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An Analysis of the Relationship among Teacher Feedback, Feedforward, and Grade on Swedish University Students’ Compositions in English as a Second Language

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Abstract:
In the present study, with the aim of analyzing the relationship among teacher feedback, feedforward, and grade, the corrections and comments made by four experienced assessors on 187 compositions were under scrutiny. These essays were written by 56 Swedish university students studying English as a second language at three different educational levels. The results reveal that while there were clear links between mid-essay corrections/comments and grades given, the links between mid-essay corrections/comments and end comments were not only comparatively few, but less clear. Moreover, although valued highly in the research literature because of their ability to promote writing skills in an enhanced manner, there were more summative end comments than formative ones. The conclusion was, therefore, drawn that it is quite taxing for assessors, even for experienced ones, to produce connections that involve an alignment among a) mid-essay corrections/comments, b) end comments and c) grade that will, at the same time, promote students’ writing skills in accordance with what is suggested by the research literature. The assessors were, however, irrespective of grade given, attuned to the educational level at hand, focusing more on analytic aspects at the two lower levels, while taking a more holistic approach at the highest educational level. This may indicate that offering corrections/comments does not only entail a developmental journey for students, but for teachers too.

Key words: composition writing, feedback, feedforward, formative assessment, L2 English, Swedish University Students, summative assessment, teacher comments, teacher corrections, university level

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1. Introduction
Many teachers generally seem to think that compositions, in contrast to other types of student production, are comparatively tricky to assess, mark, and grade. Before any teacher sets to work on such a task, several questions, therefore, usually arise. For instance, along what continuums should the various aspects of a learner text be judged? Should only one, several or all elements of the essay be considered, i.e., should a text be approached in a fashion of less-is-more or all-or-nothing? Is a grade given fair in relation to what other students have achieved and received? As if this is not enough, since assessing, marking and grading are not static phenomena, teachers have to adjust their way of working to, for example, what type of essay they are dealing with (e.g., narrative, argumentative), the level of education and proficiency, etc. Moreover, even when all these aspects are taken into account, there always seems to be an element of subjectivity in the final decision.

At the same time, the research literature shows that neither when concerned with correcting nor with commenting do teachers appear to focus on matters that would enhance student development the most. In the former case, many instructors seem to be on a hunt for details rather than in search of an understanding and conveying of the bigger picture. In the latter case, many instructors appear to provide feedback that, while often praise-oriented, is neither what students want nor require to develop their writing competence further (Stefani, 1998). That is, as evidenced in, for instance, Fisher & Frey (2013), much of the work teachers put into supplying comments is not conducive to the process that writing a composition entail.

The present study aims to investigate the relationship among assessing, marking, and grading when working with Second Language (L2) student compositions at university level, while at the same time adhering to the requirements of the course syllabus. The main concern will be the teacher perspective, but to what degree teachers’ efforts help promote students’ writing skills will also be discussed.

2 Theoretical background
While there are quite a few different assessment types (Council of Europe, 2001), summative versus formative and analytic (also atomistic) versus holistic are of primary interest to the present investigation. These will, therefore, be presented in more detail in Subsection 2.1. In Subsection 2.2, teacher corrections and comments will then be discussed in the light of these assessment types and more, as presented in two case studies.

2.1 Summative versus formative assessment/feedback and analytic versus holistic assessment/feedback
Summative assessment, frequently referred to as assessment of learning, and formative assessment, commonly referred to as assessment for learning, are based on two very different approaches (Lundahl, 2012, p. 485). The former type has developed from behavioristic ways of learning in which it is believed that student achievement is best measured in terms of objective evidence with the help of, for instance, various scoring systems (Shepard, 2000a). The latter type has instead drawn from cognitive, constructivist and sociocultural theories (Shepard, 2000a) according to which a great deal of responsibility for development is put on the students. The aim is here to turn students into autonomous learners, the instructor playing a crucial role in facilitating this goal.
Within a formative approach to learning, concepts such as ‘zone of proximal development’ (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978), and ‘scaffolding’ (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976) are, therefore, pivotal. Both focus on what a learner can achieve with the help of a teacher or peer who is more experienced than themselves, and that as such they can provide tailored assistance to guide the learner to the next step in his/her developmental trajectory (Lantolf & Aljaafreh, 1995; Shepard, 2000b). Thus, formative assessment is dynamic, i.e., the composing of a text is a process where a learner always builds on what was is previously known (Lantolf & Poehner, 2014; Poehner, 2009; Poehner & Lantolf, 2013), whereas a summative approach regards any written text as a product. Put differently, when formative assessment is implemented, teachers do something with their students; when summative assessment is made use of, teachers do something to their students (Serafini, 2000/2001). What is more, formative assessment is reciprocal as it does not only supply students with information that will promote their learning, but also empowers teachers to adapt and develop their instruction as they work to meet the learning needs of their students. Moreover, even though summative and formative assessment may seem to serve entirely different purposes, where the former type epitomizes achievement and the latter type propels further progress, it is rather how the assessment is implemented than at what point in time it is given that determines whether it is of a summative or formative nature. Any assessment that offers students input regarding their strengths and weaknesses could thus principally be used for developmental purposes, even summative assessment (Bell & Cowie, 2000).

Over the last few decades, there has been a definite shift away from summative to formative assessment in English language education generally, research most often pointing to the superiority of the latter (Black & Wiliam 1998). Still, most researchers agree that these two different ways of assessing complement each other, so that neither one could be made away with entirely (Skolverket, 2011). Furthermore, although there are comparatively few studies on the use of formative assessment specifically focusing on writing, especially L2 writing research which appears limited to theory (Evans, 2013; Hattie & Timperley, 2007), those that do exist also seem to have observed primarily positive results (e.g. L1 writing – Graham, Herbert & Harris, 2015; Parr & Timperley, 2010, L2 writing – Huang, 2012; Lee & Coniam, 2013).

One crucial part of formative assessment is feedback, defined as “information provided by an agent (e.g., teacher, peer, book, parent, self, experience) regarding aspects of one’s performance or understanding” (Hattie & Timperley, 2007, p. 81), conveying “direct, usable insights into current performance, based on tangible differences between current performance and hoped for performance” (Wiggins, 1993, p. 182). Lee (2017) considers this type of information to be conceptualized in three main steps: 1) feedback, which is supposed to answer the question where am I going?, and approached by, for instance, providing course syllabi, other learners’ successful attempts at writing, and various types of scaffolding, 2) feedback, which should answer the question how am I going?, and approached by providing helpful, diagnostic information from teachers and/or peers that is related to the feedup given in the first step, and 3) feedback, which deals with the question where to next?, and approached by implementing the information presented in step two, thus providing learners as well as teachers with new goals.

A great deal of research on feedback in L2 writing has been generated within written corrective feedback (WCF), of which the most important kind generally comes from teachers (Lee,
2017). However, despite the fact that results in this area show that feedback needs to be selective (Ferris, Liu, Sinha & Senna, 2013; Sheen, Wright & Moldawa, 2009), instructors, as hinted at in the introduction to this article, generally appear to comment indiscriminately on all types of errors (Furneaux 2007; Lee, 2004, 2008, 2013). Others seem to prioritize details only, thus losing sight of global trends as they do so. This contrast illustrates the vital distinction between an analytic (or atomistic) assessment approach and a holistic assessment approach, only the latter offering an overall evaluation of a piece of work (Council of Europe, 2001). Advocates of the second approach would set to work with a mindset epitomized in a query such as If a student needs to rethink an entire paragraph, why comment on an awkward sentence in that text part?

Moreover, teachers usually write comments in the form of statements, imperatives, and questions (Ferris, 1997; Sugita, 2006), in connection with which research has shown that teachers are inclined to give imprecise or even negative input (Cumming, 1985; Semke, 1984; Zamel, 1985). An example of this is given in Lee (2017, p. 5) where a comment like “interesting content” as a response to a student draft of a narrative story is clearly not linked to the learning goals of story writing, while “an engaging story opening” (feedback) is. Moreover, a comment like “the story opening is fine, but you could revise it to grab the reader’s attention – e.g., by putting a short dialogue at the beginning”, promotes even further what can be done to develop the story’s narrative appeal (feedforward).

2.2 Case studies of teacher corrections and comments on student essays
In Fritzell (2014), the aim was to investigate teachers’ mindset when assessing and correcting student compositions. As informants, two upper secondary school instructors teaching English within the Swedish school system were included. Both informants were male, one native Swedish teacher, 51 years of age (Sven), and one native British teacher, 40 years of age (Andy). The data gathered consisted of interviews in which open questions were posed. These were followed by think-aloud protocols which took place while the two teachers were asked to try and articulate their line of thought while reading and correcting a piece of learner text. The questions posed were concerned with the teachers’ general attitude to assessing, what their focus is and why they focus on these particular aspects, as well as how and why they correct and assess in specific ways. Both instructors were informed about the aim of the study as well as the reason for doing the observation and what questions would be asked. Finally, to investigate if there was an agreement between what the teachers said they did and what they really did, the teachers’ answers to these open questions were related to the results of the think-aloud protocols.

In the interviews, both Sven and Andy stated that they had received hardly any training in their teacher education as to how to assess and correct student compositions. The knowledge they currently had of how to approach learner text instead consisted of pieces of information from colleagues and what they had been able to acquire on their own. Fritzell, (2014), therefore, concludes that both informants had largely constructed their own knowledge about how to correct and assess written text, and that this makes it all unquestionably subjective. Furthermore, in the interviews both informants gave examples of corrections that imply that they implement direct corrective feedback (feedback that includes the correct solution), indirect corrective feedback (feedback that points to an error, either by underlining or by writing a note in the margin, but does
not offer a solution), as well as metalinguistic corrective feedback (feedback that only provides a clue as to what is incorrect, using either codes or a full description). At the same time, however, when directly asked about specific ways of correcting, both Sven and Andy denied the use of some of them. Fritzell (2014) interprets this to mean that both teachers based their corrections on impression (i.e., a subjective estimation only) as well as guided judgment (i.e., impression + activity of assessment) (Council of Europe, 2001, p. 189). In his interview, Andy further states that “it all really depends on the task” what he focuses on (2014, p. 29), and Sven adds that “sometimes you have to overlook some errors when it is a complex and demanding task” (2014, p. 29). Sven even mentions that he puts on different types of glasses depending on the task at hand and that his ‘linguistic error glasses’ are not his favourites, nor the first ones he puts on.

Sven generally also seems less comfortable with assessing and correcting than Andy does, especially product-oriented tasks such as the one that he was given. In the interviews, he claims to be less interested in atomistic aspects. Instead he assesses and corrects to promote student development. Andy’s answers, on the other hand, portray him as someone methodical with a clear focus who corrects everything and writes formative comments quite frequently. Hence Andy instead assesses and corrects so that students will know where they are in the writing process. This means that, in theory, Sven experiments beyond the analytic base, and instead takes on a holistic approach to essay writing, whereas Andy, product-oriented rather than process-oriented, represents a more analytic approach, giving very much attention to details, but not entirely disregarding the broader picture. This implies that, although both mention communication to be their top priority, Andy is closer to a weak version of Communicative Language Teaching (Spada, 2007) than Sven is. This may be explained by the fact that as a native speaker Andy is possibly more inclined to focus on language errors (i.e., accuracy rather than fluency) than someone who himself is a second language learner.

The results of the think-aloud protocols, however, offer a very different picture. In reality, while holistic matters were commented on, aspects such as spelling, vocabulary, idiomaticity, morphology, grammar, and syntax were undoubtedly considered by both informants, and to a higher degree than what could be understood by their answers in the interviews. One reason for this, Fritzell (2014) argues, may be that it is easier to find surface errors, while holistic aspects are less visible. Moreover, Andy did not offer any formative comments, which, in the interview, he claimed was an essential element of his approach. The few comments Andy made were mostly in the form of recommendations and corrections, as well as a few praises. Sven, on the other hand, was very personal in his comments and offered friendly advice as well as a great many praise-oriented comments. These findings, Fritzell proposes, could indicate that when asked about how they go about assessing and correcting compositions, teachers talk about what they would like to do, and not what they actually do. Accordingly, Sven would like to approach a piece of writing in a holistic formative manner in which the writing of an essay is seen as a process, and Andy would like to give plenty of feedforward comments, supporting learners during their writing development. For Sven, the culprit why he is not able to realize his aims may be down to time, as this is the one thing he returns to repeatedly in the interview. That is, if the primary target is the language part, there will be no time for other aspects. Still, the fact that Sven, who is ten years older than Andy and, therefore, has ten more years of experience in his bag, discusses and thus apparently considers the bigger picture more than Andy does, may also indicate that a teacher
progresses from an atomistic to a holistic approach over time, and comes to see writing as a process rather than being product-oriented, eventually focusing on positives/strengths rather than negatives/weaknesses. Such development would indicate that assessment of learner texts is not only a journey for students, but teachers too.

In Pandey & Magin (2002), the qualitative feedback on 102 essays (between 1000 and 1200 words long) written by first language (L1) and L2 students taking an introductory course in anatomy at the University of New South Wales was analyzed. The assessors, i.e. teachers as well as fellow students, were presented with six criteria: 1) addressing the topic, 2) evidence of research on the topic, 3) adequacy of discussion, 4) coherence and readability, 5) conclusion/justification, and 6) referencing. They were told that their comments should convey constructive feedback on how the essays could be improved in relation to these criteria. The peer assessors were randomly given essays of students belonging to other tutorial groups than their own, while the five teachers assessed the essays that belonged to their respective group.

The findings of the study show that there was peer-teacher agreement in the relative frequency of all six categories implemented, ‘coherence and readability’ being the most common feedback category (30/37%) and ‘addressing the topic’ attracting the least number of comments (9/10%). However, the peer assessors made generally fewer comments and were also involved in considerably more cases in which no comments at all had been offered (25%) than were the teachers (none). The students were also more inclined to mention aspects that were not related to the six criteria, as well as voicing suspicion that (parts of) the essay had been plagiarized. The most striking finding, according to Pandey & Magin (2002), is however the fact that the comments offered by the tutors displayed clear differences in focus, one teacher even having a penchant for specific phrases, reusing them over and over again.

In Topping, Smith, Swanson & Elliot (2000), it is stated that comments made by assessors usually form a reliable indication of on what criteria a composition has been judged. The fact that the teachers in Pandey & Magin’s study (2002) foregrounded different aspects may, therefore, cause confusion among students (see also Lea & Street, 1998). One reason for the difference in focal points may, according to Pandey & Magin (2002), be attributed to the heavy load of teaching and marking, one way of alleviating this burden being the reuse of formulaic expressions as mentioned above. Such an approach also implies that there may not be a clear link between the assessment criteria implemented and the comments offered (see also Magin, Helmore & Baker, 2001). The extension of this is, of course, that different teachers may, for the same learner text, come to different conclusions as to grade.

3 The present study
3.1 Research questions addressed
In the present investigation, five main research questions are addressed:

1) Quantitatively and qualitatively, what corrections/comments do assessors offer on Swedish university students’ compositions in English as a second language?
2) Do the corrections/comments relate to the grades given?
3) Do the corrections/comments made in the essays align with the end comments?
4) To what extent do the end comments help promote students’ writing skills?
5) Do different assessors focus on different aspects of the essays?

3.2 The students and their compositions
A total number of 56 Swedish full-time university students of English as a single subject participated in the present investigation (1). All of these informants studied English for (at least) three terms (henceforth referred to as English A, B, and C), during each of which they were required to write one composition (2). The material, entirely based on availability, was collected during a four-and-a-half-year period with the requirement that the informants, in order to be included, should have passed all their exams at all three levels. As some students also had to do resits to get a passing grade, as many as 187 compositions make up the data. These are distributed as presented in Table 1:

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<th>A-level</th>
<th>B-level</th>
<th>C-level</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<td>Compositions</td>
<td>60 (4 resits)</td>
<td>64 (8 resits)</td>
<td>63 (7 resits)</td>
<td>187 (19 resits)</td>
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3.3 The syllabi (3) and the composition courses based on these syllabi
At the A-level, the composing of the essay was placed within a written proficiency module which constituted 25% of the entire course. At the B-level, the essay was also made part of a written proficiency module, but here this subcourse only constituted 15% of the entire course. At the C-level, the essay was instead placed within a general proficiency module, including both spoken and written proficiency, which made up 15% of the entire course. (However, the C-level involves the writing of a degree project, focusing either on linguistics or literature.) At the A-level, the aims and contents of the relevant module are stated as follow (translated into English by the present author):

Based partly on the texts (4) and partly on a comprehensive grammar book of the English language, the ability to understand and use written English in terms of vocabulary, grammar, and stylistics (5) is developed. Proficiency is considered in terms of translation as well as free production.

At this level, the composition itself only made up 5% of the 25% mentioned above, while a test on general questions on grammar as well as translation sentences constituted the rest of the module. At the B-level, much of the A-level syllabus wording remains, but with a few additions (in bold):

Based partly on the texts and partly on a continued study of English grammar, the ability to understand and use written English in terms of vocabulary, grammar, and stylistics is developed further. Proficiency is considered in terms of translation as well as free production, with an emphasis on free production.

Here the composition constituted 5% of the 15% mentioned above, the rest again focusing on general grammar and translation. At the C-level, finally, the aims and contents of the module containing the composing of the essay are stated as follow:
The module involves continued practice of the ability to understand and use spoken language in different communicative situations. In addition, the ability to understand and use written English in terms of vocabulary, grammar, and stylistics is developed even further. Proficiency is considered in terms of translation as well as free production.

Here half of the 15% that made up the spoken/written proficiency module focused on the actual writing of the composition.

At each level, the lecturers, always native speakers of English, were given around ten hours per group to teach composition writing. The students, depending on the instructor, then handed in two to three practice essays on which they received feedback. It is here worth noticing that attendance was only compulsory at the C-level. Furthermore, the composition part was, at all three levels, always given in connection with a comprehensive text course. This included contemporary fictional texts (75%) as well as non-fictional texts (25%) at the A- and B-level, and fiction from the 17th century and onwards as well as drama, poetry and culture studies at the C-level. Topics were chosen accordingly. Examples are *A book that changed my life*, *Creating a bond*, *English as a world language*, *Reading as recognition*, *Studies abroad*, *A literary conflict*, *Women in literature*, *The Victorian Era*, *Childcare in the welfare state* and *A good ending*.

When it comes to the final test at the end of the course, the instructions differed somewhat depending on test level. Whereas first-term students were required to write a 300-word essay, second-term students were told to write at least 400 words, and third-term students to write a minimum of 500 words. Students were not allowed to deviate from the stipulated minimum number of words more than 10%. If they did, they would automatically receive a failing grade.

3.4 **The lecturers teaching the composition course and assessing the essays**

During the years when the data were collected, the same four, very experienced, lecturers were assigned to teach the composition course, assess the students’ practice essays as well as grade their achievements on the final exam. (As the students were allowed to take the practice essays home with them, it is only the final exams that make up the material of the present investigation.) All four are native speakers of English, one male, then in his late 50s, speaking American English, and three females, then from 53 to 67 years of age, speaking British English. All have Masters of Art with a literary orientation. Lastly, while all three female lecturers/assessors have some teacher training, this is not the case with the male lecturer/assessor. Table 2 offers a summary of what has been said above.
Table 2. Information about the lecturers/assessors included in the present investigation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecturer/Assessor</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age (during the 4½ years the data were collected)</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Teacher education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>56-60</td>
<td>American</td>
<td>Master of Arts/literature</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>63-67</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>Master of Arts/literature</td>
<td>Upper secondary school level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>56-60</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>Master of Arts/literature</td>
<td>Upper secondary school level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>53-57</td>
<td>British</td>
<td>Master of Arts/literature</td>
<td>Middle school level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.5 The categorization of mid-essay corrections/comments and final comments

In the present investigation, both mid-essay corrections/comments as well as end comments were considered, but they are presented separately. In the former case, four categories were formed: A) spelling, B) vocabulary including idiomaticity, C) grammar/syntax and D) topic, content, structure (including paragraphing), punctuation and referencing. Here direct corrective feedback, indirect corrective feedback, as well as metalinguistic corrective feedback were all taken into account (see Subsection 2.2).

Category B) requires a special mentioning. This category does not only include clear errors of usage, but also those uses where the students’ choice of word was acceptable, but where the assessor believed there to exist a better, more to-the-point alternative. Additionally, the category includes cases where the word or expression used by the student should not have been incorporated at all, as well as cases where the assessor inserted a word or expression, where none was used to begin with.

It is here worth pointing out that it is the assessor’s ‘perception’ of the essay at hand which is important, as this is what the grades were finally based on. This means that errors that were not noticed were not included in the results. While the opposite would also have been the case, it turned out that whereas there indeed were errors that had gone by unobserved (comparatively few), there were no situations in which something correct had been commented on as being incorrect.

Most importantly, while comments falling into Categories A-C can be classified as more atomistic (i.e., analytic) in character, comments found in Category D take on a more holistic approach to essay writing.

As for the assessors’ end comments, which are generally used to identify global trends in students’ writing and should, therefore, show alignment with mid-essay corrections/comments, these were observed to fall into five main categories: a) summative comments, b) formative comments, c) comments of praise, d) comments of blame, and e) comments on facts. Those belonging to category e) either dealt with a fact that was incorrect or with a fact that, for some reason, was found intriguing by the assessor who, therefore, added a personal thought. While some of these end comments consisted of several elements of information, thus falling into more than one of the above categories, it was important to make sure that the focus remained on the fact at hand.
one category, mid-essay corrections/comments as discussed above generally only consisted of one piece of information each, and were, therefore, consistently placed in one category per correction/comment.

A special note here seems called for in connection with Categories a) and b). End comments, especially on an exam, as is the case in the present investigation, may not be thought of in terms of formative at all. However, as the students wrote compositions at all three levels, the assessors may have taken this into account, wanting to provide feedforward comments. On the other hand, the assessors did not know which of the students would continue to the next educational level, and they may, therefore, have been more reluctant to offer formative than summative comments.

4 Results and discussion
In the present section, the research questions will be addressed. Table 3 offers the results of the quantitative analysis of the mid-essay corrections/comments in relation to the grades given.

**Table 3. The results of the quantitative analysis (percentage and average) of the corrections/comments found in the essays.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>A) spelling</th>
<th>B) vocabulary, including idiomaticity</th>
<th>C) grammar and syntax</th>
<th>D) topic, content, structure (including paragraphing), punctuation and referencing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U (fail)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no/total no</td>
<td>32.01%</td>
<td>24.48%</td>
<td>35.15%</td>
<td>8.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average/student</td>
<td>6.95</td>
<td>5.32</td>
<td>7.64</td>
<td>1.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G (pass)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no/total no</td>
<td>26.91%</td>
<td>23.96%</td>
<td>41.11%</td>
<td>8.02%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average/student</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>4.90</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VG (pass with distinction)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no/total no</td>
<td>27.31%</td>
<td>28.99%</td>
<td>36.13%</td>
<td>7.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average/student</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 clearly shows that there is a gradual decrease in the average score from a fail to a pass with distinction in all four categories. The precision with which the assessors awarded grades in relation to the corrections/comments made within the essays must, therefore, on a class level, be deemed quite impressive, yet probably exactly what students expect. This accuracy may partly be explained by the fact that all four lecturers were very experienced assessors, and partly by what is referred to as ‘tacit knowledge’. Coined by Polanyi in 1958, the concept refers to a person’s ‘hidden’ knowledge. More precisely, it refers to an “unwritten, unspoken and hidden vast storehouse of knowledge” based on “emotions, experiences, insights, intuition, observations and internalized information” (Luthra, 2007). It may thus be that it is this tacit knowledge that differentiates between an excellent teacher and, if not a bad one, at least a mediocre one. That is, while some teachers may possess this ‘gift’ for correcting/commenting naturally, others do not. It does, however, seem reasonable to suggest that tacit knowledge may also be developed and enhanced over time, being (partly) dormant to begin with. It should be noted though that teacher training does not appear to be a requirement for such knowledge, as one of the assessors in the
present investigation had none, and that, in this respect, there was no evidence of him working differently than the other three assessors who had teacher training.

It can also be observed that more end comments, here only considered from a quantitative perspective, were made on those essays receiving a fail (81.82% (=18/22)) than those awarded with a pass (20.88% (=19/91)) or a pass with a distinction (21.13% (=15/71)), the assessors here seemingly trying to offer enough support to ensure a passing grade at the next attempt. (The qualitative value of these end comments will be discussed further down.)

There are only five cases which deviate from the general trend described above, these students having received lower grades than what could have been expected based on the mid-essay corrections/comments. However, in three of these cases, the assessors instead offered explanations of the grades awarded in their general comments. This means that there are only two students in the whole material that, based on the corrections and comments made by assessors, could have chosen to argue for a higher grade. All in all, this must, as concluded above, be considered quite an achievement on the part of the assessors.

Tables 4-6 offer detailed pictures (percentage and average score) of what the assessors corrected/commented on within each grade in relation to educational level (A-, B- and C-level).

| Table 4. Essays receiving a fail in relation to the three different educational levels. |
|:--:|:--:|:--:|:--:|:--:|:--:|
| A) spelling | B) vocabulary, including idiomacity | C) grammar and syntax | D) topic, content, structure (including paragraphing), punctuation and referencing |
| A-level | no/total no | 30.77% (=36/117) | 30.77% (=36/117) | 38.46% (=45/117) | 0% (=18/22) |
| average/student | 6.00 (=36/6) | 6.00 (=36/6) | 7.50 (=45/6) | 0 |
| B-level | no/total no | 40.18% (=88/219) | 15.53% (=34/219) | 34.25% (=75/219) | 10.05% (=22/219) |
| average/student | 9.78 (=88/9) | 3.78 (=34/9) | 8.33 (=75/9) | 2.44 (=22/9) |
| C-level | no/total no | 20.42% (=29/142) | 33.10% (=47/142) | 33.80% (=48/142) | 12.68% (=18/142) |
| average/student | 4.14 (=29/7) | 6.71 (=47/7) | 6.86 (=48/7) | 2.57 (=18/7) |

| Table 5. Essays receiving a pass in relation to the three different educational levels. |
|:--:|:--:|:--:|:--:|:--:|:--:|
| A) spelling | B) vocabulary, including idiomacity | C) grammar and syntax | D) topic, content, structure (including paragraphing), punctuation and referencing |
| A-level | no/total no | 21.92% (=73/333) | 23.72% (=79/333) | 46.55% (=155/333) | 7.81% (=26/333) |
| average/student | 2.35 | 2.55 | 5.00 | 0.84 |
Of particular interest here is not only the fact that Category D, which deals with more holistic aspects of essay writing, displays the lowest number of corrections/comments within all three grades, but that the percentages (as well as average scores) in this category increase from the lowest to the highest educational level (in bold) within each grade. This increase is incremental along all three levels (A, B and C) for a failing grade as well as pass with distinction. For a pass there is a difference between the highest level and the two lower levels, but not between A- and B-level, which can most likely be explained by the fact that a pass includes a much wider span of achievements than do the lowest and highest grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade (pass)</th>
<th>A) Spelling</th>
<th>B) Vocabulary, including idiomaticity</th>
<th>C) Grammar and syntax</th>
<th>D) Topic, content, structure (including paragraphing), punctuation and referencing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A-level</td>
<td>no/total no</td>
<td>(=34/133)</td>
<td>(=44/133)</td>
<td>(=47/133)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>average/student</td>
<td>1.48 (=34/23)</td>
<td>1.91 (=44/23)</td>
<td>2.04 (=47/23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.35 (=8/23)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-level</td>
<td>no/total no</td>
<td>(=37/152)</td>
<td>(=41/152)</td>
<td>(=62/152)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>average/student</td>
<td>1.76 (=37/21)</td>
<td>1.95 (=41/21)</td>
<td>2.95 (=62/21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.57 (=12/21)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-level</td>
<td>no/total no</td>
<td>(=59/191)</td>
<td>(=53/191)</td>
<td>(=63/191)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>average/student</td>
<td>2.19 (=59/27)</td>
<td>1.96 (=53/27)</td>
<td>2.33 (=63/27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.59 (=16/27)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In *From “thought and language” to “thinking for speaking”* (1996), Slobin, in a modified version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, suggests that a person’s mother tongue determines how he/she presents linguistic information. More precisely, Slobin claims that specific constraints are put on the way spoken messages are uttered, resulting in a theory of thinking before speaking. As a continuation of this line of thought, Strömqvist, Nordqvist & Wengelin (2004) suggest that constraints, but of other types, are also imposed on written production. That is, they put forth a theory of thinking before writing, which is developed later than thinking before speaking and retains some of the elements specific for speaking for quite some time. Along these lines, an approach of correcting and commenting, more specifically an approach of correcting and commenting student compositions in accordance with educational level is here proposed, whereby assessors, especially experienced one, seem attuned to what educational level they are grading. Irrespective of what grade the students finally received, it appears that the assessors were more likely to correct/comment on holistic aspects at the higher educational levels, while focusing on atomistic aspects at the lower levels, here overlooking errors they did not believe learners studying at the lower levels are able to take in because of their greater overall complexity. The fact that there indeed were errors of a holistic type to correct/comment on at the lower levels supports this interpretation. (It is also further supported by the fact that most of the cases where the assessors had suggested alternative vocabulary to capture a concept in a more precise manner occurred at the highest educational level, while the majority of the corrections/comments on vocabulary at the lower levels were concerned with true errors.) This tallies with the tentative conclusion drawn in Fritzell (2014, where, at least from a theoretical point of view, the more experienced educator valued a holistic approach more than an analytic one. Since all four lecturers included in the present investigation are very experienced assessors, it may be, as an extension of what has been said above, that at the beginning of their careers they focused more on details, language per se being the primary target, and only thereafter slowly started to develop a more holistic perspective, focusing on aspects that affect more substantial parts of an essay. If that is the case, it most certainly means that assessment does not only involve a developmental journey for students, but teachers too.

Two other explanations are possible for this result. On the one hand, it may be that, since students make fewer errors/mistakes belonging to Categories A to C at the highest level, there is then also more time to focus on holistic aspects. As explained in Subsection 2.2, time was considered a possible issue in Fritzell (2014) too. The lack of time is, however, a less likely explanation here as the essays at the C-level were longer than those written at the A- and B-level (See Subsection 3.3). A second explanation may be that the lecturers did not put emphasis on holistic aspects in the composition course until the C-level when attendance was compulsory and that this approach was mirrored in their corrections/comments. Regrettably, it could not be found out whether this was the case or not.

As discussed above, a clear correlation between mid-essay corrections/comments and grade was observed. We will now turn to explore whether a connection can be seen between mid-essay corrections/comments and end comments, and thus also whether there is a relation between end comments and grade. The reader is here reminded that final comments that were made up of several elements were also categorized accordingly (see Subsection 3.5); thus one and the same comment may be subdivided into several categories. Moreover, links in this respect are of course
only relevant in connection with summative/formative feedback/feedforward, which here was considered to be either ‘clear’, ‘partial’, ‘not present’ or ‘incorrect’. Table 7 and 8 present the results of these analyses in relation to grade.

**Table 7. Types of end comments in relation to grade.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of end comment</th>
<th>Type of end comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) summative</td>
<td>b) formative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U (fail)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G (pass)</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VG (pass with distinction)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) praise-oriented</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) blame-oriented</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) factual</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 reveals that end comments are not very prolific in the material as a whole and that summative ones form the most frequent type at all three educational levels. Logically though, formative comments are more frequent in connection with those compositions that received a fail (9) than with those that received a pass (only 2) and those that received the highest grade (0). However, as 22 out of the 187 compositions were not awarded a passing grade, it would have been desirable to have been able to observe more end comments that could have helped enhance these specific learners’ writing development. Praise-oriented comments (e.g. *very good!* and *well done!*), which as discussed in Subsection 2.1 is unlikely to promote learners’ writing skills, are comparatively common all throughout the material, whereas comments expressing blame are most frequent in connection with the lowest grade, where they probably are also most likely to do harm(!). Thus while the four lecturers displayed almost precise accuracy as to the correlation between mid-essay corrections/comments and grade, they do not seem equally adept at providing feedforward input. It must, however, be remembered that the present investigation does not include a discussion of what went on in the composition courses (see Subsection 3.4), where, of course, the students most likely received a great deal of supportive feedforward.

**Table 8. Summative and formative end comments related to mid-essay comments.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of end comment</th>
<th>Type of end comment</th>
<th>Type of link with mid-essay corrections/comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) summative</td>
<td>b) formative</td>
<td>clear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U (fail)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G (pass)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VG (pass with distinction)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) praise-oriented</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) blame-oriented</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) factual</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Table 8 shows that, while the majority of the end comments are indeed linked to the corrections/comments made in the essays and the grades awarded, especially for those that received a fail, there are also cases where the links are only partially transparent or do not exist at all. Thus, had these end comments been the only type of feedback/feedforward, those students would clearly not have understood on what their grades had been based, and they would consequently have been lost regarding what to work on to improve their writing skills.

Based on what has been said above, it is apparent that it is easier to offer mid-essay corrections/comments and relate them to grade than provide comments that will enable students to move ahead, whether it be from a failing grade to a passing one, or from one educational level to the next. Again it needs to be pointed out that a great many such formative comments may, of course, have been offered during the composition course.

Finally, in contrast to what was found in Pandey & Magin (2002) (see Subsection 2.2), while there indeed were reoccurring phrases used by the present assessors, these seemed warranted in connection with what the students had produced and did not point to a specific assessor being especially focused on one particular aspect, while ignoring the rest.

5 Summing up
In the present study, teacher corrections and comments on 187 compositions written at three different university levels in English as a second language were analyzed. The results reveal clear links between corrections of all four categories considered and grades given, i.e., the higher the grade, the lower the average score in all four categories. The assessors’ great experience, as well as their tacit knowledge, were thought to be the main reasons for this precision. In connection with the former, it would, therefore, be interesting to explore what less experienced and recently graduated teachers could achieve.

The results also show that the assessors seem attuned to the educational level at hand. That is, they display a thinking-before-correcting/commenting approach, focusing on more analytic aspects at the lowest educational level and more holistic aspects at the highest educational level. If this is the case, it implies that assessment does not only involve a developmental journey for students but for some teachers too, where they move from a detailed-driven approach to an approach where conveying the bigger picture is of greater importance. Again, making a comparison between experienced and less experienced teachers may be of interest.

Finally, though much needed, according to the research literature, comments made at the end of the compositions were summative rather than formative. However, the links made between mid-essay corrections/comments and end comments, although few, displayed alignment in most, but, regrettably, far from all cases. It thus seems easier to produce clear connections between mid-essay corrections/comments and grade than it is to provide end comments and align mid-essay corrections/comments with end comments, which would help promote students’ essay writing skills in an enhanced manner.
Notes:
(1) 46 of the students are female (82%) and 10 are male (18%). This distribution largely agrees with the one in Thagg Fisher (1985) and Karlsson (2012), both focusing on first-term students of English at two different Swedish universities, making the present data representative in terms of gender.
(2) The academic year at Swedish universities is made up of two terms.
(3) Since the collection of the material, the university has made changes in the syllabi.
(4) Here ‘the texts’ refer to the fictional books read in another module preceding the written proficiency subcourse.
(5) Stylistics, usually defined as “…the study and interpretation of texts…” “…in regard to their linguistic and tonal style, where style is the particular variety of language used by different individuals and/or in different situations and settings” (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stylistics), is here used in a much wider sense than normal, seemingly focusing on more holistic aspects of the students’ written compositions as captured in Category D) discussed in Subsection 3.5. In fact, only one comment made in the whole material, and, therefore, not discussed further, was concerned with style as defined above.
(6) Tokens, not types, were considered.
(7) Referencing is here concerned with errors/mistakes with anaphoric reference, having for example discussed an item in the singular, but referring back as if in the plural, thus often causing confusion on a holistic level.

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An Analysis of the Relationship among Teacher Feedback

Karlsson


Opportunities and Questions:  
A Short Report on Rubric Assessments in Asia and the Middle East

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Abstract  
This qualitative short report considers the viability of the use of rubrics or alternative methods to assess writing in Asia and the Middle East. The background of learning theories, assessment types, and self-assessment literature provides a foundation for further discussion of the appropriate use of rubrics, including the prioritization of criterion, the quality of scoring, the impact of organizational features on scoring, the influence of bias, and the best application of rubric assessment. Relevant points for further study are identified, such as differentiation in research between generalized analytical rating systems and rubric assessment with specific, empirical criterion. The contradictory research regarding the advantages and disadvantages of rubric assessment in comparison with holistic assessment are of particular and crucial interest for global pedagogy. Many of the reviewed Western articles excluded Asian perspectives- except for China- and thus present a limited understanding of social and educational compatibility with new assessments and rubric assessments in particular. The discussion identifies patterns and points of contention and seeks to explore viewpoints rather than limit the scope of inquiry and consideration thus noting that relevant literature suggests that with appropriate teacher training, teachers may appropriately use rubrics as a formative assessment tool for writing in Asia and the Middle East.

Keywords: Asia, education, formative assessment, Middle East, professional development, rater, rubric, scoring, summative assessment

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Opportunities and Questions: A Short Report on Rubric Assessments in Asia and the Middle East

Since Asia and the Middle East require fluency in two or more languages, better assessment impacts students for many years. Rubrics with specific guidelines and clear expectations facilitate an understanding of the requirements of the school and the teacher and open lines of communication regarding scores between teachers, parents, and students. Although debates continue about the quality of holistic and analytical scoring, the validity of well-designed rubrics often stands above the results for these two continuums of assessment. Despite the resistance expected from many teachers, rubrics may speed teacher efficiency and facilitate opportunities for students to take ownership of their learning outside of the classroom while the teacher remains in control.

Background
In this literature review, the theoretical background regarding learning, assessment, and methods provide a picture of the purpose, types, and applications which might affect teacher scoring in the Middle East and Asia in particular.

Instruction
The method of instruction directly relates to a teacher’s evaluation of the mastery of writing skills and correlates to the performance on standardized testing. In many cases, similar teaching approaches foster higher overall scoring results on such large-scale assessments. Other teaching approaches may better suit a given nation’s cultural aims of education or a more authentic learning experience. Ismail (2011) explains that many students find writing in their mother tongue painful, and the countries of the Middle East and Asia require mastery of two (or more) languages. He also reports the observations that the writing mastery of the students in the UAE also directly relates to their previous writing experience and acquisition of language(s) and that these students positively accepted constructive feedback more in the classroom setting. They agree that feedback should shape each phase of the writing process (pp. 74-75).

Assessment
The many diverse assessment types continually change and develop with the mastery of desired skills and knowledge. With the advent of easily written translation services and globalized international communications, the Asian emphasis often focuses language mastery upon speaking and listening first, reading second, and writing as a last consideration (Yi, 2009). Hidri and Coombes (2017) explain the many subtler facets of assessment and point out a hidden opportunity to create sustainable development that could be linked to quality assurance.

Assessment Types. Nodoushan (2014) comments that assessment generally falls into the holistic, analytic, and trait-based categories and adds that each category fulfills a specific function which best matches diverse assessment types. A holistic assessment provides a sweeping, ‘big picture’ view of accomplishment, an analytic assessment includes a scaled approach of scoring overall writing, and trait-based assessment evaluates the mastery of specific goals (p. 122-124). Han (2017) remarks that a holistic writing assessment shows great validity in the context of certification, placement, or research. By contrast, analytic methods assess individual details with
less potential for bias and more impact when applied to formative assessments for use in student education through task completion (p. 124). Firoozi (2019) adds the function-based qualifiers of diagnostic, progressive, and summative types and that selecting the most valid and reliable method remain crucial to the validity of the assessment results.

The umbrella of performance tasks includes the production of writing and essays, and Nodoushan (2014) observes that the development of quality performance assessment evolves from a list of desired objectives to the creation of a motivating task which best facilitates student demonstration of mastery and finally to the development of explicit performance criteria (p. 122). Knoch (2009) quantitatively compares holistic scoring, analytic scales that are ‘intuitively developed’, and analytic scales that are ‘empirically developed’ and found that the empirically-developed analytical scales— the category that criterion-based rubric assessment fits—mitigate many of the weaknesses of other analytical assessment types (pp. 298-299).

De Silva (2014) tells us that a rubric functions as a potential tool of teaching and assessment for both performance and authentic tasks, helps students critically evaluate their work and that of their peers, saves teachers time, accommodates diverse student groups, and allows for easy use (p. 136). Furthermore, the breadth of research regarding analytical scoring often includes less-reliable measures as representative of the continuum of available tools, and more research directed solely at rubric assessment and its potential application to writing classes in Asia and the Middle East poses an area of potential further study.

Self-Assessment Rubric. A wide variety of theories regarding feedback regarding student writing continues to inspire more research, and some researchers go so far as to say that corrective feedback tends to inhibit the flow and creativity of writing and ought to be avoided (Ganji, 2009, p. 118). Rubrics can be used in student self-assessment, as well. De Silva (2014) notes that high school students in their study of in Sri Lanka expressed surprise and disappointment at the scoring of their authentic writing assessments (pp. 137-138). Hale (2015) explains that in East Asia, where the education system is still heavily teacher-centered and controlled, the novelty of these approaches questions if the students benefit more when they have a direct voice in their own grading. Among Saudi students in 2017, they favored rubric assessment with the assurance that they would be involved in the development and clearly understand the expectations of each criterion (Obaid, 2017).

Findings

The background of learning theories, assessment types, and self-assessment literature provides a foundation for further discussion of the appropriate use of rubrics, including the prioritization of criterion, the quality of scoring, the impact of organizational features on scoring, the influence of bias, and the best application of rubric assessment.

Prioritization

A particular assignment might highlight a specific skill or standard for a unit and clearly display the priorities through the lens of class and social culture. Education and social and political influence remain inextricably linked. El Ebyary (2013) observes “how the pressures on the teaching/learning process is externally managed by some educational bodies with the prime aim
of raising standards” (p. 2170). Firoozi (2019) quotes one definition: “Assessment culture refers to educational evaluation practices that are compatible with current ideologies, social expectations, attitudes, and values” (Inbar-Lourie 2008, p. 285). In America, schools often highly value technological use and innovation. In Korean high schools, communicative listening and speaking for globalized readiness remain high priorities and writing forms an almost-coincidental part of many general assessments (Yi, 2009, pp. 62-64).

In other words, rubrics always show prioritization— even when this occurs unintentionally. One study of 30 Iranian high school students concluded that they ranked grammar and spelling as the most crucial factors in their writing grades and yet this body of students requested a holistic scoring of a composition in place of the use of a rubric. The small sample emerged from within the same Iranian community, so further research has yet to delve deeper into the topic (Tajgozari & Alimorad, 2019). In the preface to their book, Hidri and Coombe (2017) add that the correlation of priorities to grading— and the general process of education itself— create a significant ethical side to the application of all forms of assessment.

Further assessment readiness often occupies one of the highest priorities for in-class writing and feedback. Ganji (2009) explored the effectiveness of corrective feedback in testing preparation, the impact of general guidelines in the IELTS testing, and how feedback from the teacher, from peers, and from self-reflection affect the Iranian upper-intermediate-level writing students’ second attempts. This study concluded that minimal corrective teacher feedback proves more effective than peer feedback or self-assessment. In America, one year later, a similar study conducted with university students found similar results. In 2007, Chinese EFL writing studies upheld this result with the caveat that student revision gives meaning to indirect teacher feedback (pp. 119-124).

Quality
In the evaluation of writing, Gebril and Plakans (2009) write that guidelines for assessing discourse should include diverse lexical, syntactical, rhetorical and pragmatic characteristics, reliable and meaningful application, and clear differences between writing scaled at another level (p. 54). Amini (2018) remarks that the quality translation in EFL classrooms includes accuracy, fluency, and “fitness for the purpose”, and these same characteristics apply to their cognitive translation of ideas into written essays.

Rating Variance. Kimura et al. (2017) stress the relationship between the fluency level of the teacher, instructional efficiency, and the comparative accuracy of scoring. Yi (2009) points out that the teacher’s personal experiences and pedagogical definition of writing excellence influence their holistic grading rationale. Many of the polled high school teachers in Korea described writing acumen using terms of grammar and organization, but one teacher provided an apt offhand description of “accuracy, commitment, good content, creativity, and good paragraphing”, an informal sketch of viable rubric criterion (pp. 53-56, 63).

Cho (2008) writes that large-scale assessment simply cannot fairly meet the level of rigor of a classroom setting. In a class, the teacher tailors the writing to areas of weakness in prior learning and specifically accesses the students’ previous classroom knowledge, allowing them to
write more confidently, fluently, and specifically. Other than generic personal writing topics, large-scale testing includes limits of personal connection to the student. However, the classroom setting presents conditioned responses in a comfortable environment with known teacher and class expectations, limiting the variety of voice and selection of writing material itself (pp. 49-52).

Zhang, Xiao, and Luo (2015) state that higher-fluency writers perform much better with holistic scoring measures, while lower-fluency writers benefit from the feedback and goal-oriented scoring of analytic scales and rubrics in particular. Especially when the writing occurs in a second or third language, the student writer balances a multitude of cognitive tasks and undergoes assessment at the level of a native speaker. They, too, grow tired as their brain evaluates, organizes, and translates under extreme pressure. Students with greater long-term exposure to writing in their native language and additional languages experience the benefit of multilayer linguistic processing. In many countries, students undergo writing assessment despite the stipulation that instruction begins “wherever conditions permitted” (Ruecker & Crusan, 2018). This paradox means that the students’ former exposure to the language will often widely vary.

As teachers grow tired of reading assessments, especially when the student writers expect expedited results, mental fatigue begins to affect the scoring process, and teachers may also grow more or less lenient in their grading and skim over their reading. This can inspire an unfair holistic scoring, which relies on the impressions of the writings as a whole. Most of the authors in this literature review agree that rubric assessment helps focus raters’ attentions and speeds the grading process, allowing teachers to grade more papers consistently and quickly. However, Zhang, Xiao, and Luo (2015) argue the opposite: more than three rating areas slow the process and negatively impact the quality and reliability of scoring and speed mental fatigue during scoring, slowing the scoring process. Knoch’s quantitative study compared holistic and analytical, trait-based scales with particular emphasis upon rubrics and concluded that a higher number of details and descriptors provided a more reliable baseline for rubric assessment and that the raters themselves ultimately preferred the rubrics to holistic assessment (pp. 298-302). This divergence of evidence and interpretation within the recent literature poses questions for further future study.

Organizational Skills. Foreign language writing assessments require more than linguistic skills; they require prolonged retention of linguistic concepts and the ability to organize these concepts into one cohesive argument. Thus, it requires very high-level cognitive multitasking and quick processing to complete such a task. A well-organized paper may support an argument better than the writing of a student with a broader understanding of the subject and applicable vocabulary. Interestingly, one Korean high school teacher answered that he assessed writing ability “looking at… grammar, flow…coherence, content, and so on” (Yi, 2009, p. 63).

Ruegg and Sugiyama (2013) explore the vast differences in scoring with rating scales and holistic scoring through the lens of the desired objectives being assessed. The authors compared scoring of timed essays and found that the number of paragraphs and cohesive devices as organizational features correlated strongly to higher overall scores even in those marked for deeper textual comprehension and expression. Although the assessments sought to rate content and application, one study found that expert TESOL teachers mentioned handwriting as a factor in thirty percent of their evaluations (Cho, 2008, pp. 53-54).
**Meta-Linguistics.** Confidence greatly affects the written presentation of their acquired knowledge, and the students’ self-reported feelings of accomplishment (Bialik, Martin, Mayo, & Trilling, 2016, pp. 46-47). This hesitance often displays in reliance upon a smaller vocabulary or upon the same simple grammatical features. Cho (2008) explains that the rating of graduate-level TESOL teachers showed a greater emphasis upon meta-linguistic factors than linguistic factors; the raters subconsciously zeroed in on the most common student writing mistakes before considering the content and skill of the writing as a whole (pp. 52-54).

Jeong’s 2015 study reached a similar conclusion, noting the link between grammar and mechanics error and lower overall scores as compared to rubric-guided scoring. For these reasons, the holistic, ‘red-pen’ approach of many traditional teachers provides very specific- albeit discouraging and often negative-feedback and often favors the literal aspects of writing over substance, meaning, and comprehension (Nodoushan, 2014, pp. 123-124). Raters often equate the length of the writing itself with a depth of thought. Beyond the mandatory word range limits commonly given on most assessments, the number of words also strongly predicts the rating given, and holistic rating amplifies this effect (Amini, 2018).

**Outside Sources.** The inclusion of outside sources and the ability to appropriately cite them indicates less about the student’s deeper knowledge of the topic and writing skills than it does the student’s grasp of complex grammatical features and higher-level analysis. Thus, a rubric often corrects this natural imbalance in scoring between form and substance. Gebril and Plakans (2009) found that- with holistic grading- the correct citation of outside sources in writing correlated with higher scores than those given to writing which conveyed original ideas and a deeper and more sophisticated understanding of the reading (pp. 63-65). Ezza (2017) suggests that more specialized writing rubrics emphasize the specific expectations, vocabulary, and previous knowledge of writing directed to niche or trade groups. A persuasive paper must cite previous evidence, such as case law, literary examples, and medical case studies, and ought to conform to the relevant conventions. Thus, exposure to native language writing in the target style supplements understanding of complex concepts which might be included in a rubric (pp. 196-197).

**Application**

Although the majority of research about rubrics studies their development, criterion selection, efficacy, and best use, the rubrics prove ineffective if the teachers cannot effectively and accurately score the writing. Best practices which utilize rubrics also gradually shift to become more goal-aligned, clear, and reflective of the experience of teachers, students, and parents.

**Calibration.** Jeong (2015) notes that despite the common use of rubrics in writing and performance-based assessments, raters rarely receive input or training regarding appropriate rubric development as a tool for assessing specific standards. Teachers literally have limitless options of foci for a rubric, especially if they create it for a specific goal or assignment. Ezza (2017) included ten of the most common writing traits in their survey of teacher rating behaviors: audience, text structure, ideas, persuasive devices, vocabulary, cohesion, paragraphing, sentence
structure, punctuation, and spelling. Notably, more than half of those traits analyze choices rather than the content itself (pp. 196-197).

Firoozi (2019) recommends teacher training in the use of rubrics as one of the greatest tools of reading and writing literacy and that they receive training in the higher-order, critical thinking cognitive skills which non-native language users require to best apply their learning. These skills apply both to teachers and students. Nonetheless, many educational organizations, such as the Center for Curriculum Redesign, offer suggested lists and even provide the websites where flexible, tested assessment rubrics can be found (Bialik, Martin, Mayo, & Trilling, 2016, pp. 14-16).

**Teacher Preference.** Teachers and students must fully appreciate and understand these rubrics. In many Asian and Middle Eastern countries, the teacher often may direct every aspect of the classroom with little interference or unwanted explanation. Since these schools typically remain teacher-driven and teacher-controlled, the give-and-take of rubrics may seem alien, incomprehensible, or doubtful. El Ebyary (2013) records the impressions of teachers in the Middle East and records a general trend to mistrust formative assessment as an unfamiliar method which conflicts with the educational perspective of their own education and of their previous teacher training (pp. 2170-2173). Zhang, Xiao, and Luo (2015) also in favor of holistic scoring on the grounds that teacher training for analytical writing assessment requires at least twice as much time and possibly more time in detail-oriented measures, such as rubric use. They also question analytic assessment as representative of the mastery of specific skills and not as a measure of the overall status.

Recalling the case study of Korean high school writing raters, they frequently expressed consternation at explaining their grading process and reasoning (Cho, 2008). For the calibration of better rubrics and grading, the students must know what facets of writing the teacher will assess. De Silva (2014) reminds teachers that providing a rubric may not fully clarify the desired outcomes. For example, the of ‘Neatness’ could refer to using pen and not pencil, the handwriting, the organization and proofreading of the paper, etc. In a 2017 study of Saudi students, eighty-six percent of students expressed the belief that rubric assessments of writing would further clarify their needs, but ninety-six percent of the same respondents feared that they would not have time to sufficiently review and comprehend each of the rubric assessment areas before writing (Obeid, 2017). In their Sri Lanka case study, high school students scored over twice as high in all areas when the teacher reviewed the rubric with the class beforehand (pp. 135-138). The students’ feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the rubric assessment also inform better teacher calibration to achieve multiple goals.

**Student Self-Reflection.** Nodoushan (2014) notes: “If performance criteria are well defined, the student will then understand what he or she must do to improve” (p. 122). Thus, providing a rubric clarifies areas of assessment, speeds teacher scoring, and clarifies the rationale behind the scoring to the parents and students, providing opportunities for independent reflection and academic growth. Hale (2015) concluded that self-assessment with rubrics makes students feel trusted, develops independent responsibility, and encourages more objective self-reflection about the quality, strengths, and weaknesses of their written work.
Additionally, De Silva’s sources argue that the sense of ownership and accountability drives them to put more effort into the first such attempt and actively invest in their grades with fewer rationalizations for a poor grade (2014, p. 137). Multiple studies among different age groups across the world uphold the importance of specific teacher feedback with fewer notes on grammar and spelling for improving student scoring trends, but some recent research indicates that the subsequent improvement in students’ writing only occurs when students must revise their work or otherwise take ownership of the identified weaknesses and apply them in a way which meaningfully integrates the feedback into their personal writing processes (Ganji, 2009, pp. 124-125). Thus, teacher utilization of rubric assessment as a means of nurturance of student creativity, growth, and self-reflection ought to apply it as part of a formative growth strategy which develops writing in carefully-planned stages.

Bias

Han (2017) points out that accurate holistic assessment remains the most trusted form of evaluation and that such methods can often produce the most accurate large-scale view of student progress. He goes on to say that holistic assessment shows a greater tendency toward swings of scoring due to personal bias. This bias can consist of many different influences. As already discussed, the commonplace holistic bias toward overemphasis upon grammar, spelling, and other organizational and meta-linguistic features and briefly discussed teacher perspectives as a key factor which more heavily affects holistic scoring than rubric scoring (or that of other analytic measures).

Fernandez and Siddiqui (2017) also point out that rater scoring differences of writing often result from the severity or leniency of their grading preferences. In their 2017 study of fifteen Pakistani writing raters, the respondents rated the same three essays holistically according to their usual scoring practices. Below, Table 1 demonstrates the extensive possible variations of holistic rating.

Table 1. Pakistani Rater Scoring of Essays

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rater</th>
<th>Essay 1</th>
<th>Essay 2</th>
<th>Essay 3</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>M4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>M14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This gap in scoring proves particularly devastating in high-stakes testing for course placement, employment, or crucial educational assessments. Referencing Table 1 above, if students become accustomed to the grading of an atypically-lenient rater, such as M3, but a strict
rater, such as M11, grades their writing, students will justifiably feel confused and often question the teacher and/or the test itself. Quintero, Trejo, Guzman, and Gonzalez (2017) studied the use of criterion-based, empirical rubrics and found that rubric use narrowed the gap between the severity or leniency of raters but did not eliminate it. These students and raters (in Mexico) more reliably predicted the variations of scoring and adjusted quickly due to their greater exposure to rubrics and analytical writing assessments as a means of summative assessment. The author did not discuss or study rubric use as a formative assessment tool, indicating that the results regarding rubric validity and reliability applied specifically to the context of widespread summative assessment.

Conclusions

From the pedagogical background to the assessment types and appropriate use of rubrics, this qualitative review seeks to understand the limits of the viability of rubric assessments of writing in Asia and the Middle East. The research indicates that appropriate rubric use includes a careful alignment with standards of the culture, classroom, and relevant testing. The teacher’s own writing skill heavily influences their teaching strategies and perceptions of student mastery; holistic grading often results in inconsistent scoring. While rubrics undoubtedly clarify goals, explicitly justify scoring, speed the grading process, and provide opportunities for teacher and student development, the review of the literature indicates that their use in conjunction with specific goals and student involvement often determines their value as tools of writing assessment.

In the Middle East and Asia, teachers often express a misunderstanding of this relationship between the purpose of rubrics and their best use. As many of these schools, especially language or business schools, globalize their educational approach, the importance of students’ investment in their own writing shows a need to align assessment to these goals. When used properly as a formative assessment tool or as a clear summative assessment guide, rubrics allow teachers to bridge their direction to student understanding and would be uniquely suited to these schools if raters undergo proper training. Perhaps the future of rubrics in Asia and the Middle East remains best-suited to formative development of individual skills and the identification of areas of strength or weakness or as reinforcement of teacher-directed goals and student writer internalization of their areas of development.

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References


The Writing Center’s Role in the Academic Life of an English Foreign Language Student from an Instructor’s Perspective

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Abstract
The English Writing Center (WC) has recently become a writing support service in selective Lebanese universities even though it has been a common practice in Western universities for the last twenty years. The article from a university instructor’s experience aims to bring forward the reasons the WC at Lebanese universities is slowly attracting students to its provided practices and how disciplinary instructors amongst other socio-cultural factors are contributing towards students’ misconceptions of the WC philosophy and services. The article first introduces the profile of the Lebanese university English as a foreign language (EFL) student to provide a background on their English language level of proficiency and expectations from the WC tutors and the misguided understanding of the WC philosophies and framework practices that are opposing students’ expectations from the WC; and continues to construct the need for the WC to re-evaluate its current writing pedagogy and process between tutor and student. The article concludes by discussing the negotiated roles WC tutors, disciplinary instructors and faculty management should take in order to transfer students’ misconception of the WC aims and objectives and to take responsibility for their writing.

Key Words: English foreign language, English language writing centre, English medium of instruction, English second language, Middle East and North Africa, writing centre, writing laboratory

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Introduction

The nuance for the attainment of the English language at an academic level has over the past twenty years become a practised requirement for students at the university level not only in Lebanon but across most of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. The English language learning has become a relevant aspect of an Arabic speaking student’s life, as to ensure a prosperous academic future and career both nationally and abroad. This standpoint has encouraged Lebanese university management and administration to place pressure on university faculty members to raise students’ numbers by provided English language support services and to enhance the English language academic proficiency to a global level. This discourse between management and tutors’ has contributed towards a re-evolvement of the universities English language writing centre (ELWC) from a writing lab philosophy that reflected more on the writing outcome than the writing process and becoming a member of the writing discourse community where students take ownership of their writing process and outcome.

The WCs philosophical practices in Lebanon as it has internationally is currently experiencing changes to what was previously implemented in the 1970s Writing Lab and since North’s (1984) major undertaking on the objectives of working with students writers. North argued that the WCs is to be more than a place to edit student’s papers. It is a learning center where tutors are to focus on student writing negotiation and planning throughout the writing experience. Since North’s support for the WC to be a writing station that encourages the personal writing growth of a student community, the academic institutions have seen a surge of international students seeking to acquire the English language discourse at an academic level. Consequently, from this advancement, universities administration such as in the case of Lebanon, have increased the English language learning support by providing students with writing language centres. The WCs are aimed at aiding students in becoming independent, proficient writers of the English academic language by addressing writing pedagogical issues relevant to students writing discrepancies.

The exploration and development of the role, form and content a WC is currently supporting at Lebanon’s higher studies, is slowly becoming a permanent approach by WC tutors and disciplinary instructors to the underpinning of various theories and pedagogical processes that aim to serve WC Philosophy, tutors and students. This support aims to provide and encourage students’ ongoing discussion between faculty members, instructors and tutors; whereby this examination of the WC will aim to serve as Archer and Richards (2011) explained, as an exploration into student profile, teacher relationship and the discipline-specific in teaching writing requirements. From this perspective, what has been observed and argued by practitioners such as Hauer (2019), Rafoth (2015) and Richards (2011), is that the WC philosophical practices and students expectations from the WC tutors and tutors from the students are often mismatched. From this standpoint, what the article aims to highlight, is that students writing expectations are not met by the tutors and tutors are unable to address students writing concerns because students do not meet the current understanding that a WC is no longer a drop off-fix it WL but a learning and writing community where students’ learning is negotiated, writing strategies are discussed, and complete control of the writing process is adopted by the student.
The objectives of this article are; one to discuss how the EFL programs pre-tertiary studies in Lebanon have prepared students for the academic writing process; and two, how the WC needs to re-evaluate its current writing pedagogy and process between tutor and student; and three to establish an understanding of the WC adopted philosophical rules and the need to encourage not only dialogue and negotiated instruction between tutor and student but also for students to understand the importance of taking control of their writing as to ensure knowledge growth of the writing process in all its form.

To adequately explore these points the article address the Lebanese English Foreign Language National Curriculum (LNC) that is delivered in the English Medium of Instruction (EMI) to affirm the reasons for students English language discrepancies in the writing process and to highlight the misconceptions between student and the WC adopted philosophies and writing practices between tutors and students. The article further reflects on the writer's experience in teaching at the Lebanese and Australian universities for comparison purposes between both of the WCs adopted philosophical writing objectives and instruction.

Profile of the Lebanese Writing Center student

From my experience in working at various universities in Lebanon the profile of the students that attends a WC compared to that of a WC student in an Australian university, for example, varies extensively even though their writing needs are very similar. For one, the profile of the student in Lebanon is homogenous. Students and tutors are mostly of an Arabic speaking background, and they all share the same geopolitical environment. Furthermore, tutors can communicate in the Arabic language with the students overcoming any frustration that may evolve from both sides due to language communication breakdown. Whereas, in Australia, the author worked with students that were either of an English second or foreign language and are of a various multicultural background. Students are expected to engage and apply the English language along with its grammatical functions and writing processes and undertaking as a native English language speaking student. Tutors as myself are expected to deal with a diversity of cultures and languages and seek pedagogical instruction to overcome language miscommunications. These international non-English speaking students are encouraged to seek remedial English language support to stamp out the remedial English as a second language (ESL) identity quickly and to provide written essays that are of a global English language academic level.

The profile of the Lebanese tertiary student English language also varies from student to student in the classroom but for reasons that are different from that of an Australian classroom. One reason depends on whether the student at the secondary level studied English as a second language in the English medium of instruction (EMI) or a third foreign language. It is important to note that the existing Lebanese National Curriculum consists of trilingualism; the medium of instruction in all public and private schools is the first language being Arabic, and depending on the teaching policy and philosophy of the school the second language is either English as a second language or French as a foreign language. A second foreign language is also instructed depending on the school’s teaching philosophy and chosen medium of a foreign language. The understanding is that public schools in Lebanon adopt the same curriculum as opposed to the private school sector that implements another global English language education curriculum. Most Private schools in Lebanon do not apply the Lebanese national curriculum and textbooks and communicate and teach
all core subjects in the English medium of instruction (EMI). The communication and assessment that is delivered in the EFL class are expected to be communicated in the English language. From this perspective, the student from a private education sector whose holistic curriculum is delivered in the EMI arrives at the university level with extensive exposure of the English language discourse and culture. Hence, their English language academic needs and shortcomings are expected to be different from that of a student who attended a national school. Secondly, as dictated by a recent study by Bakkar (2018) on the Lebanese English foreign language (EFL) curriculum from a teachers’ perspective, Lebanese national students in no small degree have acquired the English language through memorisation, and ongoing practices in grammatical rules; and teachers are most likely to instruct in the traditional teaching methods. The language classroom is teacher-centred; skills are dictated and tested through traditional assessment methods such as in short quizzes and tests. As a result, the LNEFL student arrives at university with little knowledge of the academic English language and control of their learning and writing processes. Students, in a short period, are expected to submit analytical essays that are at an international English academic standard (Bakkar, 2018) that are above their language writing and language analytical discourse.

The number of Lebanese universities that are currently teaching all core subjects in the EMI has escalated in order to attract national and international students from the MENA region. Globalized higher education enhances universities prospects of students’ enrollments, increases finances consequently making up for lack of government funding, supporting students’ needs for the global labour market and establishing the profile of the university on a local and international platform. However, offering these academic programs at higher studies do not come without their discrepancies.

Students are attracted to acquire their academic studies in EMI, but their lack of proficiency in the English language at a global academic level is posing various problems to faculty management and course instructors. What is noted is that the delivery of the courses in the EMI is highly ambitious on the students. In support of this, Preece and Martin (2010) ascertained in their study titled Imagine higher education as a multi-lingual space; that often there is a discrepancy between the pedagogical practices and philosophies of the EMI tertiary education and the language needs and profile of the ESL-EFL student. A derivative of these discrepancies are contributing towards students lack of mastery of the English language, comprehension of its theoretical reading contents, writing processes and study strategies. Consequently, these factors are pressuring faculty management to provide students with English language writing support centres as a solution to helping them achieve the academic results needed for them to reach global English language academic standards. Students are often directed by their course instructors to seek the WC support to learn how to research and write at an academic English global level. Hence, from experience and observation, instructors’ heavy teaching load, lack of office student support time and the personal perception that “they are not EFL teachers” are additional factors that encourage them to direct students to receive the assistance of the WC tutors.

Accordingly, students ambitiously approach the WC intending to escape the “Remedial English” identity inherited from received poor results and instructors’ encouragement with a false understanding of the philosophy and practices of the WC and tutors. From observation, students often identify themselves as being academically proficient in the practices of the English language.
Their strong perception of their English language level is intertwined with their social-cultural identity (Martin, 2010); hence, falling short of personally interpreting the different language elements between academic language and literacy practices. They become frustrated with their course instructors when encouraged to approach the WC for writing support. This frustration is birthed from their identity that if they are proficient speakers of the English language, then they are academically strong in the writing and research elements of higher studies. Furthermore, students arrive at university with their understanding of the characteristics of language proficiency. Consequently, the provided WC practices and directive learning approaches placed towards students’ participation is proving to be challenging between WC tutors and students.

What the author noted is what students perceive from the WC tutors is in contradiction with its noted philosophy and practices. Lebanese universities students come with past experiences in the writing mechanism and processes from secondary education with lack of personal knowledge, independence and consistency (Bakkar, 2018) thus, conditioning them to rely on WC tutors to take control of their writing essays. Students assume WC tutors as they did of their secondary teachers to provide directive-centred feedback in highlighted areas of writing concern and to narrow down the feedback to teacher controlled editing, paragraph writing and referencing. What is further observed is that due to the lack of experience and fluency and accuracy in the spoken and writing of the English language students are at ease at giving WC tutors full instructional command of their work. Students expect tutors to take on a much directive role in the one on one consultation and they perceive the role of their course instructor and the WC tutor to be of equal bipartisanship; meaning the writing outcome needs to reflect the expectations of their instructor and course assessment outcome.

Consequently, the WC tutors are finding themselves mediating between the student’s language needs and their instructors and overlooking teaching aspects of how students need to take control of their writing process and outcome. Moreover, students to meet assignment deadlines and to ensure a high GPA expect WC to polish their paper into a monolingual standard written English that is a reflection of an English native speaking student. In the process, the philosophical directive tutoring technicalities of the writing centre are lost, consequently creating tutor and student frustration and loss of writing management and purpose.

**Past and Current Philosophy and Profile of the Lebanese University Writing Center**

A modest number of WCs are currently established in several Lebanese universities where once WLs were a common practice for writing deliberation between students and tutors and work correction. In the past, the WLs have been an essential constituent of higher education globally, providing language and writing support to English second language students. The educational support the WL imparted is much different to the philosophies the twenty-first-century WCbases its philosophical, pedagogical writing processes on. The WL was based on remedial services, and tutors adopted the quick-fix method. The quick fix method was back to basics method where tutors implemented to help students with their grammatical errors and sentences fragmentation (North, 1984).

The common practice between the previous years in Lebanon and WL globally at the university level is that they provided broad tutoring services to students from various academic
sectors at a large tutorial scale. The instruction broadly communicated the targeted framework content, and students’ language needs were managed at a macro scale. Furthermore, one on one tutoring between student and tutor took place through appointed meetings during, after class or the corrected written assignment was picked up by the student without further conferencing. The WL objective was to provide a macro managed planning language framework that was aimed at providing learning support to non-English speaking students, where it focused on more than one particular pedagogical skill at a time (Rafoth, 2015). What is currently observed, encouraged and experienced between tutors and students at a WC is that the philosophical transition a WC adopts now is unlike the previously macro-managed level of language studies that are similar to an academic language syllabus framework.

The Lebanese universities’ that are adopting a modern WC philosophy and objectives are staffed by peer tutors, faculty members or professional writers who are there to guide and support students in their writing. The WC is set up by the university administration to provide students with a safe, non-judgmental learning environment that encourages a one on one approach to instruction and direct a meaningful discussion (Harris & Silva, 1993) around the writing process and experience in order for students to become better writers (North, 1984). In support of this mission, some students at various Lebanese universities the author has instructed at have demonstrated an eagerness to approach the WC but become reluctant users because they do not want to be identified as a member of the “Remedial English” language community. Their assumption as expressed by them that they have a good command of the spoken language and others lack the personal skill of gaining writing ownership because their secondary teachers took full control of their writing process prevents them from seeking writing support. Gillespie and Lerner (2000), explain that the WC should aim to teach students how to become better writers not better at writing as the WL previously did and to encourage the student to be self-reliant in the management of their writing timeline and adopted writing strategies. The WCs at Lebanese universities are aiming at evolving just like most Western universities WC’s, into a student-centred learning space that welcomes inquiry analytical discourse that is encouraged and guided by tutors. They are developing a tutor-student relationship that is non-intrusive and non-judgmental. Tutors are encouraged by WC management to encourage dialogue between students collaboratively and to guide the student to discover effective writing strategies that reflect on their style of writing and to encourage students to move beyond aiming at writing to gain better score results on their assignment. The aim for WC tutors is to provide a tutor-student micro-managed language target skill support that aims to solve language problems that are centred on the student’s language needs one skill at a time (Mackiewicz, 2015) and to empower students in taking control of their work and finding their writing voice and identifying with their audience.

However, what is encouraged philosophical practices at a WC by tutors are not always consistent with students’ expectations from the center. The article accepts these different expectations to be a derivative of students’ experiences with the English language macro-skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing at secondary schooling and being teacher reliant in all aspects of their learning (Bakkar, 2018). Consequently, the EFL student arrives at university with minimal comprehension of the academic writing process and have inherited from their secondary schooling learning skills that conflict with the expectation of tertiary level. Students are instructed...
by their disciplinary instructors to visit a WC to enhance their writing discrepancies in order for them to reach the university’s required academic level.

These tutoring philosophies that are practised in many global WC universities are not always accepted positively by students who are seeking a quick fix to their writing assignment. From my experience, tutors as myself, feel that students’ expectation of the writing session has nothing to do with building their technical writing process but centred on grammar, writing techniques and most importantly to ensure an above-passing grade. They arrive at the WC session to write up their assignment to hand it in on time, and as soon as they finish, they only return to work on a new one. They do not acknowledge the WC as an academic place where they can develop their writing techniques and become a member of their writing community. Hence, due to students misconception of the role of a WC adopts tutors are finding it challenging to manage the language philosophy delivery that is put into place by the WC management. Students place a high responsibility on tutors to take leadership of their writing process and embrace tutors feedback as a definite solution to their writing discrepancies, not as an added value to research and problem-solving.

To better understand the misconception, a Lebanese EFL student at a university level brings with them to the WC, the article delves into the student academic profile and investigates their reasoning behind such misunderstandings.

Discussion
In the following section, I aim to highlight the reasoning behind EFL Lebanese academic students’ misconception of the WC and tutors responsibilities. I reflect on and provide suggestions on the WCs adopted philosophical strategies and practices and the responsibilities of the student towards their academic writing. I approach each recommendation with a heading to raise individual topic awareness, judgement and discussion and to collectively examine the interrelationship and expectations of these topics from WC tutors, course instructors and faculty management.

EFL Lebanese University Students and the WC Tutors
To be able to construct the philosophical aims and objectives of the Lebanese universities WC, tutors and course instructors need to acknowledge students socio-cultural and academic secondary experience within the writing process. The English academic profile of the Lebanese students are of a Multilanguage English level, and this is especially highlighted in the level of academic writing they produce. From observation, students enter university with the expectation that they will receive extensive support in their writing just as they did from their secondary English language teachers. Their academic institutional, cultural habits are transferred with them into higher studies, and to change this mindset has proven on many occasions to be exhausting from an instructors’ position. From experience in delivering writing tutorials to students from various course affiliations, it is encouraged that instructors and WC tutors commit to studying students’ academic profile, English language attained and proficiency in their spoken and written language before they dictate the WCs philosophical aims and objectives to them. The WC adopted ideologies should be attainable and supportive of the tutor's teachings and students learning.
The misconception students have of the WCs role is because they arrive at university with little knowledge of its purposes. The WC is virtually a new concept, and students have not been addressed of its practices and management before their transition into university. Their experience with the writing process is close to the past concepts adopted by the WL tutors, where students work was micro-managed, edited, and grammatical syntax errors are highlighted and corrected with or without their input. The aim is to shift students negative attitude they may have about writing and to encourage them to take ownership of their writing and to become a member of the writing community. According to Hauer (2016), the tutor may highlight lower-order elements such as grammatical and syntax errors but be sensitive as not to overlook higher-order concerns that address thesis focus, purpose, audience, organization and development. Furthermore, some students do not take university-tutor students seriously because academic statuses in Lebanon is part of their culture. I have had to on several occasions introduced the student tutors as competent and professional as other the WC tutors are and that their knowledge of the WC philosophy and objectives are comparable to their colleagues.

To alter students understanding of the WCs as a writing tutoring centre, course instructors and WC tutors need to reform students acceptance of a WC role. Students need to accept it as a place where they take command of their writing process, and that tutors are available to guide them in the writing discourse where and when needed and not to take control of the writing as to eliminate their writer’s voice. They should understand that tutors are not there to evaluate their work; and that they should not put the responsibility on the tutor in micromanaging their final writing piece as a production of the final product before submission. In the process of achieving this, tutors along with student-peers presenters, brochures and online websites could students understand its aims and practices and accept the fundamental philosophy of a WC, whereby they experience the WC environment in a nonintrusive way where learning is encouraged through negotiation and an analytical mindset.

The multifaced profile a WC tutor’s role occupies where a student is concerned should be clarified. Negotiation between course instructors, WC tutors and students on the management of students work should be an initiated practice from the beginning. Student’s comprehension of the role a WC delivers is of language support, negotiation, planning, and micro-managing the technicalities of specific language skills. The tutor is there to instruct and guide but not to eliminate the students writing voice.

The WC tutor can go further as to encourage the student to publish their writing on the WC website as to inspire other students to take up writing independently and gain a better understanding of its aims and objectives. The advantage of having students publish their work is to promote undergraduate peer review, improve their multi-disciplinary research skills and to write for journal publishing post-graduation.

The Transition between Secondary School into Higher Education

The collaboration between universities WCs and secondary schools in Lebanon is still at its infancy stage. Most schools in Lebanon with the exemption of three are not aware of the WC philosophy, strategies or practices. If secondary students are to be part of this academic writing community before entering university, then misconception of the WC and tutors expectation could
be avoided. This misconception can be evaded when universities WC tutors and secondary schools instructors consider working together in creating writing workshops and providing an in schools WC environment that practices the same philosophies and strategies that are implemented at university.

From personal observation during my teachings at university, students were introduced to the WCs offerings only after they received a poor result on their essay, and by that time, most of the academic term had lapsed. It is advisable, and I know that most universities are aware of this, that at the initial stage of entering university students should be presented with a tutorial on the WCs arrangements, philosophy and expectations from them and the tutors. Students need to be encouraged by their course instructors to attend the WC regularly not only when they have an essay to produce but to become a member of a writing community that offers writing support in a variety of topics and fields. From extensive years of experience in teaching Lebanese students, I have witnessed how much they are grade driven. Therefore, in agreement with course instructors and faculty management, a small grade can be allocated to students that are frequent members of the WC community. This grade can act as an incentive for students who are seeking to enhance their GPA grades.

**Course Instructors and Faculty Management**

The culture and reiterated nuance by students on the nature and processes of the WC at the Lebanese university level can no longer be ignored. Faculty management, course instructors and WC tutors are equally responsible for altering students’ misconceptions of the purpose of the WC. Instructors and tutors must initiate conferencing with students to draw students’ attention to its existence, aims and objectives and how they can benefit from its services. In order to see substantive change in the students’ mindset, ongoing in-class and online discussion that reflects the existing students writing community should take place. Course instructor’s role should not be limited to the teaching of the course material but to also encourage students in their writing process and to help them discover their writing techniques. It is recommended that instructors express their expectations from their students and value that their students are of an EFL background and that their English language level is most likely not to a global academic level. The course instructor cannot overlook their responsibility towards the student in the writing discourse and needs to acknowledge that what is expected of them towards their student is different from that of a WC tutor. The course instructor is compelled to highlight rules that concentrate on higher thinking order such as the principles of academic writing discipline, research, referencing and provide a critical assessment on students writing progress. Different to that of an instructor, the WC tutor is encouraged to remain neutral in their assessment, not to evaluate students work and highlight useful writing techniques and habits, and encourage students to adopt personal writing strategies that reflect on their audience and writing voice (North, 1984). Students should not expect the WC tutor and their course instructor’s responsibilities towards their writing assignment to be at par, hence, all should engage in the conversation of separating responsibilities in order to achieve as North noted the “concept of a WC and its philosophy”, and to prevent miscommunication and management between all members.

The author has always made it a point to educate themselves and encourage other instructors on the learning techniques and language discrepancies EFL students’ face in the
language classroom as to adopt strategies and instructions that promote effectual long term learning that supports students’ academic writing. It is encouraged that WCs hire trained EFL tutors but as reiterated by faculty management lack of financial funding does not make it feasible. In such circumstances, instructors and tutors should be trained on how to accommodate students learning in an EFL setting, acquiring the academic English language courses in the EMI. According to Kiedaisch and Dinitz (2007), tutors being familiar with students’ language needs and can provide language writing assistance and empathy is an essential element towards ensuring students effective learning outcome. Furthermore, instructors encouragement for students to seek directed writing assistance from the WC tutors should not be based on personal value but on assisting them in learning the techniques of research and conventions of writing; understanding the value of becoming a member of the writing community and becoming aware of their writing and reading audience.

It is an added benefit to the WC tutors to have a shared link of the faculties’ syllabus across all academic disciplines in order to be theoretically aware of the literature and thesis topics students are working on. Furthermore, collaborated learning provides integrated conceptual understanding of the assignment’s aims and objectives, motivates organized discussion between student and WC tutor and in the case of a peer tutoring, the tutor will appear more knowledgeable and experienced hence, as Forman and Cazden (1985) highlighted removing any existing peer doubt and inhibition between the two.

Another way of changing students’ misconception of the WC is for faculty management to provide students with an appealing learning environment that encourages students to enter frequently. What I have frequently observed is that the smallest, dullest room with an inefficient number of tutors are provided. Tutors are unable to timetable a large number of students and students are unsuccessful in booking a follow-up session with the tutors before submitting their writing assignment. Consequently, students fail to receive further negotiated writing support and feedback. They voice a contradiction in the WCs stated philosophy and practices, hence, maintaining a negative perception of the WCs theorization and operations.

Conclusion

One cannot deny that the WC in Lebanon as it is globally, has evolved extensively since the making of the WLs. The philosophical discourse that once encouraged tutor control and focused on editing, grammar and citation now champion students through mentoring on content, organisation and voice and through becoming comfortable in the writing discourse discipline. It should be encouraged that students should not see the WC as a last “stop shop”, “quick fix” service to solving their writing problems but as a tutorial service environment that supports their writing journey. A WC where attention is drawn towards the students, initiating tutor-student conferencing, creating a personalized writing plan and adopting a writing strategy that develops their writing voice.

Furthermore, when the WCs philosophical technicalities are made manifest through theory and practice, then students perspective on the role a WC holds may change. The conflicting understanding of the purpose behind the WC and the functions of the tutor where a student is concerned is a conversation university administration, lecturers and tutors should have to provide
clear policy guidelines of the WC and the expectations of the students from the tutors. Through this process, it is hoped that the misguided conception that a WC provides as a paper drop off services, and complete editing and rewrite of the paper is erased. Conjointly, fundamental issues are discussed on how to create a WC that services EFL students who are acquiring the English language at an academic level in the EMI. Ongoing discussion between faculty management and course instructors with WC tutors on the expectations from students writing and academic research is encouraged as to ensure students support and awareness of current global academic EFL practices that they can compare to past theories and adapt to their current student's academic needs.

In conclusion, the existence of the WC philosophy and objective at the university level in Lebanon in an EFL environment is a new shared practice amongst tutors and students. The article encourages, WC tutors and faculty management and instructors to reflect on past research and current adopted strategies by international universities in an ESL and EFL context and become a member of conferences similar to the ones held by MENAWC on the role a WC plays in supporting students writing from other MENA universities whose native language is Arabic and academic instruction is in the EMI. When observing other universities conferencing on their adopted WC instruction and how students are progressing in the elements of writing, we narrow the gap between theory, research and practices (North, 1984) and work on transferring students’ misconception of the WC and becoming a member of the writing community.

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References
Morphological Awareness and Vocabulary Knowledge among English Language Learners

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Abstract
This study aims to tackle an answer to the main question; if there is a relationship between the vocabulary size of adult English language learners and their morphological awareness and if their performance would differ in word complexity. The participants were 90 senior BA English Language and Literature students from Jordanian universities. The two empirical research tools were the Vocabulary Size Test and Morphological Awareness Test. The results revealed the mid-frequent level vocabulary size of the participants, and they were unable to form and use new words using morphemes. A positive correlation between the vocabulary size of the participants and their morphological awareness existed. Besides, a positive relationship existed between their performance on word complexity and their morphological knowledge. Pedagogical solutions need to be implanted in English as a Second Language (ESL)/English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes.

Keywords: English as a Foreign Language, morphological awareness, vocabulary knowledge, vocabulary size

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1. Introduction
Vocabulary is a fundamental linguistic element that affects language learning; as limited vocabulary knowledge has always been a source of lexical disfluency for second or foreign language learners. As maintained by Zimmerman (2005), a strong significant relationship exists between the vocabulary size of language learners and their language competency. Lack of adequate vocabulary is one of the main obstacles that ESL/EFL students encounter, which obstructs their text comprehension (Levine & Reves, 1990). Read (2004) adds that a sufficient number of acquired lexical items lead to good language production.

Thus, an essential part of language learning is language learning strategies used by L2 learners to improve their learning process (Cohen, 2007; Oxford, 2002). Vocabulary learning strategies applied by ESL/EFL learners are regarded as learning strategies. Vocabulary learning strategies are strategies employed by language learners to acquire, to retain, to regain, and to use vocabulary (O’Malley & Chamot, 1995; Schmitt, 200; Schmitt & McCarthy, 1997). Schmitt (1997) indicates that second language (L2) learners could enhance their vocabulary when they are directed to use vocabulary learning strategies in learning a language. The sources for language learners to learn new words are the morphology and context according to Carlisle (2007).

Morphological awareness is considered a metalinguistic tool for learners to use words effectively (Scott & Nagy, 2004). Yücel-Koç (2015) classifies morphological awareness as a subdivision of metalinguistic knowledge. The use of morphological awareness is one possible vocabulary learning strategy applied by ESL/EFL learners as it enhances their lexical knowledge (Wysocki & Jenkins, 1987). Such knowledge can be developed when they become familiar with word-formation to implement morphological processing, which is adding affixes (prefixes or suffixes) to base words. Several studies have recommended the use of morphological clues as decoding the parts of new words by ESL/EFL students to help them understand the meaning of new words (McBride-Chang et al. 2005; Morin, 2003; Nation, 2001). With the intention of learning and developing the vocabulary of ESL/EFL students, specific attention has to be paid to the use of morphological awareness. As well, morphological awareness will enhance in reading and understanding academic vocabulary by English language learners (Kieffer & DiFelice Box, 2013; Yücel-Koç, 2015; Crosson et al., 2018).

Morphological awareness implies a conscious knowledge of the skill of using free or bound morphemes a of language, in addition to derivational and inflectional morphemes (Deacon & Kirby 2004; Deacon, Kirby, & Casselman-Bell, 2009; Kirby et al., 2012; Kuo and Anderson, 2006). When ESL/EFL learners are aware of English inflectional morphology, this improves their grammatical accuracy. Besides, their awareness of English derivational morphology will promote their lexical knowledge. Koda and Zehler (2008) consider morphological awareness a part of language learners’ comprehension of new words by fragmenting complex words into their meaningful parts and assembling their meaningful parts into the new lexicon. As maintained by Kuo and Anderson (2006), morphological awareness resembles language learners’ knowledge of the process of words formation of a particular language. For example, when English language learners recognize the word development is formed of two morphemes (develop, base word, and the suffix -ment meaning the action or result of), subsequently, they will be able to form new lexical items such as retirement, establishment, and abandonment by adding the suffix -ment to
base words. Consecutively, their comprehension of new words can influence their understanding of reading texts and writing in that language. Several studies have concluded that morphological awareness might be a cornerstone in first language L1 and L2 vocabulary development and reading (see Kuo & Anderson, 2006; Zhang & Koda, 2012). Considerable studies have investigated the practical relationship between morphological awareness and vocabulary knowledge of native-speaking children (see Carlisle & Fleming, 2003; McBride-Chang et al., 2005).

2. Review of Related Literature
Several studies determined that morphological awareness is an indicator of some language abilities which include reading abilities (see Deacon & Kirby, 2004; Kuo & Anderson, 2006), writing skills (see Qian, 2002), and vocabulary growth (see Nagy & Anderson, 1984; Wysocki & Jenkins, 1987). The following section will shed light on a few studies which examined the relationship between morphological awareness of first language or second language learners and their vocabulary growth or size.

First, Bertram, Laine, and Virkkla (2000) investigated the morphological role of learning vocabulary by Finnish elementary school children. They concluded that the more frequent Finnish elementary school children learned affixes, their vocabulary developed more, and they were able to discover the meanings of words.

Next is the study of Wysocki and Jenkins (1987). It examined the ability of school children of 5th, 6th, and 8th grades to use their vocabulary knowledge of morphological analysis to comprehend L1 complex lexical items. The researchers provided the students with a practice session two weeks before they took the test. The first group applied morphological analysis to learn words, while the second group learned words without implementing any morphological analysis strategy. They found that students who applied morphological analysis in learning vocabulary achieved better results than the other party who did not implement the strategy. Additionally, the first party was able to comprehend meanings of new words by morphological speculation of those words having the same roots.

As for Iranian English language learners, Khodadoust et al. (2013) investigated the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and morphological awareness of 89 undergraduate students studying English Translation. The scholars utilized two measuring tools: The Vocabulary levels Test by Nation (1990) to measure the vocabulary size of the participants and the Morphological Awareness Test by McBride-Chang et al. (2005) to measure their morphological awareness. They found a positive correlation between their participants’ vocabulary size and morphological awareness. They recommended some pedagogical recommendations such as language instructors using morphological analysis in helping students learning vocabulary in the classroom. Besides, as the outcomes indicated the positive effect of morphological awareness on the growth of the participants’ vocabulary, so it was recommended to include morphological activities in textbooks. Language instructors have to include the systemic and analytic aspects of morphological awareness in the classes to increase the students’ vocabulary and morphological knowledge. On the other hand, they suggested more research to be conducted to investigate the difference in language learning performance between male and female in language learners.
Akbulut (2017) examined the connection between morphological awareness and lexical knowledge of 52 Turkish university students attending ESL introductory classes. The students were divided into experimental group and control group. Both groups took a pre-test which consisted of Nation’s (2001) Vocabulary Levels Test and Morphological Awareness Test, Part 1. After 12 weeks of vocabulary teaching for both groups, they took a post-test of the Vocabulary Levels Test and Morphological Awareness Test, Part 2. The experimental group was instructed for three hours per week morphological knowledge and morphological analysis of lexical items. Whereas, the control group was instructed for three hours of regular vocabulary teaching methods as memorizing strategies and using dictionaries. Based on the outcomes, a significant positive correlation existed between morphological awareness and vocabulary size of the participants. The experimental group scored higher on the tests than the control group after 12 weeks of morphological instruction. This outcome signifies that morphological awareness can motivate students and help them to learn English vocabulary.

Long and Rule (2004) and Alsaeedi’s (2017) conclusions were the same as Akbulut’s (2017). Their outcomes revealed that ESL/EFL learners could develop their lexical knowledge by using morphological analyses as opposed to regular vocabulary teaching methodologies.

Although limited research conducted with Arab ESL or EFL learners, the relationship between morphological analysis and vocabulary knowledge has been revealed. Al Farsi’s (2008) study deducted the inverse of this relationship. It inspected the relationship between vocabulary knowledge and morphological awareness among 54 Omani EFL undergraduate students. The testing instruments were the Vocabulary Levels Test by Nation (2001) and the Morphological Awareness Test by McBride-Chang et al. (2005). The findings showed that there was no relationship between the participants’ vocabulary knowledge and their morphological awareness. Moreover, the vocabulary size and morphological awareness of the participants were limited. Conversely, Alsaeedi’s (2017) study concerning Saudi EFL undergraduate students and Yasin and Jawad (2015) regarding Iraqi EFL postgraduate students revealed the association between the vocabulary knowledge of the students and their morphological awareness.

Several studies have exhibited a positive association between vocabulary knowledge and morphological awareness. There is a deficiency in the literature regarding the lack of studies conducted on Jordanian ESL or EFL learners. Moreover, no study was found using the Vocabulary Size Test (Nation & Beglar, 2007) to measure the vocabulary knowledge and size of students as this utilized in this study.

3. Purpose of the Study
Research has divulged the significance of morphological awareness in enhancing the vocabulary knowledge of language learners (See Carlisle, 2010; McBride-Chang et al., 2005; Morin, 2003; Schiff & Calif, 2007). As stated by Carlisle (2010), "students do become more able to infer the meanings of unfamiliar words after receiving instruction in morphological analysis" (p. 466). There is a correlation between morphological awareness and learners’ lexical development due to morphological awareness that involves recognition of the words' meaning and orthography; consequently, learners will be able to identify words inevitably (McBride-Chang et al., 2008;
Zhang & Koda 2012). Moreover, morphological awareness contributes significantly to L1 vocabulary knowledge, according to Yücel-Koç (2015).

Nevertheless, not many studies have been executed on the impact of morphological awareness on vocabulary in L2 learning (see Akbulut, 2017; Migel, 2012; Yücel-Koç, 2015; Zhang & Koda, 2012). Hence, there is a need for more examinations to delve into the role of morphological awareness in expanding vocabulary in L2. The purpose of the present study is to inspect the relationship between adult English foreign language learners’ morphological awareness and their respective vocabulary size. The findings are expected to provide valuable pedagogical implementations to improve vocabulary learning at the university level.

4. Research Questions
This research is an attempt to answer the main question of the study: Is there a relationship between the morphological awareness of BA students from Jordanian universities studying English Language and Literature and their vocabulary knowledge?
The research questions addressed in this study are:
1. What is the English vocabulary size of the participants of the study?
2. What level of English morphological awareness do these participants possess?
3. Is there a relationship between the participants’ English morphological awareness and their English vocabulary size?
4. Does English morphological awareness differentiate between the participants’ performance on the complex word and simple words of the VST?

5. Methodology
5.1. Participants
The participants of this study were senior university students from three private Jordanian universities studying BA English Language and Literature. The participants were 90 students chosen randomly from third and fourth-year students. The participants' age ranged between 19 and 25, and all were native Arabic speakers and had been learning English as a foreign language for at least 12 years. The participants’ gender was not considered although 18 males and 72 females students were represented in the study. They were tested in their universities in the First Term of the 2018-2019 academic year.

5.2. Research Instruments
Two tests were applied to answer the research questions of the study. The first test was the Vocabulary Size Test (Nation & Beglar, 2007). It was adapted as it is widely used, and it functions reliably and constantly, and its results are easy to score and interpret. The second test was the Morphological Awareness Test with its two subtests: The Morphological Structure Test (Synthetic Aspect) and the Morphemes Identification Test (Analytic Aspects) (McBride-Chang et al., 2005).

5.2.1. The Vocabulary Size Test
With the aim to assess the participants’ vocabulary size, the Vocabulary Size Test (VST) by Nation and Beglar (2007) was utilized. The test measures the vocabulary size of English language learners based on 14,000-word families extracted from the British National Corpus. Beglar (2010) validated the test using Rasch analysis based on Messick’s (1995) validation framework.
Moreover, the test is a reliable measuring instrument of the vocabulary size of non-native speakers of English (Beglar, 2010; Nation & Beglar, 2007). Although the English monolingual version of the test has gained momentum, the bilingual versions of it have been extensively utilized. The multiple-choice options of the items are in the native language of test-takers such as Japanese, Russian, Vietnamese, Mandarin, and Persian. (See Elgort, 2013; Karami, 2012; Nguyen & Nation 2011; Stewart, 2009; Zhao & Ji, 2016).

The VST consists of 14 vocabulary frequency level, composing of 140 multiple-choice items, with ten from each 1,000-word family level. The frequency levels are arranged in frequency order; the first 1000-word level comprises the most frequent word families, and the 14,000-word level contains the least frequent word families. The total vocabulary size of a learner is obtained by multiplying the overall score of a learner by 100.

The VST is an applicable diagnostic test used by language instructors to identify the vocabulary size of their students and which word-frequency level they need to target. Furthermore, the test is useful for research purposes to measure total written vocabulary size for learners of the English language (Beglar, 2010; Nation & Beglar, 2007; Nguyen & Nation, 2011).

The VST used in the present study was modified by having half of the items (five items) complex words, and the other half simple words at each level. The reason for this was to inspect the relationship between morphological awareness and the participants’ performance in simple words versus complex ones. Complex words are created by adding some morphemes to test items.

5.2.2. Morphological Awareness Test
The Morphological Awareness Test by McBride-Chang et al. (2005) was used to test the participants’ morphological knowledge. This test is composed of two parts: Morpheme Identification Awareness Test (Analytic Aspects) and Morphological Structural Awareness Test (Synthetic Aspects).

5.2.2.1. Morpheme Identification Test (Analytic Aspect)
The Morphemes Identification Test gauges the participants’ ability to analyze and break down complex words into smaller units, for example, *adulthood = adult + hood*. In the present study, the participants were given 13 decontextualized items that were diverged from the items of the original Morpheme Identification Test to harmonize with the participants’ age. The participants were asked to write the meaning of each morpheme. Then they were required to segment the words into as many smaller meaningful units as they can identify in each word. The words were out of context as to restrict the potential influence of context in guessing the meanings of words. The morphemes were neutral, in terms of no phonological and orthographical changes were caused to the stem.

The total score of Morpheme Identification Test is 33: three inflectional affixes, 13 derivational affixes, 17 stems in total. The overall score stands for the maximum number of possible morphemes in the test item.
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5.2.2.2. Morphological Structure Test (Synthetic Aspect)
The Morphological Structure Test measures students’ morphological ability to synthesize morphemes to produce new words. For instance, the word *write* could be attached to many morphemes, such as *writer*, *writing*, and *rewrite*. A modified version of the Morphological Structure Test was used to make the test more appropriate for university students. The test consists of 14 items: nine inflectional affixes, three derivational affixes, and 23 stems. The items are embedded in a sentence frame to inspect two elements: First, the students’ level of awareness of lexical structure, second to inspect the relationships between words and how words relate to each other in a sentence. The participants were required to use the frame sentence to create a new word to complete the next sentence.

The total score of Morphological Structure Test is 35 points that signify the maximum number of possible morphemes in the test item.

5.3. Data Collection Procedure
The participants of the study were 90 BA students of English Language and Literature from three Jordanian universities. Data were collected in the participants’ classes during the third week of the first term of the 2018-2019 academic year. The tests were carried out on different days to minimize fatigue. The Vocabulary Size Test was administered first to determine the participants’ vocabulary size. After two days, The Morphological Awareness Test, with its two subtests (The Morphemes Identification Test and the Morphological Structure Test) were administered to inspect the participants’ morphological analytic and synthetic abilities. The participants were instructed for each test, and there was no time limit for the participants to complete the tests.

5.4. Data Analysis
The descriptive statistics and corresponding correlations were used to analyze the quantitative collected data of this study. Mean and standard deviation are used to summarize: the results of the Morpheme Identification Test, the Morphological Structure Test, and the Vocabulary Size Test.

Spearman’s rho was used for the collected data to assess: First, the students’ morphological knowledge. Second, the relationship between the students’ vocabulary size and their morphological awareness. Finally, to find if the morphological awareness differentiates between the students’ performance on complex versus simple words.

6. Results
6.1. Vocabulary Size Test
The VST consists of fourteen levels in which each level comprises of ten items, making the overall number of items 140 and the total score is 140 points. The Kuder-Richardson 21 (KR-21) formula was applied in assessing the reliability of the total items of the VST (140 items), which the reliability value is 0.812 ($\alpha = 0.812$). This result indicates that the test is a reliable measuring instrument of vocabulary size. The first question of the research was answered based on the students’ performance on the VST.

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the students’ mean scores for the VST on each level. It displays a decline in the students’ mean scores from level 1 to level 14. The highest mean
scores were for the first level (M= 8.65) and the second level (7.47) as those are the highest frequency words in English. Whereas the lowest mean score (M= 0.64) was for the 14,000 words because they are the least frequently used words in English. The students attained higher mean scores for the first seven levels (level 1 – level 7) and lower mean scores for the second seven levels (level 8 – level 14). In general, the mean scores decreased from the first seven levels to the next second seven levels. Accordingly, students perform better on the higher frequency words than the lower frequency words, as they are acquainted with high-frequency words more often.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for scores on each level of the Vocabulary Size Test for all Students (N = 90)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of VST</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First 1000</td>
<td>8.65</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>7 - 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second 1000</td>
<td>7.47</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>6 - 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third 1000</td>
<td>6.81</td>
<td>1.99</td>
<td>3 - 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth 1000</td>
<td>5.93</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2 - 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth 1000</td>
<td>5.06</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>1 - 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth 1000</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>1 - 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh 1000</td>
<td>3.73</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>0 - 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eighth 1000</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>1 - 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ninth 1000</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>0 - 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenth 1000</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>0 - 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleventh 1000</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>0 - 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twelfth 1000</td>
<td>1.43</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>0 - 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thirteenth 1000</td>
<td>1.62</td>
<td>1.51</td>
<td>0 - 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourteenth 1000</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>0 - 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 1st 7 levels</td>
<td>4,204</td>
<td>13.16</td>
<td>20 - 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total 2nd 7 levels</td>
<td>1,361</td>
<td>15.83</td>
<td>1 - 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall score</td>
<td>5,565</td>
<td>28.99</td>
<td>21 - 107</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following calculations were made to gauge the vocabulary size of the students. As there are ten items sampled at each 1,000 word-family level, each item in the test is representative of the
knowledge of 100 word-families. The students’ mean scores on the test were multiplied by 100 to estimate the vocabulary size at each level. The total vocabulary size that makes the overall vocabulary size of the students is 5,565 word-families (students’ vocabulary size falls within this level).

6.2. Morphological Awareness Test
Morphological Awareness Test is divided into two sub-tests: The Morpheme Identification Test (Analytic Aspect) and Morphological Structure Test (Synthetic Aspect). The reliability of the morphological awareness tests was calculated by using Cronbach’s alpha, as presented in Table 2. The reliability of the Morphological Awareness Test of the total test items (27 items) inclusive of both subtests was 0.881 ($\alpha = 0.881$) indicating that the test is reliable. The coefficient reliability for both subtests was obtained separately by using Cronbach’s alpha. The Analytic Aspect was reliable at 0.853 ($\alpha = 0.853$), and the Synthetic Aspect was reliable at 0.901 ($\alpha = 0.901$). In general, the students’ scores in the Morphological Awareness Test are reliable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Reliability for the Morphological Awareness Tests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instruments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morphological Awareness Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morpheme Identification Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morphological Structure Test</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To answer the second research question to determine the degree of the students’ morphological knowledge, descriptive statistics for the mean scores obtained from the students’ performances on the Morphological Awareness Test with its two sub-tests: The Morpheme Identification Test (Analytic Aspect) and Morphological Structure Test (Synthetic Aspect).

As for a general comparison between the students’ scores of the Morpheme Identification Test (Analytic Aspect) and their scores of the Morphological Structure Test (Synthetic Aspect), their mean scores indicate a significant difference between their results in both tests as it is represented in Table 3. There was a significant difference in the scores for the Morpheme Identification Test (Analytic Aspect) ($M=23.87$, $SD=7.34$) and the scores of the Morphological Structure Test (Synthetic Aspect) ($M=17.86$, $SD=10.26$). The overall mean score of the Morphological Awareness Test was 41.21 out of 68 with a significant dispersion among the results ($SD=11.79$), which implies that the students have intermediate awareness of word formation rules. The findings have shown that the students’ morphological awareness was medium (69%).
**Table 3. Descriptive statistics for Analytic, Synthetic, and Morphological Awareness Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analytic Aspect</td>
<td>23.87</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>7.34</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthetic Aspect</td>
<td>17.86</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10.26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morphological Awareness Test</td>
<td>41.21</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>11.79</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of Table 4 show a direct and significant relationship between the scores of students on the Analytic Aspect and their scores on the Synthetic Aspect. It can be noticed that the correlation index was very significant ($r = 0.651$, $p < 0.05$); it represents a positive correlation between analytic knowledge and synthetic knowledge.

**Table 4. Spearman’s Rho for Analytic and Synthetic Tests**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Analytic Aspect</th>
<th>Synthetic Aspect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spearman’s rho</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytic Aspect</td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthetic Aspect</td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>.651**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

The students’ knowledge of inflectional, derivational affixes, and stems were obtained to gain more perception of the students’ morphological knowledge. One point was given for each morpheme in this test, which makes the total score 68. The total number of morphemes were: three inflectional affixes, 13 derivational affixes and 17 stems in the Analytic Aspect section, while three derivational affixes, nine inflectional affixes and 23 stems in the Synthetic Aspect section.

**Table 5. Means for students’ scores in Inflectional, Derivational and Stems of Analytic and Synthetic Aspects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Inflectional</th>
<th>Derivational</th>
<th>Stem</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Analytic Aspect</td>
<td>M 1.48</td>
<td>M 10.56</td>
<td>M 12.23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It can be indicated from Table 5 that the students’ scores were better in inflectional affixes in both the Analytic Aspect (M= 10.56, SD = 1.85) and Synthetic Aspect (M= 8.07, SD= 1.014) than their scores in derivational affixes in the Analytic Aspect (M= 1.48, SD= 0.601) and Synthetic Aspect (M= 1.53, SD= 0.623) of Morphological Awareness Test. Furthermore, the students’ performance was relatively good on the Synthetic Aspect stems (M= 15.58, SD= 2.961), and the Analytic Aspect stems (M= 12.23, SD= 1.973) of the test.

6.3. Morphological Awareness Test and its Relationship to the Vocabulary Size Test
The correlation coefficient between the students’ morphological awareness and their vocabulary size was calculated using Spearman’s rho to answer the third research question. The mean scores of the VST, overall Morphological Awareness Test, and the two Morphological Awareness tests for the students were correlated to measure the strength of association between the variables. The significance of correlations is reported as a one-tail p-value as it is presumed that positive relationships exist between morphological awareness and vocabulary size of the students. The values of the correlation according to Ratner’s (2011) interpretation were interpreted as follows: 0 – 0.3 (weak), 0.3 – 0.7 (moderate), and 0.7 – 1.0 (strong).

Table 6. Spearman’s Rho for students’ Vocabulary Size, Overall Morphological Awareness Test, and Analytic and Synthetic Aspects (N= 90)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>VST</th>
<th>Analytic Aspect</th>
<th>Synthetic Aspect</th>
<th>Morphological Awareness Test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VST</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>.571 **</td>
<td>.509 **</td>
<td>.461 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytic Aspect</td>
<td>.571 **</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Synthetic Aspect</td>
<td>.509 **</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morphological</td>
<td>.461 **</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness Test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the .05 level (1-tail)**

The outcomes of Table 6 reveal that the Morphological Awareness Test, the Analytic, and Synthetic Aspects were significantly correlated with the vocabulary size of the students. The strength of association, however, was a moderate correlation (r = 0.571, 0.509, 0.461, p < 0.05). The correlation of the Morpheme Identification Test (Analytic Aspect) and VST means (r= .571, p < 0.05) was slightly higher compared to the Morphological Structure Test (Synthetic Aspect) and the VST means (r= .509, p < 0.05). This outcome denotes that the two tests assessed different kinds of morphological knowledge.
6.4. The Morphological Awareness Test and Complex vs. Simple Words on the VST

The students’ performance on the Morphological Awareness Test and their performance on simple vs. complex words on the VST have been scrutinized to answer the fourth research question. Table 7 presents the descriptive statistics of the students’ performance in simple vs. complex words of the first seven levels and the second seven levels of the VST. The students obtained better average scores in simple words than complex words, mainly at the first seven levels (M=10.25, SD=2.68). In contrast, their lowest average scores were scored on complex words at the second seven levels (M = 2.90, SD =2.61).

Table 7. Descriptive statistics for the students’ scores on simple words vs. complex words for the Vocabulary Size Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of VST</th>
<th>Simple words</th>
<th>Complex words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total 1st 7 levels</strong></td>
<td>Mean 10.25</td>
<td>Mean 8.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 2.68</td>
<td>SD 3.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minimum 29</td>
<td>Minimum 22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maximum 35</td>
<td>Maximum 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total 2nd 7 levels</strong></td>
<td>Mean 5.39</td>
<td>Mean 2.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SD 2.37</td>
<td>SD 2.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minimum 3</td>
<td>Minimum 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maximum 30</td>
<td>Maximum 21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The outcomes of Table 8 display the correlation coefficient between simple vs. complex words of the VST and the Morphological Awareness Test.

Table 8. Spearman’s Rho for simple vs complex words of the VST and Analytic and Synthetic Aspects (N 90)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>VST</th>
<th>Simple words</th>
<th>Complex words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spearman’s rho</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total 1st 7 levels</strong></td>
<td>Analytic Aspect</td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Synthetic Aspect</td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total 2nd 7 levels</strong></td>
<td>Analytic Aspect</td>
<td>Correlation Coefficient</td>
<td>.637**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It can be deducted from Table 8 that a positive and significant correlation exists between simple vs. complex words of the VST and the two subtests of the Morphological Awareness Test. The students’ performance on simple words vs complex words at the first and second seven levels is positively correlated with their performance on the Analytic and Synthetic Aspects. On the whole, this significant association of the students’ performance on both subtests of the Morphological Awareness Test make a distinction between their performance on simple vs. complex words.

7. Discussion
The present study aims to detect the relationship between morphological awareness and the vocabulary size of adult English foreign language learners. Four research questions were answered to determine this relationship; the results of these questions are discussed in the following sections.

7.1. Vocabulary Size
The first research question of the study regarding the students’ vocabulary size was investigated using the Vocabulary Size Test (VST) by Nation and Beglar (2007). The test is available from the following website www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/about/staff/paul-nation. As indicated by Nation and Meara (2002), a correlation exists between the number of words language learners know, as measured by the vocabulary tests, and how well they present their reading, writing, and speaking English abilities. Moreover, vocabulary size manipulates the types of reading material that language learners can easily read. Laufer (1997) confirms that a lacking number of words in the second language learner’s vocabulary comprises a hindrance to efficient reading.

The current students’ performance on the VST indicated that they performed better at the first seven levels (1-7) than the second seven levels (8-14). Their performance was better on the high-frequency words than the low-frequency words. The overall vocabulary size of the students was 5,565-word families. According to Nation’s (2016) classification of frequency levels, their vocabulary size can be considered as mid-frequent level. The three main frequency levels are high-frequency level (1000-2000 word families), mid-frequency level (3000-9000 word families), and low-frequency level (10000 on word families).

Nation and Beglar (2007) imply that the outcomes of earlier studies utilized the VST disclosed the vocabulary size of 5,000-6,000-word families of undergraduate non-native English speakers studying at English-speaking universities. Likewise, non-native postgraduate (Ph.D.) students need the vocabulary size of around 9,000 word-families. Such results denote that learners need to obtain a specific vocabulary size before handling a text without difficulty. Hu and Nation (2000), moreover, advise that learners need to be familiarized with 98% of the words in the text at any level to understand it. Furthermore, Nation (2006) assumes that learners’ vocabulary size of around 8,000-9,000 word families is expected to achieve sufficient perception of 98% written text coverage, and their vocabulary size of 6,000-7,000 word families is required to understand 98% spoken coverage. Contrariwise, Laufer and Ravenhorst-Kalovski’s (2010) recommend two
distinctive lexical thresholds for the probable text coverage at which most learners can understand. Learners’ vocabulary size of 8,000-9,000-word families is the ideal threshold to comprehend 98% of written text coverage. Whereas their vocabulary size of around 5,000-word families is the minimum threshold required to understand 95% of spoken coverage. However, the vocabulary size needed for learners to understand conversational English is about 3,000-word families (Adolphs & Schmitt, 2003). According to corpus-based studies, learners are required to acquire a large vocabulary size for reading comprehension larger than what is needed for understanding listening English. Additionally, less frequent vocabulary contributes to a nominal percentage of text coverage (Nation, 2006; Stæhr, 2008).

Thinking about 98% coverage of text as indicated by corpus-based studies, the students’ vocabulary size in the present study demonstrates that their vocabulary size is below 8000-word families necessitated for receptive tasks as understanding written texts. Considering the students’ limited vocabulary knowledge, they will not be able to handle and understand diversified challenging oral and printed texts such as academic texts and novels. A demand for planned teaching and learning and a variety of reading opportunities are required due to the students’ moderate vocabulary size. Students, therefore, need more prospects for learning vocabulary with different frequency levels to improve their vocabulary knowledge as it is vital for their academic achievements. As stated by Nation (2001), vocabulary learning strategies can be applied by language instructors to start teaching language students high-frequency words and then progress to low-frequency words.

The vocabulary size of students should be gauged with the purpose to detect the expected number of words to accomplish essential assignments at the university level. Students need to obtain good vocabulary size, so they will be able to understand and infer different written English texts as a part of their study. Hence, increasing their vocabulary size should be their primary focus.

7.2. Morphological Awareness
The second research question of this study examined the students’ morphological awareness. The answer to this question was based on the students’ performance on the Morphological Awareness Test with its two subtests: The Morphological Structure Test (Synthetic Aspects) and the Morphemes Identification Test (Analytic Aspects) by (McBride-Chang et al., 2005).

The outcomes have revealed that the students’ overall morphological awareness was medium (69%). This outcome demonstrates the students’ inadequate competency to deal with the morphological structure of words. Language learner’s morphological awareness could be counted as a good indicator of vocabulary knowledge (Goodwin et al., 2013; Mahnoosh et al., 2017; McBride -Change et al., 2005). Besides, students performed better in the Analytic Aspect (M=23.87) than they did in the Synthetic Aspect (M= 17.86). Their low performance in the Synthetic Aspect exposes their incapability to use and form new words utilizing free and bound morphemes. According to Bloom’s taxonomy- cognitive domain (1956), synthesis necessitates more highly developed skills than analysis. Taking this into consideration, it explains the students’ low performance in the synthesizing morphological structure.
The students’ results were higher in inflectional affixes than their results in derivational affixes in both subtests of Morphological Awareness Test. These results are incompatible with the findings of the study by Varatharajoo et al. (2015). Such an outcome is in agreement with Carlisle and Stone’s (2003) inference that points towards language learners’ acquisition of inflection before their acquisition of derivation. As the students of this study were native Arabic speakers, the typological differences between the Arabic language and the English language might have been a reason for the students’ inability not being able to identify the morphological structure of complex words.

Referring to the conception of cross-linguistic variation, the morphology of the Arabic language might have caused the students’ lack of ability to perceive the morphological structure of English complex words. In the perspective of the fact that Arabic affixes and roots are bound morphemes, then, complex Arabic words cannot be split into its meaningful constituents. Considereing this fact, it might have influenced the students’ incapability to part English stems from affixes, thereupon, they were incompetent to code obscure English complex words and were unable to uncover the implications of new complex words.

The English morphological system is a linear or concatenative (Saiegh-Haddad & Geva, 2007) in which word formation employs a sequence of morphemes from the word (Kiraz, 2001). For instance, the word “unthoughtful” is split into “un-”, “thought”, “-ful”. As stated by Al-Farsi (2008), the morphological structure of English is regarded as a straightforward structure. Contrastingly, the Arabic morphological system is a non-linear derivational process of a non-concatenative language (Saiegh-Haddad & Geva, 2007). For example, the verb hit /ḍurib/ in the past perfect tense is derived from the consonantal root /ḍ-r-b/ (the concept of hitting), and the vocalic sequence /u-i/ used to indicate the past perfect tense. The concatenation of these morphemes will not produce anticipated words if they are added indifferently. The inflection in Arabic is formed by the concatenative process, whereas derivation occurs using a non-concatenative process (Bhuyan & Ahmed, 2008).

Based on the prior mentioned findings of the Morphological Awareness Test, it is essential to apply explicit teaching methodology of morphological instructions and morphological analysis in EFL and ESL classes. Several studies have exhibited that morphological awareness results in mastering oral and written language skills such as reading and writing (Mechta, 2016; Qian, 2002). As maintained by several studies, students have demonstrated their ability in reckoning the meanings of unknown words or complex words after being acquainted with morphological analysis instruction (Gordon, 1989; Morin, 2003; Yücel-Koç, 2015; Zhang & Koda, 2012). Morin’s research (2003) deduces that explicit teaching of morphological units enhances both receptive and productive vocabulary knowledge of students as well as facilitating vocabulary learning of unknown words. Another study was conducted by Varatharajoo et al. (2015) concludes that training their 106 ESL secondary students inflectional and derivational morphemic analysis awareness improved their students’ vocabulary learning strategies.
7.3. Vocabulary Size, Morphological Awareness and Complex vs. Simple Words on the VST

The third and fourth research questions tackled the probable relationship between the students’ vocabulary size and their morphological awareness, their accomplishment on the Morphological Awareness Test, and their performance on simple vs. complex words on the VST.

It was assumed that a positive correlation would exist between the vocabulary size of the students, as estimated by the VST, and their morphological awareness, as evaluated by the Morphological Awareness Test. Additionally, a correlation would be found between the students’ morphological awareness and their performance on simple vs. complex words on the VST.

The results of the present research display a positive significant correlation between the vocabulary size of the students and their morphological awareness. This result is in line with the results of the study administered by McBride-Chang et al. (2005) that indicated a positive significant correlation between their participants’ morphological awareness and vocabulary grades.

It is noted that the correlation between the students’ vocabulary size and their performance on the Morpheme Identification Test (Analytic Aspect) was to some extent higher than the correlation between the students’ vocabulary size and their performance on the Morphological Structure Test (Synthetic Aspect). This finding signifies that the two subtests of the Morphological Awareness Test measured different types of morphological knowledge, and the students had different performance on each test.

The fourth question of this study inspected the students’ performance on the Morphological Awareness Test and their performance on simple vs. complex words on the VST. The outcomes of the question show that the students’ performance on simple vs. complex words of the first seven levels was higher than their performance on simple vs. complex words of the second seven levels of the VST. This correlation indicates the students’ performance decreases as the word frequency level of the VST decreases too. A significant positive relationship existed between the students’ performance on simple vs complex words on the VST and their performance on the Analytic and Synthetic Aspects.

This study highlighted the relationship between the students’ English vocabulary size and their English morphological awareness and between the students’ English morphological awareness and their performance on English words complexity. These focal points are congruent with several pieces of research, such as Singson, Mahony, and Mann, 2000, and Sternberg, 1987.

8. Conclusion

The present study investigated the relationship between the vocabulary size of adult language learners (senior students of BA English Language and Literature) and their morphological awareness. The study inspected the possibility of a correlation between the students’ vocabulary size and their morphological awareness and if their performance on the Morphological Awareness Test would be different in word complexity (simple vs. complex words). Two empirical research instruments were used to answer the research questions: The Vocabulary Size Test adapted from Nation and Beglar (2007), and the Morphological Awareness Test with its two subtests: The
Morphological Structure Test (Synthetic Aspect) and the Morphemes Identification Test (Analytic Aspects) modified from McBride-Chang et al. (2005).

The outcomes indicated that the students demonstrated medium overall morphological awareness, which can be considered ineffective managing the morphological structure of words. As for their achievement in word formation, they performed better in the Morpheme Identification Test (Analytic Aspect) than the Morphological Structure Test (Synthetic Aspect). This result reflects the students’ inability to form and use new words using free and bound morphemes. Regarding their vocabulary size, the findings of the study revealed that their vocabulary size is 5,565 word-families (mid-frequent level size). They performed better on the high-frequency words than the low-frequency words. Besides, they scored higher in simple words than complex words on the VST.

To conclude, the findings of the study illuminated a positive correlation between the vocabulary size of the students and their morphological awareness. The students’ morphological awareness, moreover, correlated positively with their performance on simple vs. complex words on the VST and their performance on the Analytic and Synthetic Aspects. These outcomes imply a need for pedagogical implications to be implemented in ESL/EFL classes.

To improve the morphological awareness and vocabulary size of the students, explicit teaching of morphological awareness in the classes has to be put into practice, in addition, including morphological knowledge in the English language curriculum used in classes. Language instructors can endorse diversity of morphological activities to help students to analyze and build the morphological structure of new lexical items. Carlisle and Stone (2003) indicate that morphological units can be used by language learners to know the meaning of words to improve their lexical knowledge. Moreover, teaching students affixes will increase their vocabulary size as stated by Baumann et al. (2003), and Kuo and Anderson (2006) and will improve their reading comprehension due to the increase in their vocabulary knowledge according to Mechta (2016), and Fowler et al. (1995).

The pedagogical insinuation of this study is that morphological awareness is essential for vocabulary learning and vocabulary size of English language learners. Language instructors and curriculum planners have to focus on using morphological knowledge and activities in the classes of ESL/EFL due to their significance in learning English language skills as writing and reading in addition to vocabulary learning and academic success.

Future research may investigate some aspects that were not taken into consideration in this study. This study investigated the vocabulary size of the students, while other language skills such as reading, or writing can be examined in future research. It would be useful if other factors were considered in the study as age, gender, or learning motivations of the students.

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Abstract
The aim of the present paper is examining the mental representations activated by semantic networks in media discourse. It studies the cognitive frames that are mentally constructed and activated about illegal immigrants, in general, and Syrian refugees in particular. Any word class can evoke frames, but to limit the scope of analysis, Fairclough's socio-cultural approach is implemented to work out the experiential, relational and expressive values of only nouns and adjectives in media discourse. The corpus consists of articles released by The Guardian newspaper during and after the Syrian refugee crisis between 2015 and 2019. The results of the research show that cognitive frames are used to enhance the stereotypical categorizations of refugees as dislocated, uprooted and oppressed communities. This paper focuses on the mental mapping of such disadvantaged people and how they are categorized and presented in media discourse. It also analyses nouns and adjectives as generators or builders of cognitive frames in the human mind via discourse. This study is original because it relates semantic networks, mental lexicon and cognitive frames to analyze media discourse.

Keywords: Categorization, cognitive frames, media discourse, mental lexicon, mental mapping, semantic networks

1. Introduction
Cognitive representations activated in text and talk are alluring linguistic phenomena that invite analysts to investigate the kind of mental constructs that some linguistic or lexical features trigger in discourse. Media discourse seems to be a fruitful area of research because it influences the public opinion. As such, analyzing the mental representations built in The Guardian articles, regarding a critical issue in the last few years in Europe and the Middle East, may reflect how Syrian refugees are mentally represented and shed light on the cognitive frames related to them in discourse. This will be examined via Fairclough's socio-cultural approach to answer the following questions:

a) What experiential, relational and expressive values do nouns and adjectives have in the corpus?
b) How do these value-laden lexical features build semantic networks in discourse?
c) What kinds of cognitive frames are they evoked in media discourse with regard to the Syrian refugee crisis between 2015 and 2019?

2. Literature review
2.1 Frame
Frame semantics is a theory of linguistic meaning developed by Charles J. Fillmore that connects linguistic semantics to encyclopedic knowledge. The main idea is that one cannot understand the meaning of a single word unless s/he has access to all the essential knowledge that relates to that word. For example, one cannot understand the word "restaurant" without knowing anything about the situation of eating in a restaurant, which also involves, among other things, food, a menu, the relation between the waiter and the client. Thus, a word activates, or evokes, a frame of semantic knowledge relating to the specific concept to which it refers (Fillmore & Baker, 2001).

More specifically, a frame is “a mental knowledge structure, which captures the typical features of the world units organized ‘around’ a certain concept” (van Dijk, 1977, p. 215). This includes the typical necessary information related to this concept. A frame is a mental model of the world located in the human memory. It can be saved and retrieved when such models are stimulated. As such, a frame is a cognitive phenomenon and a structure that is stored in the human mind (Bednarek, 2005). According to Werth (1990), it can also be defined as an area of experience in a culture (as cited in Chilton, 2004, p. 51). In short, a frame is a mental construct that shares a number of features.

Frames are organized in a hierarchical structure. In the human memory, knowledge is stored in a form of several related frames (Bednarek, 2005). Each frame is characterized by specific typical features. Since a frame consists of cognitive components and their related elements, these features may supply ‘prototypes’ or central and typical instances that represent a category. A frame is thus built upon categories and their interrelations (Bednarek, 2005). Retrieving mental or cognitive representations consists of finding the stored traces in memory and using the schemata to reconstruct the original interpretation or representation (Bower & Cirilo, 1985). In other words, these frames can be organized in a hierarchy and inherit properties from super-ordinate frames.
2.2 Semantic networks and mental lexicon

Words are organized in an interconnected system of lexical items. This lexicon establishes a mental network that is similar to drawing a reasonably reliable ‘map’ of a person’s ‘word web’ (Aitchison, 2003, p. 85). These word webs are clusters of words that relate to the same topic. Individuals often select items from the original word’s semantic field where words of similar meanings are stored together. These semantic fields are also referred to as semantic networks. According to Aitchison (2003, p. 86), there are different types of link between a ‘stimulus word’ and its ‘response’. The four most important links are the following:

1- *Coordination*: response involves coordinates, like salt and pepper, butterfly and moth, and opposites, like left and right, hot and cold.
2- *Collocation*: a word that is likely to be collocated (found together) with the stimulus in connected speech, like salt water, butterfly net, bright red.
3- *Subordination*: the cover term, which includes the stimulus word, like insect is elicited by ‘butterfly’, or color by the word ‘red’.
4- *Synonymy*: a word with the same meaning as the original word, like ‘starve’ beside ‘hungry’.

As such, people do not deal with words as isolated entities. They have to establish or find connections between them and relate these words to each other in the mental lexicon. As Aitchison (2003, p. 75) states, ‘words are stitched together in one’s mind like pieces on a patchwork quilt’. This means that words are interdependent, and each word activates many related similar words that belong to the same semantic network (See also Reed, 1982, p. 217). Frames, generated by such semantic networks or mental lexicon, may categorize entities or events in media discourse based on some common features.

Notions like frames, semantic networks and mental lexicon may be closely interrelated in discourse. Analyzing the links between these concepts may uncover the mental mapping of Syrian refugees in media discourse, and hence the interconnections between such linguistic features.

3. Methodology

3.1 Corpus

The corpus of the present research consists of randomly selected articles from the British daily newspaper, *The Guardian*. These articles are downloaded from the following website: [https://www.theguardian.com/uk](https://www.theguardian.com/uk). They cover the Syrian refugee crisis between 2015 and 2019 in Europe. For each year, three articles are randomly selected to be analyzed; hence the corpus involves fifteen separate texts.

3.2 Data Collection

The focus will be on nouns and adjectives because they encode the attitudes of the journalists and reflect the categorization of Syrian refugees in media discourse. These lexical features build a mental lexicon related to refugees and demystify how they are cognitively framed and mentally mapped by the *Guardian* newspaper.
3.3 Research method

Fairclough’s socio-cultural approach is selected to analyze media discourse on the Syrian refugee crisis. Since Fairclough’s (1989) model is a three-dimensional approach, it involves three levels of analysis, namely textual description, interpretation of the connection between the discursive processes of production and interpretation of the text, and ultimately explanation of the link between the discursive processes and social processes. Only the first stage of analysis, which corresponds to description, will be implemented in the current research. It is concerned with the identification and description of the linguistic features that are relevant to the present study.

This choice can be explained by the fact that the main focus of the present study is on textual features, semantic connections between words and the cognitive representations they activate in the human mind. These textual features will be analyzed in terms of their experiential, relational and expressive values. The first stage of analysis of Fairclough's model is illustrated in table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of meaning</th>
<th>Values of features</th>
<th>Structural effects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contents</td>
<td>Experiential</td>
<td>Knowledge/beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relations</td>
<td>Relational</td>
<td>Social relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subjects</td>
<td>Expressive</td>
<td>Social identities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Formal Features: Experiential, Relational and Expressive Values

Source: Fairclough, (1989, p 112)

The focus will be on the lexical features that build evaluative mental representations about Syrian immigrants. The aim is uncovering the mental frames generated by mass media during and after the crisis as well as the journalists' attitudes towards such a human drama.

4. Results

As stated before, the values of the collected data will be examined via three stages. First, experiential values deal with the way the writer or the speaker experiences the world. Second, relational values show how social relations are enacted in the text. Third, expressive values indicate how subjects are positioned in the text and how their social identities are referred to.

4.1 What experiential values do nouns and adjectives have in the text?

To answer this question, the focus will be on how nouns and adjectives are distributed in the selected corpus. Only the nouns and adjectives that refer to Syrian refugees and describe their conditions are considered for analysis. Table 2 illustrates the total number of the value-laden nouns and adjectives used by The Guardian journalists in the selected articles.

Table 2. Frequency of Occurrence of Value-Laden Nouns and Adjectives in the Corpus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nouns</th>
<th>Adjectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crisis (34), exodus (3), conflict (19), strain (5), sanctuary, poverty (5), desperation (2), asylum (29), risk (15), assistance (3), help (2), shortfall (2), militia, battles, displacement (5), seekers (8), war (14), violence (7), persecution (5), danger (9), flow (5), migration trail, exile (3),</td>
<td>Humanitarian (10), largest (3), forced (6), displaced (15), biggest (6), dire, worsening, fleeing (3), huge (7), vulnerable (7), worse (4), complex, exiled, intractable, stranded (2), upsetting, stringent, higher, bad (2), nervous, harder, untenable (2), underfunded, damming, unable,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 shows the distribution of nouns and adjectives in the corpus. In the noun category, one can note the predominance of the nouns ‘crisis’ (34 times), ‘asylum’ (29), ‘conflict’ (19), ‘war’ (14), ‘smugglers’ (9), ‘seekers’ (8), ‘problem(s), ‘death’ and ‘violence’ (7), ‘influx’ (6) and ‘persecution’ (5). In the adjective category, ‘displaced’ is the most frequently used adjective (15 occurrences), followed by the adjective ‘humanitarian’ (10 times). After sorting out the distribution of nouns and adjectives in the corpus, one has to examine their relational and expressive values in the following sub-sections.

4.2 What relational values do nouns and adjectives have in the corpus?
At this level, the collected lexical items will be examined in terms of their relational values in the corpus. The focus will be on the kind of relations established between Syrian refugees, European countries and Bashar Al Assad’s regime in Syria. The main concern will be demonstrating how these lexical features reveal relations between the agents or entities mentioned in the corpus.
The lexical items in table 2 not only unveil the relationship between words but also the relationships between agents or referees in discourse, in this case Syrian refugees, Assad's regime and European countries. One can note a dual set of relationships based on ENMITY (Assad vs. Syrian refugees and Assad vs. European countries) vs. FRIENDSHIP (Syrian refugees and European countries). Assad’s regime is portrayed as a 'VIOLENT' and 'AGGRESSIVE' regime. It is a 'DANGER' and a 'THREAT' for Syrians who are presented as 'VICTIMS'. European countries, on the contrary, are depicted as a 'REFUGE' or 'SHELTER'. Hosting countries are also described as supportive nations that provide 'ASSISTANCE' and offer 'SECURITY', 'RESCUE' and 'HELP'.

**Figure 1.** Relational Values of Nouns and Adjectives in the Selected Corpus

Assad’s regime is depicted as a common threat. It is not only the enemy of Syrian refugees, but also the enemy of democracies in Europe. After demystifying the kind of relations established between the entities referred to by nouns and adjectives in the corpus, one can shed light on the expressive values of these lexical features in the *Guardian* discourse.

### 4.3 What expressive values do these features have in the corpus?

At this stage of Fairclough’s model, one has to investigate the meanings expressed by the lexical features, how subjects are positioned in the text and how their social identities are conveyed.
The ‘CRISIS’ frame consists of sub-frames that involve ‘conflict’, ‘chaos’, ‘tensions’, ‘problems’ and ‘outbursts’. These sub-frames are mental representations triggered via discourse. In this context, the noun ‘crisis’ means an extremely difficult or dangerous situation. The word ‘conflict’ encompasses the idea of ‘war’, disagreement or fighting between two or more parties. As for the noun ‘persecution’, it refers to cruel or unfair treatment because of religion, race or political beliefs. The noun ‘strain’ expresses the idea of putting pressure on someone or something. ‘Tension’ is a noun that refers to a feeling of anger between different groups. It is close in meaning to the noun ‘outburst’, but this latter is a stronger feeling that leads to a sudden and forceful expression of emotions. ‘Outbursts’ may lead to ‘riots’ which are noisy and violent gatherings in public. The noun ‘emergency’ refers to something dangerous or serious. A ‘problem’ is, however, a less serious or urgent situation. All these words have some features in common that relate them together under the umbrella of one semantic network.

The superlative forms ‘the biggest’, ‘the largest’, ‘the worst’ and ‘the greatest’ magnify the Syrian refugee crisis. The adjectives ‘huge’, ‘bad’, ‘harder’, ‘worsening’, ‘increasing’, ‘higher’, ‘worse’ and ‘damning’ portray the dilemma of an uprooted population. The words ‘escalation’, ‘overstretched’ and ‘overwhelming’ reveal the huge obstacles and problems that Syrians face after fleeing war in their country. All the previous words may lead to ‘devastating’ or ‘looming’ results if problems reach a peak. Semantically, the adjective ‘devastating’ describes something that causes damage or destruction. ‘War’ is one devastating factor, and it is a kind of ‘crisis’, ‘emergency’ and ‘conflict’. ‘Stringent’ is an adjective that refers to something severe or grave, like ‘war’. As one can notice, these words create a mental map based on interrelated mental frames. Every word activates a set of semantically related words. Cognitively, every frame constructs sub-frames with mental connections activated in the discourse emitter's memory.

The ‘RISK’ frame consists of sub-frames that involve ‘risk’, ‘danger’, ‘threat’ and ‘death’. These sub-frames are mental representations triggered via discourse. In this context, the noun ‘risk’ means a possibility of danger or failure to achieve an intended goal. The word ‘danger’ encompasses the idea of ‘hazard’, ‘harm’, ‘risk’, ‘peril’, ‘safety’, ‘threat’, ‘dangers’, ‘risk’ and ‘safety’. The noun ‘threat’ expresses the idea of potential danger or harm. The noun ‘death’ refers to the end of life or the state of being dead. Similarly, ‘death’, ‘barrel bombs’, ‘fear’, ‘deadliest’ ‘lethal’, ‘grave’ and 'cancerous' evoke the idea of danger and threat. The general lexical town can be divided into frames and sub-frames. For instance, the frame ‘plight’ triggers sub-frames, like difficulty, hardship, dangerous or unpleasant situations etc. Based on this semantic network, Syrian refugees are depicted as a community at risk. They are threatened by Assad’s regime as well as the insecure living conditions inside and outside their home country.
difficulty (2), pressures, poverty (5), persecution (5), starvation, misery, burden (3), instability, human drama, plight (2), worsening, harder, disastrous, difficult (3), awful (2), problematic (2), imbalance, besiegement, clampdown, need(s) (5), brunt, shortfall (2), shortages (2), intractable, stranded (2), untenable, underfunded, restrictive, treacherous (2), paralyzed, extreme, vetting, prison, misery, food scarcity (2), overcrowded camps, trapped (2), homeless (2), poor health, lack of adequate nutrition, malnourished, lengthy arduous journey, minimal access to health or education, besieged population, deprived, restrictive, restriction, arbitrary process, obstacles, neglected, stigmatized, the worst of odds, freezing (3), divided, rising

Figure 4. HARDSHIPS Lexical Item in the Corpus

The third semantic field highlights the HARDSHIP-FRAME in the Syrian crisis. The nouns ‘homeless’, ‘pressure’, ‘plight’, ‘poor’ and ‘burden’ portray the ‘problematic’ situation of this community. Moreover, the nouns ‘persecution’, ‘starvation’, ‘misery’, ‘poverty’ demystify the ‘human drama’ of Syrians fleeing death in Syria. The words ‘difficulty’, ‘difficult’, ‘harder’, ‘worsening’, ‘rising’, ‘awful’, ‘disastrous’, ‘besiegement’ and ‘clampdown’ convey the inhuman and catastrophic conditions that these innocent Syrian refugees have endured since they escaped war and persecution in their home land. It is worth noting that HARDSHIP-FRAME is dominant in the selected corpus (86 items). This reflects the sufferings of these refugees and the tough conditions they have been facing. The mental lexicon highlights the huge problems and hardships that Syrian refugees encounter in their search for a better life. It also describes the difficult mission of some European countries to deal with the refugees’ mass immigration to Europe.

stream, flow (5), migration trail, influx (6), wave(s) (2), exodus (3), refugee “tap”, flood(s) (2)

Figure 5. INFLUX Lexical Items in the Corpus

The fourth frame that we notice while reading the articles is INFLUX-FRAME. The arrival of a big number of refugees all together is portrayed as a ‘stream’, or a ‘flow’. This recalls the idea of flowing water and fluidity. This idea is also triggered by the nouns ‘waves’, ‘refugee tap’ and ‘flood’ that enhance the INFLUX-FRAME. These words stimulate mental representations or knowledge constructs that are saved in our memories and activate them to be used in discourse.
production and comprehension. The cluster of such mental knots depict Syrian arrivals as massive waves or continuous streams of immigrants. This highlights the huge number of refugees that continuously enter Europe.

Figure 6. VIOLENCE Lexical Items in the Corpus

VIOLENCE-FRAME is dominant in the selected corpus. The lexical items 'forced', 'fighting', 'damage', 'fire', 'regime', 'attacks' and 'abuses' portray the picture of oppressed, persecuted, tortured and endangered refugees. Moreover, the lexical items 'thugs', 'vandals', 'aggressive', 'revenge' and 'vengeance' refer to the 'militia' of Bashar Al Assad. The noun 'jeopardy' summarizes the dilemma of the Syrian refugees who are escaping the atrocities of war in Syria, facing death in the Mediterranean Sea and expecting better life conditions in hosting countries. These words reveal the atrocity of the Syrian war and depict refugees as a community in peril. This idea is supported by the words 'detention', 'arrests', 'prison', 'brutal' and 'aggressor' since they all include negative connotations.

Figure 7. EMOTIONAL TRAUMA Lexical Items in the Corpus

The semantic network 'EMOTIONAL TRAUMA' reveals the sufferings of Syrian refugees. The words 'vulnerable', 'desperate', 'desperation', 'despair', 'instability', 'instability', 'desperation', 'despair', 'depression', 'unhappiness', 'dismay', 'tortured', 'squeezed', 'hopeless', 'worried', 'tortured', 'squeezed', 'hopeless' and 'worried' unveil the emotional state of these refugees. The climax of such an emotional trauma led to 'self-harm' and 'suicide' cases in refugee camps. Syrian refugees had high expectations about better life conditions in hosting countries, but they found themselves trapped in some 'racist' communities. Some of them were victims of 'xenophobic' treatments, like Hungary that refused to accept any Syrian refugee on its territory. The word 'toll' expresses suffering, death or damage. The noun 'hostility' describes the attitude of some European
countries towards Syrian asylum seekers. Semantically, this semantic network involves NEGATIVE connotations. Consequently, only NEGATIVE mental representations are retrieved and activated to frame their depressing conditions.

Figure 8. RELOCATION Lexical Items in the Corpus

Another semantic field, noticed in the corpus of the present research, is 'RELOCATION'. This frame is triggered by the words 'displacement', 'displaced', 'relocation', 'exiled' and 'uprooted'. It stresses the idea of changing someone's place or location. One can also note the SHELTER-FRAME triggered by the nouns 'asylum', 'exile' and 'sanctuary'. This shelter is, however, temporary because the countries that host refugees think about sending them back to their home country. The lexical features 'repatriation', 'refoulement' and 'deportation' enhance this idea. It is important to note in this context that the word 'shelter' encodes the idea of a voluntary movement for safety and security reasons, but the noun 'exile' means that the movement is forced or imposed on the subject. These sub-frames have weaker or stronger links with the general frame 'RELOCATION'.

Figure 9. HELP Lexical Items in the Corpus

The last mental frame found in the corpus is 'HELP'. It is supported by sub-frames, like 'assistance', 'support' and 'rescue'. These mental constructs highlight the feeling of 'sympathy' on the part of some European communities. These frames create a mental map where Syrian refugees are depicted as endangered people who look for 'security'. They generate feelings of compassion and solidarity with these unprivileged and unfortunate people.
One can synthesize that Syrians are collocated with NEGATIVE frames in media discourse, more specifically in The Guardian newspaper. The ‘CRISIS’, ‘RISK’, ‘HARDSHIP’, ‘VIOLENCE’, ‘EMOTIONAL TRAUMA’ frames display the disastrous and atrocious situation of this community. ‘INFLUX’ and ‘RELOCATION’ themes have one common feature, mainly ‘movement’. ‘HELP’ frame, however, ignites POSITIVE frames that reveal the ‘humanitarian’ side of European countries. As one can notice, these frames and sub-frames build lexical towns that are semantically and cognitively interconnected and interrelated. This idea will be elaborated further in section 5.

Let us expand the analysis to focus on some propositions and how nominal and adjectival phrases produce cognitive frames in media discourse. These cognitive frames will be discussed starting from the most dominant to the least dominant mental construct. The most recurrent cognitive frame is CRISIS with 155 items. The following are two extracts from the corpus:

“We are experiencing the biggest refugee crisis since the second world war,” he told Greek Star TV. (01/03/2016) \ People have already weathered four years of brutal conflict; a fifth is too much. (09/09/2015)

The superlative form of the adjective ‘big’, collocated with the noun ‘crisis’, as well as the collocation of the adjective ‘brutal’ with the noun ‘conflict’ stress the complexity of the Syrian refugee crisis in Europe. The nouns ‘crisis’ and ‘conflict’ are categorized, evaluated and classified as ‘big’ and ‘brutal’ respectively. These adjectives activate knowledge slots in the receiver’s brain that are already stored in episodic memory. The superlative form magnifies the refugee crisis, which is cognitively represented as huge, bad, great, hard etc. in other parts of the corpus. The word ‘biggest’ recalls other related mental lexicon in the brain and activates them to understand entities and events in discourse. These cognitively related words highlight the extent, scale or intensity of the Syrian refugee crisis. The conflict in Syria is described as ‘brutal’, which encodes a stronger meaning than the adjective ‘violent’. It recalls similar cognitive frames, like ‘aggressive’, ‘tough’, ‘harsh’, ‘hard’, ‘difficult’, ‘bloody’, ‘deadly’ etc. The common feature between these words is that they trigger mental representations related to war, fighting, conflict, enmity, struggle and tension. Such mental lexicon builds a general semantic network that connects them together, namely CRISIS-FRAME.

RELOCATION is the second most recurrent cognitive frame in the selected articles with 92 lexical items. 

It is now the greatest movement of the uprooted that the world has ever known. Some 65 million people have been displaced from their homes, 21.3 million of them refugees for whom flight is virtually compulsory – involuntary victims of politics, war or natural catastrophe. (17/09/2017)

RELOCATION-FRAME can be divided into sub-frames, expressed by the lexical items ‘the greatest movement’, ‘the uprooted’ and ‘displaced’ (here used as a verb, not an adjective). These words highlight the forced movement of Syrians from their country to a safer place. The adjective ‘uprooted’ activates the ideas of a displaced entity that is pulled up from the ground, or from native or habitual surroundings. The superlative form of the adjective ‘great’ enhances the fact that the relocation of Syrian refugees is a huge problem. It is qualified as ‘the greatest movement’ that ‘the world has ever known’. Such displacement is presented as ‘compulsory’ and ‘involuntary’ which
enhances the ideas of forced relocation and imposed escape from conflicts and natural disasters, like extreme weather in 2019 in Europe and parts of Asia.

**HARDSHIP** is the third most frequently generated frame with 86 words. Others who spoke to the Guardian say they have heard constant reports from inside Syria that those who had returned faced extreme vetting from security agencies and a high risk of detention, especially if they come from opposition-held areas. (30082018)
The adjectives ‘extreme’ and ‘high’ are qualifiers that modify the noun phrases ‘vetting’ and ‘risk of detention’. They function like intensifiers because they show the huge problems that Syrians may face if they go back to their country. The lexical item ‘extreme’ triggers many related mental representations, like a very large or big amount of, a high degree of something etc. It may also evoke other related frames based on our experiences, like extreme weather, extreme poverty, extreme pain etc. The nouns ‘vetting’, ‘risk’ and ‘detention’ unveil the hardships that Syrians encounter in Syria that is torn between Al Assad regime, ISIS fighters and democratic forces supported by the USA and European Union. The HARDSHIP-FRAME is recurrent in the selected articles from 2015 to 2019. It builds negative mental frames that uncover the extreme sufferings, countless hardships and inhuman conditions of Syrian victims. This mental lexicon generates cognitive frames about Syrian refugees and recalls other related frames, like VIOLENCE-FRAME and CRISIS-FRAME, and sub-frames that are cognitively related to these general frames.

The fourth dominant cognitive frame is VIOLENCE with 81 lexical items in the selected newspaper articles.

“We must remember why Syrians fled their homes in the first place: barrel bombs, besiegement, starvation, detention and torture. (30082018)
The cluster of the noun phrases ‘barrel bombs’, ‘besiegement’, 'starvation’, ‘detention’ and ‘torture’ generates a negative general frame, mainly VIOLENCE-FRAME. Syrians, in this excerpt, are categorized as besieged, starving and tortured detainees. Lack of freedom, lack of food as well as the violation of human rights are mental frames that emanate from these lexical items. Every noun triggers many related frames and sub-frames. These frames are mental representations that are stored, retrieved, activated and then reproduced to understand discourse. Such mental representations depend on the personal experiences and cognitive skills of the discourse analyst. People may activate different mental constructs about the same entity or event. In this case, Syrian refugees can be categorized as a community that is endangered by barrel bombs and starvation. ‘Torture’ encodes the idea of extreme violence or unbearable treatment. It also generates mental frames based on extreme suffering, emotional trauma, hardship and pain. The noun ‘torture’ embeds a stronger meaning than ‘violence’. It refers to the climax of ill-treatment of Syrians by Assad regime.

As for Assad regime, it is portrayed as a totalitarian, authoritative and bloody regime that chases its Syrian opponents. Bashar Al Assad is presented as a violent, aggressive and brutal ruler. Syrians fleeing the country are depicted as humiliated victims who can no longer endure the regime’s violations of their basic human rights. In short, the above noun phrases stimulate mental representations that locate entities in certain cognitive frames. They are mentally mapped as a community in peril.
**RISK** is the fifth most recurrent mental model in the selected corpus with 77 items. *Aid* workers warn there is a real risk people will simply freeze to death as temperatures have already dropped to -1C, amid a shortage of blankets and heating fuel. (12\01\2019)
The nominal phrases ‘a real risk’, ‘death’ and ‘a shortage’ build mental constructs that unveil the dangerous conditions of Syrians in detention camps. These mental constructs depend on the reader’s experience, social and political background as well as her knowledge about events, actions, entities and the world in general. Nouns and adjectives in this excerpt enhance the idea of danger that may lead to ‘death’. They reveal the risky, deadly, dangerous and lethal conditions, starting from escaping a bloody war in Syria and facing death in the Mediterranean Sea to going to the unknown to seek shelter. The recurrence of the noun ‘risk’ in the corpus evokes NEGATIVE COGNITIVE FRAMES that locate Syrians in the center or the heart of danger. This noun is mentally connected with death, harm, injury, famine, insecurity, instability and many other frames and sub-frames. These negative mental representations, triggered by the *Guardian* journalists’ words, show their concern about Syrian refugees, especially women and children. The clusters of such representations build the RISK-FRAME and HARDSHIP-FRAME.

**EMOTIONAL TRAUMA** can be classified sixth in terms of the frequency of occurrence of lexical items in the corpus with 67 words.

*Report warns generation faces psychological ruin, with most vulnerable the hardest hit.* (12\03\2018)
The noun phrase ‘psychological ruin’ encompasses severe emotional or mental distress caused by a bad experience. The brutal war in Syria and the escape of millions of Syrians to Europe and neighboring countries resulted in great disruption and suffering. The noun phrase ‘psychological ruin’ evokes the idea of a psychological shock and its consequences on the body, soul and mind. After fleeing a brutal war in Syria, refugees were traumatized. The adjective ‘vulnerable’ shows that they are susceptible to emotional injury and can be easily hurt.

The superlative form qualifies or modifies the noun ‘hit’ to exaggerate the impact of the Syrian war on people and magnify war results on the emotional and mental health of Syrian refugees. These refugees are categorized as war victims who are exposed to assaults, disasters and attacks. In this context, Syrians are mentally mapped as a community that faces the worst of odds. This shows the support and solidarity of the Guardian journalists who express sympathy and compassion via words. Indeed, the nouns and adjectives used in the corpus express the discourse emitters’ empathy and their understanding of the Syrian refugees’ emotional state.

**HELP** frame is the seventh most frequently generated cognitive frame with 63 mental lexica. *Speaking as the European commission signaled it was putting together an urgent humanitarian aid package for the country after predictions that more than 200,000 men, women and children will be marooned there by summer, the leftwing leader said Brussels had promised “support and solidarity”.* (01\03\2016)
The use of the adjective ‘humanitarian’ and the nouns ‘aid’, ‘support’ and ‘solidarity’ reflects the POSITIVE side of the European Union. Although some countries refused to accept asylum seekers, the *Guardian* journalists reflect the humanitarian side of host countries and report the need for assistance and cooperation to financially support these unfortunates. HELP-FRAME is
The adjective ‘marooned’ describes these people who are abandoned and isolated without food and basic needs. This adjective recalls the HARDSHIP-FRAME as well as EMOTIONAL-TRAUMA-FRAME. As such, there are interconnections or interlinks between the different lexical items found in the corpus. They generate interrelated mental representations that function as cognitive frames and sub-frames that categorize entities in discourse and allocate certain features to them.

The last cognitive frame identified while analyzing the corpus is INFLUX with 21 items. Large exodus from a single conflict in a generation places humanitarian system under increasing financial strain (09/07/2015)

Mass immigration of Syrians is referred to as ‘exodus’. It is also qualified as ‘the largest’ in a generation. This mass movement is also compared to ‘waves’, ‘flow’ and ‘influx’ in other parts of the corpus. The word ‘strain’ evokes mental lexica, like pressure, injury, damage, violence and HARDSHIP. It also has connections with EMOTIONAL TRAUMA-FRAME. As such, the noun ‘strain’ has common features with these two frames. This enhances the idea that one category has strong and weak bonds with other categories and sub-categories. These frames are interconnected in a mental network based on mental lexicon.

To highlight the idea of mental networks, we can examine the following example: Those most at risk face escalating threats of being permanently maimed by fighting, or emotionally scarred by a litany of abuses including forced labor, marriages, food scarcity and minimal access to health or education. (12/03/2018)

In this excerpt, one can notice the eclectic use of RISK-FRAME, VIOLENCE-FRAME, EMOTIONAL TRAUMA-FRAME and HARDSHIP-FRAME. The adjective ‘maimed’ refers to the severely injured victims of the Syrian war. The nouns ‘fighting’ and ‘abuses’ evoke mental constructs related to violence. The nominal phrases ‘forced labor, marriages’, ‘food scarcity’ and ‘minimal access to health and education’ generate cognitive frames that mentally represent deprivation, hardship, difficulties, obstacles, tough living conditions etc. The eclectic analysis of the present example is based on combining these frames and their related sub-frames to build mental lexicon. Interconnected mental lexicon establishes a semantic or mental network.

5. Discussion
After analyzing some excerpts from the corpus, one has to discuss the general mental representations built via the lexicon used in media discourse, and more specifically the mental mapping of Syrian refugees in The Guardian between 2015 and 2019. The semantic networks analyzed in the previous section correspond to cognitive frames in the human mind. These mental representations are structurally classified into general and specific elements. In the selected corpus, we have noticed eight general cognitive frames. These general categories or frames are divided into sub-categories, which are in their turn divided into minor sub-categories. Inspired by Aitchison’s (2012, p. 228) lexical network and Reed’s (1982) semantic network,
figure 10 illustrates how the mental lexicon is organized as a network of linked frames and sub-frames in the corpus.

![Network of Mental Lexicon in the Selected Corpus](image)

**Figure 10.** Network of Mental Lexicon in the Selected Corpus

Words in figure 10 build lexical towns in the form of a mental network. Every lexical town involves several clumps of words that are strongly interrelated. These words have other weaker relations, semantic connections or common aspects with other groups. As such, the mental lexicon has strong and weak bonds with other words depending on the topic.

Cognitive frames are schematically presented as knowledge constructs or slots about stereotypical events or entities. The lexical network is organized in terms of semantic fields or mental towns that are structured in terms of categorical relations. Such a mental network consists of cognitive representations, or a mental mapping of Syrian asylum seekers and their living conditions in some countries. More specifically, the lexicon, as a mental construct, is schematically generates or activates different frames that take into account the typical features of the world units that surround a given entity, in this case Syrian refugees, and given events, in this case their mass immigration to Europe. The general frames are divided into smaller frames which are in their turn divided into sub-frames. The network consists of the interrelations between the frames that are built upon these categories or prototypical features.

These prototypical frames reflect how *The Guardian* journalists perceive the refugee crisis. For instance, the typical features allocated to Syrian refugees are a 'displaced', 'relocated', 'homeless', 'tortured', 'persecuted', ‘maimed’ and 'marooned' community. Some of these common features are clear in these examples: "At the end of 2014, one in every five displaced people worldwide was Syrian." and "In the last few months our clinics have seen more people who have suffered violence, who are victims of rape, who have been tortured, than ever before". These lexical items determine the discourse emitter’s construal of the Syrian refugee crisis and her attitude towards these war victims.
Apart from the classification of these mental frames in hierarchical structures, ranging from general to specific, these frames can be classified in terms of dominance from the most dominant to the least dominant features in The Guardian discourse. The most dominant frames are ‘CRISIS-FRAME’ (155 items), ‘RELOCATION-FRAME’ (92 words), ‘HARDSHIP-FRAME’ (86) and ‘VIOLENCE-FRAME (81). Figure 11 illustrates the different semantic networks or frames found in the corpus and orders them according to their dominance in the selected articles.

![Dominant Mental Frames in the Corpus](chart.png)

**Figure 11.** Dominant Mental Frames in the Selected Corpus

These cognitive frames prototypically describe Syrian refugees as people under pressure who face tensions. They are also depicted as 'asylum' seekers who look for a refuge in other countries. Similarly, they are portrayed as a community that is living in conflicts and problems. As such, cognitive frames reflect realities because the mental representations constructed by the selected discourse activate real mental frames about the hardships, sufferings, persecutions and atrocities experienced by this community. While reading the articles, the analyst's mind creates cognitive relations or mental connections between her mental models and the real world.

We can thus confirm that semantic networks activate cognitive frames in the selected corpus that reveal the media's mental mapping of Syrian refugees and their categorization depending on NEGATIVE frames or mental networks. Since there is no direct link between text and social context, we need a cognitive interface in the form of evaluative mental representations that are activated by the participants of a given communicative event.

6. Conclusion
To conclude, one can state that after examining the experiential value of nouns and adjectives in the corpus, the results have shown the prevalence of the nouns 'crisis' (34), 'asylum' (29), 'conflict' (19), 'displaced' (15) and 'risk' (15). Studying the relational values has demonstrated how nouns and adjectives reflect the kind of relationships between Syrian refugees, European countries and Al Assad regime. While examining the expressive value of these lexical features, we have found out that these nouns and adjectives are classified according to semantic networks where words are
interconnected semantically and cognitively in a form of a mental network or a mental map, hence cognitive frames.

The implication of this research is that it studies cognitive frames as mental constructs activated by semantic networks in media discourse and explains how nouns and adjectives, as builders or generators of mental representations, build a mental lexicon and evoke cognitive frames in discourse. This study demystifies the mental mapping of entities and events in discourse from sociocultural and cognitive perspectives.

7. Notes
1 The definitions are taken from Cambridge Dictionary, retrieved from https://dictionary.cambridge.org/.

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8. References
A Study on Vocabulary-Learning Problems Encountered by BA English Majors at the University Level of Education

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Abstract
Proficiency in English language depends on the knowledge of its vocabulary possessed by the second and foreign language learners and even the native speakers. Though developing the vocabulary is vital, it poses several problems, especially, to non-native students of English. Students with a low vocabulary knowledge show weak academic performance in different courses related to the language skills, linguistics, literature, and translation at the university level of education. This study, in particular, aims to investigate the problems faced by English majors in learning the vocabulary at Prince Stattam bin Abdulaziz University (PSAU) in Saudi Arabia. It also puts forward some vocabulary-learning strategies to minimize the potential problems. The data consist of the responses of 100 student-participants (undergraduates) randomly picked up from five different levels (four, five, six, seven, and eight) of 4-Year BA English Program at PSAU. This quantitative study uses an online questionnaire, as an instrument, to collect the data. The results reveal that the English majors at PSAU face several problems in learning the vocabulary such as knowing the meanings of new words, pronouncing new words, using new words correctly, memorizing and spelling new vocabulary and so on. To its contribution, this study emphasizes the importance of learning the English vocabulary, draws students’ attention towards it, highlights the problems encountered by students, and raises their awareness of the vocabulary. Future research may explore teachers’ perspectives on students’ vocabulary-learning problems and instructional methods implemented to teach the vocabulary in English language classrooms.

Keywords: English majors, Saudi students, vocabulary knowledge, vocabulary-learning problems, vocabulary-learning strategies.

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Introduction

This paper investigates the problems faced by English majors (undergraduates) in learning the vocabulary at Prince Stattam bin Abdulaziz University (PSAU) in Saudi Arabia. In fact, the learners’ ability to communicate effectively depends on a good knowledge of vocabulary, which they continue to expand throughout their life span. Rababah (2005) maintains that Arab students generally face difficulty to communicate in English due to lack of vocabulary items, methods of teaching and incompatible learning environment. This quantitative study emphasizes the importance of learning target vocabulary, draws students’ attention towards it, highlights the problems encountered by students, and raises their awareness of vocabulary. It depends on the responses of the participants who are PSAU students studying at different levels of 4-Year BA English Program. The results reveal that students faced a range of problems in learning the vocabulary of the English language. It also suggests strategies that, hopefully, would enrich students’ vocabulary knowledge and minimize their difficulties. It begins by introducing the vocabulary.

In learning a mother tongue or any foreign language, vocabulary is the most significant component. Language acquisition cannot take place without learning its lexis with unlimited shifts in meaning caused by various contextual variables (Yang & Dai, 2012). Vocabulary is one of the most essential parts, along with phonetics/pronunciation and grammar, required to learn a foreign language (Pan & Xu, 2011). In addition, vocabulary is the basis for language skills, namely, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Without learning the vocabulary, it is difficult to attain any language proficiency. Vocabulary is the basis of acquiring a second language. Rohmatillah (2017) asserts that without learning the vocabulary communication in the second language becomes harder. Further, vocabulary knowledge is an integral part of the language; it is central to communicative competence. Low vocabulary knowledge poses severe problems to its learners, which consequently impedes the learning of English language (Alqahtani, 2015). Schmitt (2002) argues that vocabulary plays a vital role in teaching and learning the second language as lexical knowledge is fundamental to communicative effectively. The language of the human beings depends on the vocabulary used or gained. Thus, without vocabulary, the learners will be demotivated to use the language (Richards & Renandya, 2002).

The term vocabulary has a variety of meanings proposed by teachers. To some, it represents sight-word vocabularies as the immediate recognition of words by students. Others describe it as meaning-vocabularies representing the words understood by students; it is also considered as listening-vocabularies or students’ understanding of the heard and spoken words. The content teachers further describe it as an academic vocabulary that reflects the content-specific words or students’ understating of the oral and print words (Antonacci & O’Callaghan, 2011). Hiebert and Kamil (2005) provide another definition for the term vocabulary, which is the knowledge that the learners should have about the meanings of words. They argued that words come into two types, oral and print and the knowledge, too, comes in at least two types: receptive (understand or recognize) and productive (write or speak). The oral vocabulary belongs to a set of words for which the learners know the meanings while speaking or reading orally. The print vocabulary consists of words for which the learners know the meanings when they write or read silently. To Hiebert and Kamil, the productive vocabulary is a set of words that are well-known and used frequently by the learners in speaking or writing. The receptive vocabulary is a set of words, which are less
frequent and for which learner assign meanings while listening or reading (Hiebert & Kamil, 2005).

Also, the vocabulary has two types as active and passive. The active vocabulary refers to the words taught to students, and they can use these words in speech or writing as oral or written expressions. The passive vocabulary refers to the words that students recognize and understand in a context. Such a passive type of vocabulary occurs in a listening or reading material (Harmmer, 2007). Besides, Webb (2009) advocates that students recognize the receptive vocabulary when it is used in a context, i.e. the one seen in a reading text and the one that cannot be produced by students in a written or spoken form. To Neuman and Dwyer (2009), vocabulary refers to the words in spoken (expressive vocabulary) and listening (receptive vocabulary) forms that the learners need for a competent interaction. Hatch and Brown (1995) consider vocabulary as a group of words that the language users use differently. Vocabulary knowledge usually indicates the learners’ progress. Learning the vocabulary has always been a skill taught and evaluated in other language skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking (Schmitt, 2000). Instead, it promotes the development of language skills (Mart, 2012).

**Problem Statement**

The language learners must enrich their word-repository and develop linguistic repertoire by enhancing vocabulary. However, vocabulary-learning is challenging, particularly, for the non-native speakers of English who face problems relating to the meanings of new words, spelling, pronunciation, correct use of words, guessing meaning through the context and so on. The reasons for such difficulties can be multifaceted. For instance, in Saudi Arabia some of the studies have underscored faulty practices adopted in teaching and learning English. Al-Seghayer (2015) emphasizes that the teachers in Saudi Arabia follow traditional methods in teaching English. They use the students’ mother tongue more than the target language to deliver lessons, which causes students’ low performance. Some other studies pointed out problems in learning the vocabulary on the part of the students as well (e.g., see Baniabdelrahman & Al-Shumaimeri, 2014; Elttayef & Hussein, 2017; Farjami & Aidinlou, 2013).

Despite some deficiencies in teaching and learning strategies, the demand for English in Saudi Arabia has dramatically increased. The individuals have to do jobs that demand competence in the English language considered as one of the most critical factors in political, educational (Al-Saraj, 2014), and social as well as technological development in the country (Khan, 2011). Consequently, the learners have to get command over vocabulary to prove that they are competent users of English. Similarly, it is a hard task for the teachers to fulfill the students’ needs and make them learn vocabulary in an unforgettable way. Thus, it is crucial to highlight vocabulary-learning problems faced by students, propose vocabulary-learning strategies that can enhance students’ understanding of the target vocabulary, and offer them opportunities to acquire new words. The present study advocates that students in the Saudi Arabian universities need enough vocabulary knowledge to tackle on-campus lectures delivered in English and to improve their communication skills. Rababah (2005) claims that departments of English in some universities in the Arab countries accept high school students with a low proficiency level in English. By arguing that the Department of English at PSAU also admits high-school students into its 4-Year BA English Program without assessing their proficiency level, this study investigates vocabulary-learning problems faced by PSAU students as soon as they approach higher-level courses.
Research Objectives

This paper aims:
1- To investigate the problems faced by PSAU English majors in learning the vocabulary.
2- To recommend strategies that can minimize PSAU students’ problems in learning the English vocabulary.
3-

Research Questions learning the vocabulary

This paper answers the following questions:
1- What are the problems faced by PSAU English majors in learning the vocabulary?
2- What are the strategies that can minimize PSAU students’ problems in learning the English vocabulary?

Literature Review

Vocabulary learning helps acquire language, develop the learners’ reading proficiency, and is beneficial for reading comprehension (Tozcu & Coady, 2004). Learning the vocabulary encompasses four stages: discrimination, understanding meaning, remembering, and consolidation and extension of the meanings. First, the discrimination stage involves distinguishing sounds and letters. It helps in speaking, listening, reading, and writing because by distinguishing sounds, the learners pronounce words correctly and understand them when they read or hear. Secondly, understanding meaning involves understanding the concept of words by relating them to their referents. Thirdly, the remembering stage consists of the ability to retain the meanings. Fourthly, the consolidation and extension stage refers to learning new vocabulary and its integration in the learners’ vocabulary system (Grauberg, 1997). However, learning the vocabulary usually causes a heavy burden on the learners. In other words, languages are productive and they continually create and add new words to their vocabulary stock. Oxford (1990) argues that generally, no rules are followed in learning the vocabulary as used in learning the grammar. Students usually encounter hundreds of words that they need to learn and practice during their studies.

Altyari (2017) considers that the Saudi students’ weak linguistic performance in English reflects their deficient vocabulary knowledge. The researcher points out two compelling facts that contribute to poor vocabulary uptake and lexical insufficiency by the Saudi students in public high schools. The participants included thirty-five students from different educational levels and nine male Saudi teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL) at intermediate and secondary schools. The data were collected through questionnaire and secondary school textbooks. The results reveal that students-participants ineffectively used vocabulary strategies such as by mainly relying on a bilingual dictionary, asking others to know the meanings and so on. Similarly, the results also indicate insufficient recycling of the vocabulary items and presentation of all aspects of the vocabulary knowledge. The study strongly recommends an incremental process of teaching vocabulary.

Rohmatillah (2017) investigated the difficulties faced by students in learning English vocabulary. This qualitative research, using interviews and questionnaires, points out at several challenges that hinder vocabulary-learning practices adopted by students. This study outlines the problems such as pronouncing and spelling words (written and spoken forms do not match most of the time), choosing appropriate meanings of words (complexity of vocabulary knowledge),
inflections of word forms, (inadequate understanding of grammar), and an excessive number of words that students need to learn. It also reveals some important factors of difficulty in learning the vocabulary and attributes learning difficulties to various levels of language. To cite, pronunciation difficulties are related to the sound system of English, inflections and word forms are related to the morphological system, word associations, such as collocations, and phrasal verbs are related to semantics, the word categories relevant to syntax and so on. Khan (2011) also points out the vocabulary areas in which the Saudi target language learners face difficulties. These areas include learning the vocabulary meanings, spelling, using synonyms, prefixes, and suffixes.

Elttayef and Hussein (2017) probed the difficulties that teachers face in teaching English to the Arab learners. The study argues that the learners have insufficient basic knowledge; however, they are taught English in schools. Secondly, it points out the lack of attention on the part of the teachers in highlighting the significance of English in classrooms. It also asserts that the teachers’ role in teaching English is doubled because their students depend them with the expectations that they would make students learn English soon. This study claims that the socio-cultural background also affects teaching English to the Arab learners who attend English classes mostly to pass the courses. The researchers argue that with this weak background, students find difficulties later at college and universities when they engage themselves in specialized courses. This study concludes that the learners encounter difficulties in practicing language skills such as listening, speaking, and highlighted problems related to teachers and curricular (Elttayef & Hussein, 2017).

In another study, Alqahtani (2015) declares the learning of vocabulary as an important aspect of the foreign language learning with an emphasis on the meanings of new words. This study summarizes the important research on vocabulary and sheds light on teaching techniques employed by teachers while teaching vocabulary. As a teacher-researcher, Alqahtani observes that, generally, the Saudi students are taught grammar rules more than the vocabulary.

Baniabelrahman and Al-shumaimeri (2014), by using the cluster sampling methods, examined the techniques adopted by the first-year students, at a Saudi university, to guess the meanings of unknown words in reading a text. The participants contained students from the preparatory-year at King Saud University from six male (120) and six female (120) classes. The study claims that most students were unable to use the strategies for guessing the meaning of an unseen vocabulary. The results of this study encourage the teachers to, practically, train the students in using various strategies to derive correct meanings of new vocabulary.

Farjami and Aidinlou (2013) argue that learning a foreign or second language at various levels of proficiency requires a high number of words for which the learners make efforts to retain words in their long-term memory. This study also elaborates the learners’ problems in learning the vocabulary and offers some practical learning and teaching strategies to improve these problems. However, it places stress on the long-term vocabulary techniques than the short-term ones. For such reasons, Farjami and Aidinlou suggest one of the practical approaches to enhance the students’ vocabulary knowledge. They assert that teachers should present new vocabulary items in contexts, which are rich enough and provide the learners clues to guess the meanings (e.g., see Farjami & Aidinlou, 2013).
Research Methodology
This study adopts a quantitative approach that explains the phenomena based on a numerical data (Aliaga & Gunderson, 2002). Its participants are comprised of 100 male undergraduate students enrolled in 4-year BA English Program at PSAU. They were randomly handpicked from five different levels of the program. Table 1 represents the profile of the participants.

Table 1
Profile of the participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of education</th>
<th>No of participants</th>
<th>Program of study</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4-year BA English program (PSAU)</td>
<td>Male (Arab background)</td>
<td>19 to 23 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 6</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>Level 7</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Level 8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data were collected during the academic year 2017-2018. For this purpose, a questionnaire was adapted from previous scholarly studies (e.g., see Alqahtani, 2015; Altyari, 2017; Baniabel Rahman & Al-Shumaimei, 2014; Dickins, 2012; Eltayef & Hussein, 2017; Farjami & Aidinlou, 2013; Khan, 2011; Rohmatillah, 2017; Saigh & Schmitt, 2012). Through the piloting stage, it was ensured that the participants were competent enough to understand the questionnaire. This study uses the Google Docs platform that serves as a real-time collaboration and communication for creating and administering the online questionnaire (Blankenship, 2017; Denton, 2012). It increases the efficiency and handles the data with more accuracy via a unique URL (Rayhan et al., 2013). To assess the students’ vocabulary-learning problems, a questionnaire was created in Google Docs with a 5-point Likert scale options: (1) Strongly agree, (2) Agree (3), Undecided (4) Disagree, and (5) Strongly disagree, (Brown, 2010). The questionnaire consisted of 15 items and the students were instructed to complete it by rating their problems accordingly. After the successful completion of the questionnaire, Google Docs summary of all the scaled responses generated the percentage of the vocabulary-learning problems interpreted in the results section.

Results and Discussion
The primary focus of this study was to examine the students’ vocabulary-learning problems and suggest strategies to overcome the potential problems. The analysis indicates (see Figure 1) that English majors at PSAU faced the problem in “Learning Meaning of New Vocabulary”. A majority of 59.6% of the participants (strongly agree 33.9% and agree 25.7%) responded positively to this questionnaire item. 24.8% of the participants (strongly disagree 15.6% and disagree 9.2%) responded negatively to this problem. The learners of English often face problems in discovering the meanings of new words and retaining them in their memory (e.g., see Altyari, 2017; Farjami & Aidinlou, 2013). Learning L2 vocabulary enhances the learners’ understanding of the target language. One strategy is to use the vocabulary cards as valuable tools that “contain key elements about the target word” (p. 216). The learners can be instructed to manage such vocabulary cards and optimize the learning (e.g., see Sheridan & Markslag, 2017). Form the students’ perspectives,
it is argued that the learners should expand their plans and develop autonomous learning strategies. Foreign language learners can actively learn the meanings of new words through deliberate vocabulary acquisition strategies and by using contextual clues for a generation of the meanings of new words (Lawson & Hogben, 1996). Similarly, the learners may apply activation strategies that involve different tactics such as to practise the new words in different contexts. These strategies can work in addition to other essential learning strategies such as metacognitive strategies, cognitive, memory and others (Goundar, 2016).

![Figure 1](image-url)

**Figure 1** Vocabulary learning problems faced by PSAU English majors

Source: Data collected from the questionnaire adapted from previous studies (e.g., see Alqahtani, 2015; Altyari, 2017; Baniabdelrahman & Al-Shumaimeri 2014; Dickins, 2012; Elttayef & Hussein, 2017; Farjami & Aidinlou, 2013: Khan, 2011; Rohmatillah, 2017; Saigh & Schmitt, 2012).

Figure 1 illustrates that PSAU students also faced problems in “Using New Vocabulary in Speaking or Writing”. A high number of positive responses reflected the problem, 43.4% of the respondents agreed and 14.4% strongly agreed. However, 25% of the respondents disagreed. Since vocabulary represents the words that the learners need to communicate (Neuman & Dwyer, 2009), they must have enough practice to use it effectively in speaking and writing. The correct use of new vocabulary indicates the productive knowledge that “means to be able to use a word correctly in a written work or a speech” (Pignot-Shahov, 2012, p. 43). Qian (2002) also comments that, for students, the vocabulary knowledge includes an in-depth understanding of the meanings, syntax, sound structure, and pronunciation. Several previous studies have observed that vocabulary significantly contributes to the formation of written or spoken texts (e.g., see Gu, 2003; Nation, 1990). To advance their vocabulary, students should have opportunities to repetitively see and hear the new words, through different activities, which they are likely to forget otherwise. It is suggested that students should maintain vocabulary logs as separate notebooks to record new words that are exchangeable among peers and can be used inside and outside the classrooms for home assignments as well (Erling, Ashmore, & Kapur, 2016).
The results indicate (see Figure 1) that 55.4% of the participants admitted that they faced the problem in “Pronouncing New Vocabulary”. On the contrary, only a low proportion of the participants (17.5%) disagreed while others remained undecided. Rohmatillah (2017) confirms the students’ “difficulties in pronouncing the words” (p. 82). This is mainly due to the difference in spoken and written English, for instance, pronouncing words like muscle, listen and so on. Schmitt (2000) also establishes that students face difficulties in pronouncing the words with similar forms, for instance, pool, polo, pollen, pole, pall, pill, etc. Such challenges may cause confusion in both spelling and pronunciation. Rababah’s (2005) study also reveals that the Arab students encounter problems related to stress and intonation due to the pronunciation difference between English and Arabic. Some strategies may solve students’ pronunciation problems. To cite, the teachers should identify pronunciation errors and teach to pronounce words correctly through special pronunciation classes as well as students should be encouraged to consult the dictionary (Hassan, 2014). The learners should be informed that their unintelligible language could annoy the listeners; therefore, they should practice important and complex sounds to improve their pronunciation.

An overwhelming majority, 69.8%, of the undergraduates also agreed (see Figure 1) that “Spelling New Vocabulary” was problematic for them. On the contrary, 11.3% of the participants were undecided and 18.9% responded negatively. The learners have to focus on what words look (spelling) and what they sound (pronunciation). Usually, errors are caused when students fail to perceive a sound-spelling mismatch, which ultimately causes word-learning difficulties. Moreover, different “spelling patterns can also cause confusion where the pronunciation is concerned” (Rohmatillah, 2017, p. 82). Spelling is a critical literacy skill. However, the teachers sometimes marginalize it. Presumably, more attention is placed on reading and writing skills based on the belief that the English spelling system is unsymmetrical. Arguably, spelling is also important as it promotes reading (Reed, 2012). Bowen (2011) acknowledges that students face spelling problems peculiar to the L1 Arabic learners of English. One of the most obvious reasons can be that spelling is not taught with a prescribed syllabus in mind. Bowen suggested some activities for teachers that must be engaging and memorable, tailor-made to solve the students’ general and specific problems, and related to the making and braking of words. The activities include segmentation, phoneme/grapheme correspondences and so on. Simmons (2007) also claims that students in “general have difficulty using the correct spelling strategies” (p. 160). As suggested, a more systematic methodology should be employed to spelling while teaching the students. The learners’ spelling problem can be addressed through strategies such as rule-based approach, multiple efforts, resource based, and brute force (Peterson, 2005). Several other previous works on vocabulary have recommended different strategies to lessen the learners’ spelling problems (e.g., see Basner, 2011; Dymock & Nicholson, 2017; Jackson, Konza, Ben-Evans, & Roodenrys, 2003; Rashid, Yousuf, & Imran, 2012; Shankweiler & Lundquist, 1992).

As the results indicate, the responses to the problem “Memorizing New Vocabulary” were also recorded in a high number (see Figure 1). 68.9% of the participants claimed that they faced difficulty. Comparatively, a low proportion (14.1%) of the participants disagreed to this problem. During the vocabulary acquisition process, a reasonable time is spent on memorizing the words but in a quite traditional manner such as remembering with the assistance of contextualized or non-contextualized fixed wordlists from textbooks (Mondria & Mondria-De Vries, 1994). The Saudi
university students have difficulty in memorizing new vocabulary; particularly, they have “difficulty in memorizing the prefix and suffix of words” as reported by Baniabdelrahman and Al-Shumaimeri (2014, p. 89). Memory strategies, known as mnemonics, retain words in the memory in different ways. First, they include classifying language material into meaningful units (nouns, verbs, and topics). Second, they link the new language knowledge with concepts already established in the memory. Third, they engage in a new language in a context (use a words or phrases in meaningful sentences). Fourth, they relate a new language to memory concepts by using visual imagery, semantic mapping (arrange words into diagrams), and remembering words by using auditory and visual links and their sounds (see Li, 2004; Oxford, 1990). Similarly, Zhang (2011) suggests that students might also memorize words by listening to words repeatedly, by reading words, and by guessing the meaning from context that helps the students to understand the meanings of unknown words. For more information about memorizing vocabulary and related strategies, see other works (e.g., Easterbrook, 2013; Nemati, 2009; Yu, 2011).

In response to the problem related to “Recognizing New Words,” the results confirm that majority of the participants (57.6%) responded positively, 20.8% of the participants remained undecided but a small minority of the participants (21.6%) responded negatively. San and Soe (2016) report the grammatical difficulties encountered by the EFL learners at the university level of education. The study shows that students positively responded to the problems they faced in identifying plural forms of nouns, past tenses of verbs. Rohmatillah (2017) also reveals that the “grammatical form of a word known as inflections” (p. 69) has been a difficulty for students in learning the vocabulary. However, without information about the words as noun, verb, adjective, or adverb, it would be impossible for students to use words correctly in speaking or writing forms. Students should recognize different types of learning circumstances for different words. Some words exist in the students’ oral vocabularies for which they need to learn to use them. Other words may act as labels for familiar concepts. Further, some words may represent a concept that must be acquired but not through traditional vocabulary instructions (Nagy, 1988). Several researchers have investigated the word recognition phenomenon from different perspectives (see e.g., Alco, 2010; Chard, & Osborn 1999; Phala, 2013; Probert & De Vos, 2016). One particular strategy with significant benefits for identifying unfamiliar words is a “vocabulary self-collection” (p. 88) strategy. It promotes the words consciousness and independent learning because the learners are actively engaged in knowing news words from their readings and develop vocabulary (Antonacci & O’Callaghan, 2011).

The analysis also reveals that PSAU undergraduates even confronted problems in “Learning Meaning of Technical Terms” (see Figure 1). A high percentage (64.7%) of the participants acknowledged facing this problem. Nonetheless, the lowest proportion of the participants (13.4%) reacted negatively. Technical words create difficulties due to their specific meanings and rare uses. Chung and Nation (2003, 2004) observe that technical terms in textbooks are a main concern for the language learners. These words appear in textbooks of various academic disciplines and become challenging for students in understating their meaning. Several strategies can solve this problem; for instance, students can rely on dictionaries and guessing strategies to learn technical terms (Fan, 2003). Students at the university level of education from different streams can exploit different learning strategies to deal with technical vocabulary such as determination strategies (by discovering new word’s meanings), social strategies (by interacting with other people), memory strategies (by recalling meaning), cognitive and metacognitive
strategies (by evaluating their own leaning) as suggested by Wanpen, Sonkoontod and Nonkukhetkhong (2013). Effective learning strategies and appropriate instructional methods are useful for students to make sense of new vocabulary. One such proposed activity is the “same word different subject” activity. It gives the students an explanation about technical words that have one meaning and used in one subject and specialized words used in different subjects and have different meaning. Some more similar activities include “scavenger hunt” and so on (Stowe, 2015, pp. 4-5).

Likewise, the questionnaire item “Giving Enough Time to Studies” indicated that a vast majority of the respondents (72.2%) accepted that they do not spare enough time for their studies whereas 13.4% of the participants disagreed. On the contrary, sparing time for studies has shown a positive impact on the university students’ academic performance. Alsalem et al. (2017) in their research conclude that the university students in Saudi Arabia who exercised the time management skills for completing their home assignments yielded better academic performance. Thus, the practice of not sparing time by PSAU students for their studies is a ‘bad study habit’ that may affect their academic performance. Previous research has confirmed the role of the study habits in academic achievements. Ebele and Olofu (2017) point out that good study habits guarantee the success in learning the vocabulary because they have a close relationship with students’ academic performance. Similarly, the students’ level of motivation and length of study time do determine the degree of academic achievements (see Gbore, 2006; Kunal, 2008; Ukpong & George, 2013). Based on such recommendations and empirical confirmations, PSAU English majors should devote a long time to their studies to improve their academic grades. Dunlosky, Rawson, Marsh, Nathan, and Willingham (2013) also propose “a schedule of practice that spreads out study activities over time” (p.6) should be implemented. Time management is one of the effective skills categorized under good study habits. Students should study in their peak study time when they are fully awake, alert and able to absorb new information. They can also make use of bonus study time that is free or extra time such as unexpected break, free hours, and cancelled lectures (Mayland Community College, 2002).

The results also point out that 59.4% of the participants believed in “Remembering Words without Understanding Meaning.” Thus, PSAU students try to learn English vocabulary without understanding the meanings essential for text comprehension. However, the difficult vocabulary is an indicator of a difficult text and the readers’ vocabulary knowledge is a predictor of their understating of the text. Readers’ lack of knowledge as a fundamental part of education is a severe obstacle for many students (Nagy, 1988). Cain and Oakhill (2014) suggest that vocabulary is connected with comprehension in some aspects, for instance, inference making, and global coherence. The PSAU English majors acknowledged that 64.1% of the participants never practised any “Vocabulary Learning Strategies” to improve their knowledge of words. On the contrary, learning strategies play an instrumental role in learning a second or foreign language. Studies have proved that successful students follow the learning strategies covering all language skills (e.g., see Manzanera Pagès, 2015). It has also been argued that vocabulary plays a vital role in English language acquisition at a college level. The process of vocabulary learning includes not only knowing the meanings of the words but also all aspects of a particular word have to be known (He, 2010).

As demonstrated in Figure 1, 43.8 % of PSAU undergraduates “Never Guess Meaning through Context”. The technique is useful to deal with unfamiliar words. The context is of two
types: context within the text including information related to morphology, semantics, and syntax and the general context related to the readers’ background knowledge about the subjects (Nation & Coady, 1988). This technique is a sub-skill of reading, which can make the learners depend more on the context than relying heavily on a dictionary (Selçuk, 2006). The study also confirms that EFL university students, both successful and unsuccessful guessers, sometimes need proper training and monitoring to learn the meanings from the context. Hardanti, Sutarsyah, and Yufrizal (2015) also advocate that guessing the meanings form the context “is the most practical method to comprehend both written and oral communication” (p.3). Without vocabulary knowledge, comprehension stays afar from students because it involves more than just remembering words, for instance, the use of words in a natural way inside a context. Some other strategies also include guessing the meanings from the context, looking up dictionaries frequently, remembering words by the meanings when reading again, connecting new words to the students’ first language, repeating words, and practising (Easterbrook, 2013). Teachers should also use various strategies to help students understand the meaning through the context, associate new vocabulary with already learned words and even help them memorise words and meanings. No doubt, the students need a large number of word meanings to communicate effectively (Ferreira, 2007). For more works related to teaching and learning the vocabulary, see other studies (e.g., Gu & Johnson, 1996; Schmitt).

Concerning the problem of “Learning Cultural-Specific Vocabulary”, 63.9% of the participants responded positively (see Figure 1). In contrast, only a small minority of the participants (19.9%) found it easy to understand such type of vocabulary and 16.2% remained undecided. Usually, culture-loaded words are simple words, idioms, or expressions that convey a deep meaning about a specific nation or culture. A foreign language learner interested in learning such culture-loaded vocabulary should also know the cultural implications of such words. The results illustrate that PSAU English majors’ are mostly unable to follow the culture-loaded vocabulary. Instead, their knowledge and awareness about such words must be enhanced. To solve this problem, teachers should expand their instructional method to teach the culture-loaded words by employing various resources. The students themselves should also realize the importance of the cultural-loaded vocabulary and make efforts to advance their knowledge of a native and target culture by learning the vocabulary (Yuewu, 2015). Zhao (2014) recommends that teachers should enhance their own and students’ cultural consciousness of English words to facilitate comprehension and interpretation of literary texts. Similarly, the teachers equipped with the latest linguistic and pedagogical theories can teach vocabulary in a better way. The teaching practice through the contrastive method yields better results where students can draw a comparison between a native culture and target culture. In addition, the teachers should strengthen the students’ autonomous learning ability so that they can draw conclusions themselves and act as guides to recommend different sources vital for enhancing the vocabulary knowledge. On the other hand, students should pay attention to the cultural-loaded words and learn these words via various channels, such as “surfing the Internet, chatting with foreign friends … attending online micro-class” (p. 41) to improve their self-study learning abilities and cultural communicative abilities (Guan & Zhao, 2016).

Figure 1 illustrates that a large percentage (53.3%) of PSAU students also accepted that the problem occurred in “Understanding Compound-word Meaning.” A lexical item may seem
problematic if it consists of more than one word encountered by the language learners, for instance, a compound noun, phrasal verbs and so on (Rohmatillah, 2017). Another study, investigating the university students’ problems in learning English, advocates that the learners of English as a second language (ESL) and native speakers both face comprehension problems in following compound nouns (Charteris-Black, 1998). Compound words appear in the text in different forms, some of which may not have clues for readers to decipher the meanings. Therefore, the teachers should introduce compound words from text and train their students to find the meanings (Fernandes, 2006). When questioned about “Learning Homophones,” 55.2% of PSAU English majors admitted their inability to understand and learn the words having the same pronunciation but different spelling and meanings. The results concur with the study about difficulties encountered by the Arab learners of English in differentiating and giving the right spelling of homophones (Ja’far, 2011). Similarly, another study conducted by Ibrahim (2018) witnesses that the university undergraduates face problems in “using homophones and homographs words…not able to distinguish…in context…confusion among students when using the words” (p. 3). To solve this problem, a seven-step plan can be implemented in a language classroom, which includes reading or listening to the text, visualizing the meaning, identifying grammatical structures, categorizing words, analyzing word meanings within the context, owning the words and assessing the new meanings (see Jacobson, Lapp & Flood, 2007).

The results also demonstrate that PSAU undergraduates (54.3 %) fail to understand “Multiple-meaning Words” required for communication in classrooms. In comparison, only 24.7 % of the participants disagreed and 21% remained undecided about the problem. Lin (2014) also points out that learning the meanings of multiple words is a challenge for the learners of English. They fail to identify additional meanings and the context. To facilitate students in learning the words with multiple meanings, the teachers should offer explicit instructions and enhance the students’ awareness. The teachers can provide students with direct instructions and definitions of the words with new meanings and give examples. Secondly, the teachers can introduce a new meaning in a particular context. However, one word with the multiple meanings may not be taught simultaneously. The words should be constantly reviewed through different learning points to have retention. The students should be encouraged to increase their consciousness of the multiple-meaning words by highlighting the words that pose confusion, reading sentences, and consulting a dictionary (Lin, 2014). Large dictionaries that have sub-entries for a unique sense of a word are also accommodating for students facing such problems (Anderson & Nagy, 1993).

Overall, this study reflects that a high percentage of PSAU English majors acknowledged facing the problems in learning the vocabulary by responding to the questionnaire items enlisted in Figure 1. Based on the results, the current study has discussed some of the strategies to minimize the problems and enhance the students’ vocabulary knowledge.

**Conclusion**

This study, utilizing the questionnaire, has investigated vocabulary-learning problems confronted by PSAU English majors in pursuing their 4-year BA program at the Department of English. By analyzing the responses of the student-participants, it has been confirmed that the learners face vocabulary-learning problems even at the university level of education. The problems surfaced as difficulties in pronouncing news words, spelling new words, using new words correctly,
identifying grammatical structure of words, guessing the meanings from the context and others. Hence, this study argues that PSAU students have a limited ‘word repository,’ an issue that should be addressed seriously. These vocabulary-learning problems cause to weaken the students’ reading comprehension, writing power, and communication skills due to lack of the vocabulary knowledge. It also puts forward some strategies, from the teaching-learning perspectives, which can resolve the difficulties related to learning the vocabulary.

To its limitations, this study focuses on emphasizing the problems faced by the students in learning the English vocabulary. It is suggested that the future research should examine in detail the reasons behind vocabulary-learning problems. Also, the future studies may investigate teachers’ perspectives on instructional methods they use inside the language classrooms and the problems they face in teaching vocabulary to students.

Hopefully, this study will raise awareness in students, highlight the importance of learning the vocabulary, and motivate the students to overcome their problems by following the proposed strategies. This study also recommends that PSAU English teachers and students should work together and find all possible means that can facilitate the students to enrich their vocabulary knowledge.

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A Study on Vocabulary-Learning Problems Encountered


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Learning Strategies and Teaching Methods in Thai and Vietnamese Universities

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Abstract
The main purpose of this research is to investigate language learning strategy use of Vietnamese and Thai university students using Oxford’s Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). One main objective of the research was to compare different six aspects of language learning strategies (memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, affective, and social) between Thai and Vietnamese students. The main research question was to learn about learning strategies Thai and Vietnamese university students used. The data of research were collected from 116 English major Thai university students and 174 English major Vietnamese students, using the SILL developed by Oxford (1990) as the instrument and interviews from 16 lecturers from Vietnam and Thailand. The findings revealed statistically significant differences in memory, cognitive, affective, and social strategies between Thai and Vietnamese students. The interview data were used to gain insight into the findings of the questionnaires. The findings of the research can be beneficial to teachers and educators who are involved in the education of both countries, providing better understanding of different aspects of language learning strategies used in learning English.

Keywords: language learning strategies, teaching methods, Thailand, university students, Vietnam

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Introduction

As the use of English expands in countries where it is not an official language, it has become known as ‘a medium’ among people who are from different backgrounds. Due to its significance, English has been brought into early education for students (Trån, 2013). As a result, teaching English has drastically impacted many countries over a short period of time, especially within Asia. Moreover, different methods and approaches have been adopted for English language teaching and learning in Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Within the association, Vietnam has become one of the most successful countries in English teaching. According to Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), Vietnam ranked 17th, and Thailand ranked 50th (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). Only one percent of Thai students are fluent in speaking, listening, reading, and writing, giving Thai students a very low proficiency.

Moreover, many factors affect how students acquire a language, and learners’ strategies are a significant part of how successful students can be. Language learning strategies do not stand alone when they come to their roles. They involve numerous other factors associated with language learners. Students try to use different learning strategies for their learning (Shen, 1989; Lewis & McCook, 2002). An investigation of a relationship between learners and language learning strategies help clarify how learners learn. Also, it explains how each learner responds to factors related to their learning. Therefore, it is essential to reveal the similarities and differences in the learning strategies used in Thai and Vietnamese universities in second language (L2) students’ learning.

Research Objectives

This current research is designed to investigate language learning strategies that university students in Thailand and Vietnam employ in learning English using the SILL by Oxford (1990). The context of Thai and Vietnamese universities is quite different. In fact, Vietnam is known as a leading country in English language learning and teaching (Van Van, 2009).

Research Questions

The research was addressed using two research questions, which were answered using both quantitative and qualitative data:

**RQ 1:** What are the perceived learning strategies of Thai and Vietnamese university students?

**RQ 2:** What are the teaching methods teachers use that affect students’ learning strategies in Thai and Vietnamese classrooms?

Literature Review

**Thailand**

Unfortunately, Thailand has been reported as having a very low proficiency in English (Kitjaroonchais & Kitjaroonchais, 2012). This is a major concern for the government, and the Thai Ministry of Education (MOE) is tasked with ensuring Thai learners become more competent in English. However, teaching methodology in classrooms has not been a concern to the government. Within Thailand, current educational reform plans are to provide 12-year compulsory and free education to Thai citizens (OBEC, 2008). The curriculum is created by the government, and it includes English subjects taught by native English teachers at primary and secondary levels (Varavarn, 2005).
For government schools, most English classes are taught by Thai teachers and English-Thai translation is frequently used in class. Often times, teachers focus on form and don’t adequately teach its functions or pragmatics system. Teaching is generally recognized as teacher-fronted, so classes utilize one-way communication as teachers transfer the knowledge to the students. Thai students are expected to show respect to teachers and carefully pay attention in class. Thus, questioning and causing arguments rarely occurs in Thai classrooms. Second, showing respect to people also leads to students obeying and not questioning their teachers. Together, these two key concepts may minimize obstacles in classrooms. However, there is a major concern around the interaction and rapport of teachers and students as well as teaching methodology used in classrooms (Mulder, 1996). Different teaching methodology use in Thai and Vietnamese classrooms has impacts on students’ learning.

Problems of English Teaching and Learning in Thailand

Studies indicated a major contributor to Thailand’s low proficiency was the use of unqualified and poorly trained non-native English teachers. “According to a survey from the University of Cambridge, it was found that a full 60% of Thai teachers had knowledge of English and only 20% were teaching class-levels for which they were both qualified and competent.” (Noom-Ura, 2013). If unaddressed, this is likely to become more challenging for English language teaching in Thailand, especially when other interfering factors are considered. Along with the teacher’s proficiency, other factors that could interfere with improving English in Thailand include a learner’s native tongue, attitude, limited knowledge of English, poor learning environment, and restricted support. Thai learners, similar to learners in other Asian countries, are generally shy and reserved in language classrooms (Bray, 2009; Zhenhui, 2001). This trait does not support communicative classrooms. Therefore, it is essential for Thai teachers to have a knowledge and understanding of the English language and teaching pedagogy.

Vietnam

One major issue that has been raised for many decades in Vietnam is who should teach English--native English speakers or non-native English speakers (Bright, 2012; LaBelle, 2007). A study conducted in Vietnam showed that having native English-speaking teachers could help students become more successful (Walkinshaw & Duong, 2012). Also, native speakers are considered as the standard of acceptable language (Walkinshaw & Oanh, 2014). Students who learn with native English teachers believe that they are encouraged more, and they feel more comfortable speaking because native English teachers are seen as friendly (Benke & Medgyes, 2005). On the other hand, non-native English teachers can help students learn because they are able to identify difficulties students have (Ketch & Santana-Williamson, 2002; Medgyes, 1992). Therefore, teachers in Vietnam use various teaching methods in classrooms to help students, besides the Grammar-Translation Method. This could be one of the reasons why Vietnamese students have higher English proficiency than students among ASEAN countries (Cook, 1999). A study about Vietnamese teachers revealed that teachers considered the cultural context as well as using a variety of teaching approaches in their classrooms. Le Ha (2004) supported this by mentioning “This moral sentiment has been consolidated and encouraged by Vietnamese society's respect and love for teachers and the teaching profession.”. Many Western teachers view teaching in Vietnam as ‘traditional’, meaning teachers provide advanced knowledge as one-way communication instead of adopting ‘Communicative Language Teaching’ (Trân, 2013). Recently,
the government has taken a learner-centered approach into consideration. Engaging the students to actively participate in language learning can lead to greater success in learning English (Van Dang, 2006).

**Problems and Barriers to English Teaching and Learning in Vietnam**

Even though the success in English teaching and learning in Vietnam appears to go beyond other Asian countries, it is important to be aware of how Vietnamese students participate in classrooms. Learners’ views are often not taken into consideration when teachers make decisions about materials, methodologies, and curricula. A lack of acknowledging this has brought failure to language innovation projects in the past in Vietnam because teachers use inappropriate practices in the classroom. Moreover, learners become less successful when they are pushed to learn in ways that they do not find helpful (Allwright & Bailey, 1991; Lewis, 1996).

**Learning Strategies**

Based on previous definitions of language learning strategies, the following definition was synthesized for the purpose of this research: language learning strategies are conscious behaviors, processes, and techniques learners employ in language-related tasks to improve their language competence using English input and output.

There are five basic types of classifications of language learning strategies which can be identified as (1) classifications related to research of successful language learners, (2) classifications formed on psychological functions, (3) classifications associated with a background of linguistics, (4) classifications related to language skills, and (5) classifications hinged on a variety of learning styles (Vlčková et al., 2013). The number of classifications covers a wide range of unclear concepts of learning strategies which helps to illustrate a major problem in strategy research. For language teachers, differences in learning strategies among students cannot be avoided, but it is a teachers’ responsibility to find out what works well for their students.

**A Review of Research in Learning Strategies in SLA**

Without question, learning strategies research has seen a great deal of progress over the years. Early work lacked useful descriptions of the types of strategies, and it also did not focus on cognitive aspects and variables that affected strategy use (Nambiar, 2009). Therefore, researchers have attempted to figure out ways to describe and understand more about the learning strategies of individuals. With this in mind, the strategy called ‘think-aloud’ protocols whereby students have to verbally express their thoughts while they were doing tasks (Ericsson & Simon, 1980). By using these protocols, the researchers are able to evaluate students’ logical thinking (Nambiar, 2009). Along with these protocols, a number of researchers in the field use the SILL developed by Oxford (1990) to collect data on learning strategy use from individual learners. The questionnaire is comprised of four functional groups of learning strategies: cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social (Abhakorn, 2008; Chamot, 2004). Through the use of the SILL, researchers in Ireland reported that learners with higher proficiency used learning strategies to achieve their learning goals (Bruen, 2001). Based on their results, the researchers suggested that it is worthwhile to understand how relevant proficiency levels and learning strategies are, and how the use of learning strategies by each individual could help classroom teachers to promote students’ learning.
According to the related research and literature review on language learning strategies above, it appears that the researchers aimed to explore how language proficiency influenced use of learning strategies. Besides using the Strategy Inventory of Language Learning (SILL), it might be worth looking at another dimension related to students’ English proficiency achieved, which includes teachers’ teaching methodology in classrooms.

**Teaching Methods in Thailand and Vietnam**

In this research, four major teaching methods that are widely used in both countries are reviewed. They are the Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method, the Communicative Language Teaching Approach, and the Collaborative Teaching Approach.

**Grammar-Translation Method**

The main purpose of the Grammar-Translation Method is to motivate individual learners to gain knowledge of reading skills by studying grammar and interpreting texts with the use of a dictionary (Mondal, 2012). The main concepts of the Grammar-Translation Method (Celce-Murcia, 1991) include (1) teachers use the mother tongue to teach L2, (2) grammatical rules are taught explicitly with clear explanation, (3) the content of the text is not the focus, and it is used mainly for grammatical analysis exercises, (4) pronunciation is mostly ignored, (5) lists of isolated vocabulary are taught, (6) grammatical rules and instruction focus on form, (7) students are asked to translate texts word for word, and (8) teachers drill a lot of sentences in the target language and students have to translate into their native tongue.

Although this method has been used widely, and it accommodates teachers to improve students’ learning, there are advantages and disadvantages to its use in classrooms. The advantages are (1) learners are able to recognize features in L2 and study L2 very well as this method focuses on grammar and vocabulary, (2) learners’ reading skills can be highly improved because this method uses texts as its main materials, (3) teachers use their native tongue to teach so students are able to understand the teachers precisely. On the other hand, the disadvantages of this teaching method are (1) this method provides little emphasis on communication; (2) students do not have an opportunity to produce their own sentences or develop their creativity; and (3) students do not have a chance to use the target language in all four skills (speaking, listening, reading, and writing).

**The Direct Method**

In the United States, one of the most successful language schools, Berlitz, adapted the Direct Method and called it “the Berlitz Method” (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). The main concepts of the Direct Method are (1) students should not use their native tongues in classrooms, (2) grammar should not be explicitly taught, (3) teachers should not explain or translate, but demonstrate, (4) teachers should create an environment to help students understand meanings (e.g., pictures or realia), (5) accurate grammar points and pronunciation are emphasized, and (6) students use L2 for communication in the form of questioning and answering the questions in pairs or in groups. Teachers who apply the Direct Method in classrooms promote students in communicating with L2 in order to learn L2 naturally. Also, students are less passive than the Grammar Translation Method as they work in pairs and groups.
The advantages of this method are (1) students are familiar with a real command of L2, (2) this method is interesting to students as it emphasizes using pictures, objects, demonstrations, etc., (3) students get a chance to speak and write. Disadvantages include (1) some words cannot be translated directly so it takes a lot of time for teachers to explain, (2) this method might not be suitable for large classes since it depends on the needs of individual students, (3) teachers need to be well-trained in order to use this method effectively.

**Communicative Language Teaching Approach**

Unlike the Grammar Translation Method or the Audio-lingual Method, the Communicative Language Teaching Approach emphasizes the understanding of the target language. Therefore, teachers have to select learning activities that can engage students in authentic language usage. Furthermore, the Communicative Language Teaching Approach can be distinguished in two separate ways which are a weak and a strong version. The weak version highlights the importance of preparing students to use the target language through communication with language learning activities. The strong version emphasizes developing L2 through in-class learning activities which are similar to the real world (Molina, Cañado & Agulló, 2013).

Advantages of Communicative Language Teaching are (1) students are able to understand communication skills through real contexts, (2) activities are interesting since they are related to the students’ lives and experiences, (3) this method allows teachers and students to communicate so their relationship is interactive. Disadvantages are (1) this approach is not appropriate for large classes because activities are designed to be applied to small groups of students, (2) this approach focuses on fluency, not accuracy, and weaker students may struggle as they do not have enough knowledge in the target language, (3) the Communicative Language Teaching Approach does not focus on reading and writing as much as it should.

**Collaborative Teaching Approach**

The Collaborative Teaching approach serves as an important shift away from typical classrooms. Through this approach, students are motivated to work in group discussions and engage in active tasks. As well, a teacher is considered as a person who coaches students in their learning process (Smith & MacGregor, 1992). However, traditional classroom activities such as lecturing and note-taking process do not entirely disappear in collaborative classrooms.

The main concepts of the Collaborative Teaching approach include (1) students share knowledge, questions, and solutions in order to achieve tasks, (2) teachers are facilitators and don’t take full control in classrooms, (3) both teachers and students have opportunities to share knowledge and ideas, (4) classroom tasks are relevant to real situations where students can relate.

Advantages of the Collaborative Teaching approach are (1) students are motivated to learn by trying to achieve goals, (2) students develop social skills and get to share ideas with other students in their groups, (3) activities encourage students to communicate through L2 so students get an opportunity to practice, (4) it allows more flexibility of instructional time for students. Disadvantages are (1) weaker students may need to try to catch up with other students, (2) there is loss of instructional independence, and (3) students may get confused with their roles in group work.
The Framework of the SILL

This particular research is respectively related to the most widely used taxonomies of second language learning strategies: O’Malley and Chamot’s (1990) and Oxford’s (1990). O’Malley and Chamot (1990) classify language learning strategies into three groups, which were adapted from cognitive concepts of learning by Brown and Palincsar (1982). On the other hand, Oxford (1990) only categorize them into two groups, which then contained three subgroups each. Within her taxonomy, Oxford (1990) attempts to combine all kinds of L2 learning strategy aspects with all four skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking). Along with this, she also took into account communicative as well as linguistic aspects. Based on her taxonomy, Oxford (1990) established the SILL, and it included six aspects to classify learning strategies students use: memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognition, affective, and social.

Methodology

In this research, there were two phrases guided by the two research questions.

Phase I: The first phase was a quantitative phase, a questionnaire was administered and responses were recorded as numerical data.

Phase II: The second phase was a qualitative phase; the teacher interviews were conducted. Since in-depth data of language learning strategy use was also required, sixteen Thai and Vietnamese teachers were interviewed to learn their various teaching methods.

Structure of the Questionnaire

For this study, the questionnaire was translated into Thai and Vietnamese. The questionnaires comprised of three parts. The first part was questions to ask about the personal information of the students. The second part was open-ended questions asking about teachers’ teaching methodology. The last part was Oxford’s (1990) Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). This part includes 50 closed-ended questions on learning strategies.

Before administering the questionnaires for a pilot study, the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) was used to evaluate the questionnaire by using a score range from -1 to +1. The items with scores lower than 0.5 were cut from the questionnaire and the items with scores higher than 0.5 were reserved in the questionnaire. In this process, the questionnaire was checked by three experts with Ph.D. degrees and many years of teaching experience in the teaching field from three different universities.

Students

Two groups of university students were chosen from one university in Vietnam and one in Thailand. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling as the students had to meet the criteria. Both Thai and Vietnamese students and universities had to meet four main criteria. First, both universities were public universities and they offered English majors. The students had to take similar English courses, especially in their third and fourth year. Second, the number of students in both universities was almost the same. There were about 150 students for the third- and fourth-year programs in both universities. Third, the locations of the universities were not in the capital cities, so facilities and learning environments were very similar. Finally, the English
courses at both Thai and Vietnamese universities focused on English skills, rather than knowledge. The students shared common knowledge and skills in English.

Participants
Lecturers
Eight Thai and eight Vietnamese lecturers of English were interviewed in this research. The lecturers in this research had at least one year of teaching experience and mainly taught English major classes to the students who participated in the research. The lecturers were from the same universities as the students.

Results and Discussion
Research Questions
RQ 1: What learning strategies of Thai and Vietnamese university students use?

The questionnaires were collected from 116 Thai university students and 174 Vietnamese university students to see how different they are. Frequencies of responses from 50 questions on the questionnaire were compared. The data were categorized into six learning strategy usage classifications. Each participant responded to 50 questions of SILL were based on a Likert scale (1 = never true of me to 5 = always or almost always).

In order to analyze the results, students’ strategy use in each aspect of the SILL was initially examined, and then the overall strategy use of both Thai and Vietnamese university students was analyzed. The data analysis adopted in the research was the t-test.

Table 1 Comparison between Vietnamese and Thai university students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classification</th>
<th>Mean Thai</th>
<th>Mean Vietnamese</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig (2-tailed)</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>1.63</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.04*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>-2.08</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metacognitive</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>7.29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.01*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>-2.61</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.00*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

p ≤ 0.05

As shown in Table 1, the t-test analysis was conducted to compare learning strategy use between Thai and Vietnamese university students. Four classifications (memory, cognitive, affective, social) were statistically significant. The results of analysis indicate statistically
significant differences among students occur in memory ($p=0.01$), cognitive ($p=0.04$), affective ($p=0.01$), and social ($p=0.00$) strategies, while there is no statistically significant difference in compensation ($p = 0.81$) and metacognitive ($p = 0.20$) strategies.

The t-test analysis reveals that each classification differed, even though the responses in both groups were very similar in the overall results. In addition, there were significant differences in certain classifications, which suggested the use of a variety of learning strategies among the students.

Based on the research findings, the overall responses of the questionnaires revealed Vietnamese students used learning strategies more than Thai students. As for the means of the memory classification and the cognitive classification, Vietnamese students had higher means. This could indicate the more frequent use of these two strategies of Vietnamese students. On the other hand, Thai students showed higher means of affective and social classifications. Thai students used affective and social strategies more than Vietnamese students.

**RQ 2: What are the teaching methods teachers use that affect students’ learning strategies in Thai and Vietnamese classrooms?**

Teaching methods in both Thailand and Vietnam were found to be very similar, and they include the Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method, the Communicative Language Teaching Approach, and the Collaborative Teaching Approach.

**Thai teachers**

In Thai classrooms, the analysis showed that only the Grammar-Translation Method and the Communicative Language Teaching Approach were commonly used. Teachers also reported using Thai and asking students to translate. The main reason why the Thai teachers had students translate is possibly because many Thai students had low English proficiency, and it was difficult for them to understand content. Since the main purpose of the Grammar-Translation Method is to teach grammar explicitly with L1, and students are not expected to learn pronunciation, the method worked better for Thai students (Cele-Murcia, 1991). Another approach found in the Thai classrooms was the Communicative Language Teaching Approach — an approach that requires authentic materials and communication activities associated with real-world language (Wesche & Skehan, 2002; Molina, Canado&Agullo, 2013). In some cases, Thai teachers used Facebook as a teaching tool, so the students could relate lessons to their own experience in order to achieve goals.

**Vietnamese teachers**

While the Thai teachers applied two teaching methods or approaches in memory, the Vietnamese teachers used the Grammar-Translation Method, the Direct Method, and the Collaborative Teaching Approach. In regard to the Direct Method, almost every teacher used English to communicate with their students in class to create an L2 learning environment (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). The teachers did not focus much on teaching grammar and taught it implicitly through class activities. In addition, students were encouraged to work in groups to exchange ideas. This approach is called the Collaborative Teaching Approach, which allows both teachers and students to exchange ideas (Rockwood, 1995; Lai, 2011). Giving students chances to share...
and exchange opinions encourages them to think beyond what they know. As well, they can gain new knowledge from other learners. Along with the two methods mentioned above, some Vietnamese teachers also reported using the Grammar-Translation Method in lessons. Since not all students learn the exact same ways, it is important for teachers to provide a wide range of class activities for each individual student.

In response to the interview questions, the Thai and Vietnamese teachers reported engaging all four teaching methods or approaches to promote their students’ cognitive strategies. Moreover, there were some similar perspectives between countries. For instance, the teachers from both countries thought students should work together to brainstorm ideas and have group discussions on various topics. When working in groups, the teachers noticed the brighter students were group leaders and told the other students what they needed to do to help. For the students who were not as confident, group work was found to encourage them to interact and ask other students in their group for help. Overall, it seems using the Collaborative Teaching Approach helped to increase the knowledge of students through interactions among themselves. However, it is not the typical teaching method in Thailand and Vietnam, which both rely on one-way communication (Webb, 1993).

Despite the most frequently used strategies, the responses of the open-ended question asking students about classroom activities revealed that their teachers did not use activities which involved metacognitive strategies in either country. Regarding the metacognitive aspect of strategy use, the interview results revealed similar responses from Thai and Vietnamese teachers. When asked about students correcting their own mistakes, Thai and Vietnamese teachers suggested that students with lower English proficiency often made mistakes and did not realize making them without teachers’ guidance. In contrast, some students with high proficiency were able to correct their own mistakes right away. One explanation is that both Thai and Vietnamese classrooms tend to be teacher-centered. The students are used to having teachers lead the class. The students with low English proficiency had poor background knowledge of English. Therefore, they were not able to recognize their own mistakes without teachers’ assistance. While the students with higher English proficiency had stronger background knowledge, they were able to figure out what mistakes they made. For Thailand and Vietnam, this difference was also connected to the cultural background of the students, especially in Vietnam. For the Vietnamese, teachers give importance to perfection, meaning students should not make mistakes. In regard to paying attention to other students when they speak English, both Thai and Vietnamese teachers felt they were responsible for making sure students paid attention to other classmates. Some teachers provided lists of questions or asked them to share their opinions, and others kept reminding students to listen and show some respect. In relation to this, there was a contrast between the students’ responses in the questionnaire and the teacher interviews regarding metacognitive strategies. The students felt they used the strategies, but the teachers felt they were responsible for getting students to pay attention to them. Regardless, it is obvious that the teachers should provide class activities which support metacognitive learning strategies to increase students’ learning abilities.

Overall, the t-test results revealed four strategy classifications were statistically significant, which were memory, cognitive, affective, and social. This could signify a higher competency of the Vietnamese students in terms of L2 learning in memory and cognitive classifications based on
the means. While Thai students had a higher competency in affective and social classifications, the means of the two classifications of Thai students were higher than Vietnamese students. This difference in competency is important since the aim of language teaching and learning is to improve language competency of learners with the use of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (Van Van, 2011; Nguyen, 2014). With CEFR in mind, Vietnamese teachers focus on perfecting students’ L2 skills instead of having students learn from their own mistakes (Murray, 2010). One of the main reasons to use CEFR could involve improving education to the higher level, which means they aim to bring higher standards to students and teachers in the country. Along with this, the Vietnamese government shapes the curriculum and teaching methodology based on a learner-centered approach, meaning students are engaged actively in lessons (William & Burden, 1997).

In brief, the findings of the questionnaire showed the Vietnamese students had a high frequency of language strategy use while the Thai students had a medium frequency. However, some methods and approaches were not relevant to class activities. One method which both Thai and Vietnamese teachers shared was the Grammar Translation Method as they believed students should understand meanings of the content they were being taught. One classification not found in the responses for both questions was compensation. This is understandable since the classroom activities did not fit compensation classification. It is possible that both the Thai and Vietnamese teachers may not have given the students tasks that required them to guess as much as they should have, which would have encouraged the use of compensation. Moreover, it is believed that using cooperative learning approaches can promote and improve students’ L2 learning (Sarobol, 2012; Morrisson, 2009). Therefore, both Thai and Vietnamese teachers gear towards using group work such as group discussions and presentations.

**Limitations and suggestions for further studies**

The results of this research certainly revealed differences in learning strategy use between Thai and Vietnamese university students, as well as differences in the teaching methods of Thai and Vietnamese teachers. To carry out this research, limitations and suggestions for further studies have been noticeable as follows;

1. This study might be limited in terms of generalizability since convenient and purposive sampling techniques were used in the research. Having more participants from universities in various areas of Thailand and Vietnam can help findings to become more generalizable.

2. Self-rating questionnaires are based on individual respondents. Therefore, using a variety of research tools might help to obtain more reliable data. Further studies may need to consider using the observation technique or focus group as well.

3. Instead of investigating only differences of strategy use between Thai and Vietnamese students, determining other factors related to strategy use would be helpful. For example, demographic differences of individual students and teachers such as gender, age, beliefs, educational background, cultural experiences, and learning goals could also provide insight into learning styles and teaching methods.
Conclusion

This current research has helped to further the understanding of the language learning strategy field, especially in regard to Vietnam and Thailand. The main contribution of the research is the six classifications of the language learning strategies employed by Thai and Vietnamese university students.

More specifically, the findings of the questionnaire showed the Vietnamese students used language strategies more than Thai students. Statistically, the comparison between the Thai and Vietnamese students indicated differences among four classifications which included memory, cognitive, affective, and social strategies. From the interview responses, the Thai and Vietnamese teachers were found to use different teaching methods and approaches in their classrooms. However, some methods and approaches were not relevant to class activities. Based on the issues identified in this study, five suggestions were made to improve future research in the field. They were: (1) include more qualitative work to find out more about language learning strategy use of the students; (2) expand the number of participants to obtain stronger data; (3) obtain more information from teachers; (4) find more factors that can influence strategy use; and (5) analyze data of language proficiency to support self-reported responses from the SILL.

In summary, the findings of this research might help provide people in the education with more insights into the different teachers’ teaching methodologies and students’ learning strategies as they can apply the knowledge and utilize it in classroom settings. Moreover, Thai teachers could adapt teaching methodology from Vietnam to improve English teaching in Thai classrooms.

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References


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Order and Chaos in Young Adult Science Fiction: A Critical Stylistic Analysis

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Abstract
With the challenges and revolutionary changes in the world, it is essential that the sources of social power direct the communities towards the right path that leads to a brighter future, especially when it comes to young adults. Young adults represent a critical social group that needs special attention. Therefore, the present paper tackles one of the fascinating literary genres to young adults; young adult science fiction. The paper attempts to investigate how the social themes of order and chaos are delivered to young adults in young adult science fiction through conducting a critical stylistic analysis of certain extracts in selected young adult science fiction novels. The linguistic tool employed for the critical stylistic analysis is negation for its prevalent use in the discourse, in general, and for its textual effectiveness in rendering hidden ideologies, whether intended or unconscious.

Keywords: chaos, critical stylistics, dystopia, Ernst Cline, James Dashner, negation, order, science fiction, young adults

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1.0 Introduction

Critical linguists have built on systemic functional linguistics (SFL) to draw the ideology of the text or the producer of that text. SFL is a field of study that has evolved since the 1960s. Social construction is an essential issue, and style has a significant function in the social process. It describes language use in context, and shows how settings and language have a historical and cultural manifestation of meaning. SFL concentrates on the functional part of the initial communication process, and the way the language functions in a different context (Young & Harrison, 2004, p.2). Halliday (1994) has focused on the idea that language cannot be isolated from meaning. SFL shifts the interest from structural analysis only and mixes the social context with the linguistic features of a clause or a sentence. SFL has added the social dimension and focused on the way language affects individuals in a particular context. Halliday’s (1994) theory of SFL depends on three primary language metafunctions. Metafunction is a means of echoing experience as well as expressing this experience. Halliday (1994) categorizes them into ideational and interpersonal, which lead to the textual function that paves the way for the former two metafunctions. Ideational meaning refers to the experience of the world, and it expresses actions, events, processes of consciousness, and relations. Interpersonal sense occurs when a speaker or writer uses language to perform something. The act of the clause represents the process of interaction, such as offers, commands, etc. The third metafunction represents the textual meaning that is related to the preceding and the following context as well as the context of the situation (Halliday & Matthiessen, 1999).

The linguistic behavior of language users can reveal the relations of power by discursive practices (through which ideological power occurs) to discover social critique (Young & Harrison, 2004, p. 3). For establishing the ideological assumption of the text, Fowler et al. (1979) suggest a practical analysis. The first way to such analysis is the grammar of transitivity, which provides particular characteristics to show the semantics of the text. The second one is the grammar of modality, which reveals the linguistic structures to examine the writer’s attitude about the world. The third way is the syntactic transformation that consists of nominalization and passivization. The fourth one is classification, which produces the linguistic arrangement of the world. The fifth one is composed of coherence, order, unity, and it is related to discourse (Fowler et al., 1979).

Within the domain of critical linguistics, the theory of critical discourse analysis (CDA) has appeared with principles and aims that abide by the essential principles of critical linguistics. CDA is an approach that analyzes the interrelations between the exploitation of language and the political or social context. It focuses on cultural aspects of society like gender, the prejudice of particular people, problems of identity, etc. These topics and others exist within the social process and the way they occur in language. In such a way, CDA explores language construction and communication through the social process (van Dijk, 1998). In CDA, the linguistic structure occurs in the textual analysis. It also exposes the ideology hidden within the social practices. It reveals linguistic characteristics and discovers the extreme ideologies of a particular group over the other. All this happens through the text that exhibits human experiences. There are particular relationships among powers through which, ideologies can reflect themselves in discourse.
Critical stylistics is a method of analyzing texts to reveal the ideological construction depending on transitivity as well as other textual practices. Jeffries (2010) has tried to set tools to give an overall model of analysis within critical stylistics. In that way, critical stylistics tries to link CDA, the critique of ideology, and stylistics that is mainly interested in literary texts. In the same manner, critical stylistics brings together the essential functions that a particular text adopts to show reality (Jeffries, 2010, p. 14). Critical stylistics does not support a political view. It shows that most documents are ideologically written whether the author has intended them to be so or not (Jeffries, 2016, p.160). Jeffries has proposed ten tools as textual-conceptual functions to set her model of critical stylistics. They include the following: (1) “Naming and Describing”, (2) “Representing Actions/Events/States”, (3) “Equating and Contrasting”, (4) “Exemplifying and Enumerating”, (5) “Prioritizing”, (6) “Assuming and Implying”, (7) “Negating”, (8) “Hypothesizing”, (9) “Presenting the Speech and Thoughts of other Participants” and (10) “Representing Time, Space and Society” (Jeffries, 2010).

The present paper attempts to investigate negating as a critical stylistic tool for ideology extraction in the young adult science fiction novels. Of the ten tools of Jeffries’ essential model of critical stylistics, negating is used for its ideological significance. A great deal of communication occurs through “constructing and interpreting non-existent versions of the world which are created for many different reasons” (Jeffries, 2010, p. 106).

Young adult science fiction is a sub-genre of science fiction of a specific age-group; from 13 to 19 years old. It has appeared due to different factors in history. These factors have led to advances in science and futuristic speculations. Among these factors are the industrial growth and globalization. Publishing houses have contributed to flourishing the genre. In that way, young adult science fiction has become a matter of trade. Besides, some of these novels have been part of the material studied in schools due to their educational aims. Young adult science fiction has always addressed human moral issues (Coats, 2011, p.317).

Young adults represent a susceptible age group with highly receptive minds. Their future doctrine, beliefs, ideologies, attitudes, and ways of conduct exist within the frame of their adolescence. Science fiction stories represent the most exciting genre for young adults. This genre enables them to indulge in a world, different from their own. They can see new and extraordinary events and creatures. Thus, science fiction genre takes part in shaping their future visions depending on the ideologies embedded in the story texts. In the present time, the world is going through a critical time of order and chaos. Therefore, one of the most valid young adult characteristics is rebelliousness. Order, for example, is only obeyed by the sever force of law. Therefore, the present paper tends to conduct a critical stylistic analysis to investigate the ideologies embedded in the texts of the young adult science fiction stories towards order and chaos.
Young adult science fiction genre has social power that might affect and shape the ideologies of the society in general and the young adults in particular. Science fiction is usually studied and analyzed from a literary point of view. It means that critics and reviewers read such genre from a literary perspective. The linguistic perspective of this genre has not received its due importance yet. Therefore, the present paper tries to bridge the gap between literature and linguistics within the domain of young adult science fiction texts.

The data selected for analysis are James Dashner’s *The Maze Runner* (2009) and Ernst Cline’s *Ready Player One* (2011). Both of these novels are dystopian young adult science fiction that criticize the world of the young adults and that what makes them fall prey in their struggle in the stories. Besides, both of these novels were presented as movies, and this has raised their social effect and prevalence.

In *The Maze Runner*, Thomas, the protagonist, awakes in an elevator. He has lost the memories of his past. There are other boys, and all of them do not have any memories. The boys have managed their lives in that they have built a society in which order should prevail to lead healthy life. The boys live in The Glade, and hope to discover a way to escape through the Maze, which encloses their living community. The Grievers guard the maze. There are two groups of boys. Some want to challenge the risk, and the others want to stay as they are. Finally, Thomas and another boy manage to escape through learning the codes. However, some lose their lives, and the protagonist meets the Wicked, who has designed the Maze. Then, after killing the wicked, a leader gives an account about the world outside the Maze, and he tries to save the children from the Wicked’s idea. The boys receive a letter from the Chancellor of the Maze telling them to be ready for another Maze in the future.

*Ready Player One* revolves around a teenager, James Halliday. He lives in a virtual world in the form of a video game that he has created to overcome the chaos and difficulties in the real world. Many people try to live in a virtual world to escape such circumstances. Wade (Halliday in reality) becomes one of the Gunters in the game. He hunts inside the Oasis (the game, which is a virtual program system) to find the key for the Easter egg. James Halliday has designed The Oasis before his death. The one who finds the key will get Halliday’s estate, and gain power by getting Halliday’s company (Gregarious Simulation Systems). It is not easy to find the clue for the key. Wade enters the Oasis by the help of his school. Finally, Wade manages to get the third gate and have Halliday’s Easter egg. Wade’s life has changed forever, and he wins a significant amount of money in that fake world.

The analysis tackles certain extracts in the novels. The extracts carry the themes of order and chaos. The aim is to see how both themes act as social principles through critical stylistic analysis. For this study, order and chaos are general themes that can be detected by objective linguistic tools. They are not ordinary specific literary themes that a literary genre may elicit. As for order, it includes all aspects of healthy, secure, and satisfying way of living that occurs through...
law, love, support, reality, and humanity in general. Chaos is associated with crime, injustice, escape from facing serious situations, hatred, and negative actions and feelings that could harm humanity in general. The semantic macrostructure and the semantic microstructure are the detecting linguistic tools for finding out the themes of order and chaos. These linguistic tools are linguistically efficacious for such a purpose. They help to make clear the essential and global gist of discourse (van Dijk, 1980).

1. The Method

1.1 Critical Stylistics

Critical stylistics, according to Jeffries (2010), analyzes texts in terms of textual conceptual meaning to uncover the ideological aspects of a text. It aims to analyze both literary and non-literary texts to reveal how texts show the reality to the reader or the hearer. Jeffries has identified some defects in adopting the CDA approach for analysis. Therefore, she has tried to set a comprehensive method by constructing a systematic model of analysis that combines tools from stylistics as well as critical linguistics. Jeffries attempts to exhibit the linguistic features of the text to show the workings that show the ideology of a text (Jeffries, 2010, pp. 13-14). Jeffries (2016) demonstrates that critical stylistics depends on textual conceptual functions that reveal a level of meaning between linguistic structure and its use in context. Halliday’s ideational metafunction is the focus of Jeffries’ critical stylistics. It elucidates how language is part of creating world-views. The textual conceptual functions assist in exposing the ideology hidden in a text by linking linguistic structure to higher-level conceptual meaning (Jeffries, 2016, p.160). The textual conceptual functions proposed by Jeffries (2010, 2016) are as follows:

a) Naming and Describing

Names can call and name things in different ways. A name is not limited to the reference of the noun. It also includes the words that accompany the nouns, the co-texts like adjectives, postmodifiers, clauses, and the nominalized verbs (Jeffries, 2016, p.164).

b) Representing Actions/Events/States

This textual- conceptual function represents the selection of transitivity. It shows the semantic function of a noun phrase concerning verbal elements. It reveals how a speaker or a writer expresses the situation according to actions, events, or states. In such a way, it aims to show who shoulders the responsibility of the resulted action (Jeffries, 2016, p.164).

c) Equating and Contrasting

Jeffries (2010) sets syntactic triggers to create equivalence and opposition. It is one way to explain a text by different words, and it is a way to find out peculiar work in context (Jeffries, 2016, p.164).

d) Exemplifying and Enumerating

Exemplifying and enumerating are related and hard to differentiate. Therefore, the readers need to employ “pragmatic inferencing” to identify them. The difference between them is that when exemplifying occurs in a text, the list is indicative. With enumerating, the list in a text is comprehensive (Jeffries, 2016, p.164).
e) Prioritizing
Prioritizing is found when text producers prioritize parts of the content of the utterance. It occurs in subordination, information structure, cleft constructions, and some other syntactic clues (Jeffries, 2016, p.165).

f) Assuming and Implying
It is associated with presupposition and implicature. There are some features of implicature, which fit into the interpersonal (pragmatic) level of meaning. Besides, there are textual triggers of presupposition (assuming) and implicature that are not contextual (Jeffries, 2016, p.165).

g) Negating
It is the way of building non-existent worlds (specifically narrative) to promote and enhance an ideology, like fearing, desiring, or believing, for a reader. It evokes positive and negative reality (Jeffries, 2016, p.165).

h) Hypothesizing
Presenting hypothetical reality can be shown by adopting the modality system. Halliday (1994) thinks that the modal system fits in the interpersonal metafunctions of language. However, Jeffries (2016) thinks that modality is ideational in its textual conceptual meaning. It can show the impact on the reader or hearer in different ways (Jeffries, 2016, p.165).

i) Presenting the Speech and Thoughts of other Participants
This tool shows others speech and thought through the division of direct and indirect speech and direct and indirect thought. According to Jeffries (2016, p. 166), it is related to the textual function.

j) Representing Time, Space and Society
It shows how the text organizes its deixic center and draws the reader’s attention towards that deixic center. In that way, a reader or hearer takes a view situation from within the text, and so they become more sensitive to textual ideology (Jeffries, 2016, p.166).

In the present paper, the tool selected for analysis is the textual conceptual metafunction of negating. It attempts to show a non-existent world that fits the imaginary and inspirational world most usually created in the stories of science fiction, in general, and those directed to young adults, in particular.

1.1.2 Negating
According to Jeffries (2016), Negating can portray mental images of the negated ideology. Negating works on the textual level between the semantic and the pragmatic meanings. Texts exploit syntactic triggers like the particle not with the dummy auxiliary verbs do, does, did and other auxiliaries, or no as a modifier of nouns and the adverbial never. Negating occurs in the morphological usage of un, in, im, etc., and lexical verbs like fail and lack (Jeffries, 2016, p.165).
1.1.3 The Semantic Macrostructure and Semantic Microstructure

The process of detecting the extracts (where the themes of order and chaos exist) has mainly relied on linguistic bases. The first-level analysis depends on the application of the semantic macrostructure and semantic microstructure. Both semantic macrostructure and semantic microstructure have a significant role in different domains of human studies, and social sciences. They are associated with studying discourse interaction and cognition.

Semantic macrostructure refers to global semantics or global topics. It is vital for communication and interaction and aims at discerning how people, consciously or unconsciously, comprehend the structures by explaining them or showing their behaviors towards them. Moreover, people display their reactions toward these structures depending on social manifestations. This way, people rely on cognitive aspects to understand the discourse of the semantic macrostructure (Van Dijk, 1980, p. 1). It is concerned with what discourse is globally about making clear the global coherence in a text or talk. Semantic macrostructures “define what speakers, organizations, and groups orient towards and that has a great impact on further discourse and action” (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 102). In a way, “they are often expressed in discourse, for instance in titles, headlines, summaries, abstracts, thematic sentences or conclusions” to arrive at the intended semantic macrostructure (intended theme) (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 102). The semantic macrostructure is an essential general introductory manifestation in any analysis. It gives a general overall idea of what a text is all about and dominates many other domains of discourse and its interpretation (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 102).

The semantic microstructure refers to local meaning or local topic. It is recognized by “the meaning of words …, the structures of propositions, and coherence and other relations between propositions” (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 103). Analysis of semantic microstructure comes next to the review of semantic macrostructure. The investigation occurs in examining the words and modes of expressions since the selection of words is vital in distinguishing the text, which transfers specific meaning to actions and subjects. The vocabulary chosen to convey ideas, concepts, and meanings is dealt with in semantic and linguistic analysis (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 103).

For the importance of semantic microstructures in making thematic inferences and ideology deduction, Van Dijk (2002) states:

[A]nalysis of local meanings will try to relate the selection of propositions expressed in text and talk to underlying event and context models as well as socially shared (group) representations such as knowledge, attitudes and ideologies. Thus… local meaning … will typically be a function of the ideologically based event models (p. 231).

As is mentioned earlier, the idea of semantic macrostructure is relative and exists only in term of the idea of semantic microstructure. The semantic structure of complicated information must be
described relatively to other semantic structures that are ordinary or local level like the meaning of words, phrases, clauses, and simple actions. Therefore, the local information represents microstructures, and the analysis requires the microstructure to understand the macrostructures that are global semantic information and linked relatively to microstructures of discourse, cognition, and interaction. It might be then that the same type of information may work as microstructure or macrostructure; they depend on the contribution in the text (Van Dijk, 1980, p 13).

1.2 Analysis of Data

1.2.1 The Theme of Order

Extract 1

Alby spoke in a loud, almost ceremonious voice, looking at no one and everyone at the same time. “Ben of the Builders, you’ve been sentenced to Banishment for the attempted murder of Thomas the Newbie. The Keepers have spoken, and their word ain’t changing. And you ain’t coming back. Ever.” A long pause. “Keepers, take your place on the Banishment Pole.” Thomas hated that his link to Ben was being made public—hated the responsibility he felt (Dashner, 2006, p. 93).

In the extract above, the theme of order is entailed in the semantic macrostructure manifested by the propositions of:

- “Ben of the Builders, you’ve been sentenced to Banishment for the attempted murder of Thomas the Newbie”;
- “The Keepers have spoken, and their word ain’t changing”;
- “And you ain’t coming back. Ever”;
- “Keepers, take your place on the Banishment Pole”;

On the semantic microstructure level, the order exists in the lexicalization of “ceremonious”, “sentenced to Banishment” and “Keepers have spoken”.

Both the semantic macrostructure and the semantic microstructure suggest the meaning of order through the execution of law and banishment of guilty people to achieve order and stability.

As far as negation is concerned, there is lexical negation in the use of “no one” (indicating the eyesight direction of Alby). He was announcing the judgment and banishment of Ben. This event leads to the ideology of indiscrimination when it comes to law to achieve order. Another lexical negation is the use of “hate” to emphasize sympathy with the supposed criminal (Ben) and hatred towards maintaining justice and law execution, which could lead to torture and misery of the loving ones. Thus, the ideology of torment towards order is inferred. There are, also two cases of grammatical negation “their word ain’t changing” and “you ain’t coming back” referring to the firmness of the judgment made leading to the ideology of fortitude.
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Extract 2

He backed against the tree, trying to get away from Alby, who stayed right in his face. “No interruptions, boy!” Alby shouted. “Whacker, if we told you everything, you’d die on the spot, right after you clunked your pants. Baggers’d drag you off, and you ain’t no good to us then, are ya?” “I don’t even know what you’re talking about,” Thomas said slowly, shocked at how steady his voice sounded. Newt reached out and grabbed Alby by the shoulders. “Alby, lay off a bit. You’re hurtin’ more than helpin’, ya know?” Alby let go of Thomas’s shirt and stepped back, his chest heaving with breaths. “Ain’t got time to be nice, Greenbean. Old life’s over, new life’s begun. Learn the rules quick, listen, don’t talk. You get me? (Dashner, 2006, pp. 10-11).

From a semantic macrostructure viewpoint, order entailed from the propositions of:
- “No interruptions, boy!” Alby shouted;
- “Alby let go of Thomas’s shirt and stepped back, his chest heaving with breaths”;
- “Old life’s over, new life’s begun”;
- “Learn the rules quick, listen, don’t talk. You get me?”

More precisely, on the semantic microstructure level, the theme of order is also established in the lexicalization of “how steady his voice sounded”, “let go”, and “stepped back” which show how the situation in the extract inclines towards firmness and order.

Grammatical negation is found in “ain’t no” (doubled), “don’t” (twice), and “Ain’t”, in the speech of Alby (the leader of the situation) when he gives instructions to Thomas. Close observation of the co-text surrounding this negation, the ideology of harshness towards order is spotted. As for Thomas, his reply to these firm instructions (rules) came with the grammatical negation surrounded by the co-text of “I don’t even know what you’re talking about” revealing the ideology of ignorance for the order. Grammatical negation is also found in the conditional if in “Whacker, if we told you everything, you’d die on the spot” uttered by the leader Alby directing Thomas and indicating that order exists regardless of the general circumstances. Accordingly, the ideology of ignorance appears for the second time.

Extract 3

Every lovin’ second of every lovin’ day we spend in honor of the Maze, tryin’ to solve somethin’ that’s not shown us it has a bloody solution, ya know? And we want to show ya why it’s not to be messed with. Show ya why thembuggin’ walls close shut every night. Show ya why you should never never find your butt out there. (Dashner, 2006, p. 38).

Order is manifested on the level of the semantic macrostructure only as it is clear in the proposition of the following sentences:
- “[I]t’s not to be messed with”;

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“walls close shut every night”;
“you should never, never find your butt out there”.

There are three cases of negation; a grammatical one, “it’s not to be messed with”, and a lexical one, “you should never, never find your butt out there”. Integrated with the theme of order and supported by the linguistic environment, negation entails the ideology of fortitude.

**Extract 4**

People rarely used their real names online. Anonymity was one of the major perks of the OASIS. Inside the simulation, no one knew who you really were, unless you wanted them to. Much of the OASIS’s popularity and culture were built around this fact. Your real name, fingerprints, and retinal patterns were stored in your OASIS account, but Gregarious Simulation Systems kept that information encrypted and confidential. Even GSS’s own employees couldn’t look up an avatar’s true identity. (Cline, 2001, pp. 28-29).

This extract represents the narration of the novelist himself describing a set of rules for the virtual world of the video game (the OASIS) that Halliday, the main character, has designed. This game represents the shelter from the miseries of the real world because they can create their dream avatars in the game and live their dream life. The semantic macrostructure is the leading linguistic tool for theme extraction since order mainly exits in the propositions of almost all of the sentences in the extract. Two cases of grammatical negation, “no one” and “couldn’t”, and lexical negation, “rarely”, have existed within the enumeration of the rules that actually exist in a virtual world, which is a replacement of the real world. Thus, these are unreal rules and the order they lead to is illusory. Therefore, the ideology of illusion toward order seems so apparent. However, this illusionary order is still providing the players with the psychological relief they miss in the real world. They can portray their avatars in the way they like. They can live the life they long for. Thus, negation can also lead to the ideology of satisfaction.

**Extract 5**

And since the buildings were just pieces of software, their design wasn’t limited by monetary constraints, or even by the laws of physics. So every school was a grand palace of learning, with polished marble hallways, cathedral like classrooms, zero-g gymnasiums, and virtual libraries containing every (school board–approved) book ever written…. Best of all, in the OASIS, no one could tell that I was fat, that I had acne, or that I wore the same shabby clothes every week. Bullies couldn’t pelt me with spitballs, give me atomic wedgies, or pummel me by the bike rack after school. No one could even touch me. In here, I was safe. (Cline, 2011, pp. 31-32).

This extract indicates order that is embedded in certain propositions on the semantic macrostructure. Wade describes the ideal system and setting of his new school in the virtual world of the video game:

- “[T]heir design wasn’t limited by monetary constraints, or even by the laws of physics”;
• “[E]very school was a grand palace of learning, with polished marble hallways, cathedral like classrooms, zero-g gymnasiums, and virtual libraries containing every… book ever written”.

The two sentences above contain a set of propositions that entail the perfect design of a school in an organized, orderly secured world.

As for negation, there is grammatical negation in “their design wasn’t limited” indicating the ideology of **phantom satisfaction** since it describes a fake world. Grammatical negation also occurs in “no one could tell that I was fat” and “Bullies couldn’t pelt me with spitballs”. It indicates the ideology of **phantom security** since it eliminates social harm from a fake world but not from the real world.

**Extract 6**

My avatar materialized in front of my locker on the second floor of my high school—the exact spot where I’d been standing when I’d logged out the night before. I glanced up and down the hallway. My virtual surroundings looked almost (but not quite) real. Everything inside the OASIS was beautifully rendered in three dimensions. Unless you pulled focus and stopped to examine your surroundings more closely, it was easy to forget that everything you were seeing was computer-generated. And that was with my crappy school-issued OASIS console. I’d heard that if you accessed the simulation with a new state-of-the-art immersion rig, it was almost impossible to tell the OASIS from reality. (Cline, 2011, p. 27).

The semantic macrostructure representation of order is reflected in the perfection of the virtual world created in the video game, OASIS, as seen in the sentence of:

• “Everything inside the OASIS was beautifully rendered in three dimensions.”

Order also exists in the semantic microstructure employment of the sentence, which indicates the perfection of the virtual surroundings inside the OASIS:
• “My virtual surroundings looked almost (but not quite) real”;
• “[I]t was easy to forget that everything you were seeing was computer-generated”;
• “[I]t was almost impossible to tell the OASIS from reality”.

In addition, order is also expressed in “the exact spot” as a semantic microstructure representation indicating how organized that world is and one cannot go astray in it.

Lexical negation in the verb “logged out” is mainly associated with software systems; it indicates the way Wade (the speaker) gets in and out of that fake virtual world. Therefore, the ideology of **illusion** becomes clear. The other three cases of negation (“not quite”, “unless” and the lexical negation in “impossible”) have all denied truth realization that Wade is in unreal world,
when he gets rid of “focus” and stops to “examine” his surroundings. This case, he is going to get indulged in that perfectly bogus world. This way, the ideology of reality denial is achieved.

1.2.2 The Theme of Chaos

Extract 1

He let go of Chuck, slumped backward, trying not to look at the boy’s shirt, black with blood. He wiped the tears from his cheeks, rubbed his eyes, thinking he should be embarrassed but not feeling that way. Finally,…Once he was up, she didn’t let go, and neither did he. He squeezed, tried to say what he felt by doing so. No one else said a word, most of them staring at Chuck’s body without expression, as if they’d moved far beyond feeling. No one looked at Gally, breathing but still. (Dashner, 2009, p. 360).

This extract represents the killing of Chuck. He is one of the young runners and Thomas’ first friend in the Glade. He had sacrificed his life by jumping in front of the knife that Gally threw at Thomas.

Chaos exists in the semantic macrostructure in the collaboration of the propositions of most of the sentences in the extract. Chaos is in the topical meaning level of a young person, with childish amusing behavior and love of practical jokes, who was, accidentally, slaughtered by a knife that is not meant to be directed to him. This mistaken killing of an innocent, loving person portrays how chaotic the situation is.

The grammatical negation in “he should be embarrassed but not feeling that way” indicates the ideology of denial. Thomas is supposed to feel embarrassed by the chaos, but he is not. The two cases of negation in “she didn’t let go, and “neither did he”, show the ideology of human correlation in the chaotic and disastrous times. Such a relation can soothe the bitterness of chaos. In “No one else said a word” and “No one looked at Gally”, negation shows the ideology of subservience when nobody reacted to show the refusal of killing.

Extract 2

The woman almost seemed in a trance as she spoke, never taking her eyes off an indistinct spot in the distance. “The sun flares couldn’t have been predicted. Sun flares are normal, but these were unprecedented massive….countless miles became wastelands. Then came the sickness.” She paused, took a breath. “As the ecosystem fell apart, it became impossible to control the sickness— even to keep it in South America. The jungles were gone, but the insects weren’t…. Only the richest can be treated, no one can be cured…. First the delusions start, then animal instincts begin to overpower the human ones. Finally it consumes them, destroys their humanity….

Chaos is embedded in the semantic macrostructure of the following:
This extract is rich with propositions that entail chaos through the portrayed chaotic situations indicated in the sentences above. Besides, chaos also exists in the lexicalization of “trance”, “indistinct spot in the distance” (inspiring a feeling of being lost) and “delusions”.

When “never” and “couldn’t” are integrated with their co-text shown above in the extract, the ideology of being lost becomes so apparent. The lexical negation of “unprecedented”, “countless”, “impossible” and the grammatical negation in “weren’t” and “no one” show the ideology of hopelessness since man does not have cure for diseases and clean and decent place for living.

Extract 3

“Order,” Newt continued. “Order. You say that bloody word over and over in your shuck head. Reason we’re all sane around here is ’cause we work our butts off and maintain order. Order’s the reason we put Ben out—can’t very well have loonies runnin’ around tryin’ to kill people, now can we? Order. Last thing we need is you screwin’ that up. (Dashner, 2009, p.102).

This is an interesting and special extract that carries the theme of chaos but on the semantic microstructure level represented by the word “order” that has appeared four times to mean the opposite (chaos). It is a far-fetched kind of order that is described as “bloody word” that made them do lots of bloody deeds to get it maintained. However, they were just trying to find the map of an illusionary maze. They were in the Maze to perform an extraordinary scientific experiment. The grammatical negation of “can’t” and the lexical negation of “last thing we need” show the ideology of misunderstanding. The pursue of order is pursue of chaos instead.

Extract 4

At first, I couldn’t understand why the media was making such a big deal of the billionaire’s death. After all, the people of Planet Earth had other concerns. The ongoing energy crisis. Catastrophic climate change. Widespread famine, poverty, and disease. Half a dozen wars. You know: “dogs and cats living together . . . mass hysteria!” Normally, the newsfeeds didn’t interrupt everyone’s interactive sitcoms and soap operas unless something really major had happened. Like the outbreak of
some new killer virus, or another major city vanishing in a mushroom cloud. (Cline, 2011, p. 1).

The primary manifestation of chaos is lexicalization (the semantic microstructure) represented by the expressions of “ongoing energy crisis”, “Catastrophic climate change”, “Widespread famine”, “poverty”, “disease”, “Half a dozen wars”, “mass hysteria”, “outbreak of some new killer virus” and “major city vanishing in a mushroom cloud”. The two grammatical negation cases of “couldn’t” and “didn’t” are employed to negate figuring out the way society, in general, and media, in particular, is careless of all the chaotic miseries and prefer not to “interrupt… sitcoms and soap operas” to warn people and inform them of critical issues. Thus, the ideology of underestimation is apparent here.

**Extract 5**

[H]onesty isn’t the best policy after all. Maybe it isn’t a good idea to tell a newly arrived human being that he’s been born into a world of chaos, pain, and poverty just in time to watch everything fall to pieces. … Luckily, I had access to the OASIS, which was like having an escape hatch into a better reality. The OASIS kept me sane. ….. The OASIS is the setting of all my happiest childhood memories. When my mom didn’t have to work, we would log in at the same time and play games or go on interactive storybook adventures together. She used to have to force me to log out every night, because I never wanted to return to the real world. (Cline, 2011, p. 18).

Chaos, here, exists through the SMA of the propositions entailed from:

- “[H]onesty isn’t the best policy”;
- “Luckily, I had access to the OASIS, which was like having an escape hatch into a better reality”;
- “The OASIS kept me sane”;
- “The OASIS is the setting of all my happiest childhood memories”;
- “I never wanted to return to the real world”.

“OASIS” is a video game that has been created by the main character, Halliday, to create a perfect virtual world that is miseries free and pure. The sentences above praise game, which is a safe haven where the characters have always found the peace of mind. However, this is delusory since it is just an escape from the real world, and the chaotic world is ironically even more highlighted when its miseries are neglected to be aggravated. There are also lexicalization entities on the semantic microstructure level that carry the theme of chaos: “world of chaos”, “pain”, “poverty” and “everything fall to pieces”.

The grammatical negation in “honesty isn’t the best policy” shows how the young have the tendency of denial towards the principles of a rational world. The other three cases of negation
also deny the importance of facing reality and encourage escaping the bitter truth and hiding behind illusion leading to achieving the ideology of **reality denial**.

**Extract 6**

I created the OASIS because I *never* felt at home in the real world. I *didn’t* know how to connect with the people there. I was afraid, for all of my life. Right up until I knew it was ending. That was when I realized, as terrifying and painful as reality can be, it’s also the only place where you can find true happiness. Because reality is real. Do you understand?” … Good,” he said, giving me a wink. “Don’t make the same mistake I did. Don’t hide in here forever. (Cline, 2011, p. 364).

The semantic macrostructure indications of chaos are found in:
- “I never felt at home in the real world”;
- “I didn’t know how to connect with the people there”;
- “I was afraid, for all of my life”;

The propositions of the sentences above entail alienation and fear from a chaotic world where true identity and safety are lost. Moreover, the expression “terrifying and painful as reality can be” is the semantic microstructure representation of that chaotic world.

The first two cases of negation, “never” and “didn’t”, lead to fulfilling the ideology of **alienation** towards that uncertain real world. The other two instances of negation, “Don’t” and “Don’t”, fulfill the **back to right** ideology when the creator of the game himself advises others not to be misguided by the illusionary perfect world.

Putting the analysis of the ideologies rendered from the two themes in a totalitarian form, the following table results:

**Table 1. The ideologies associated with the themes of order and chaos**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Order</th>
<th>Chaos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>discrimination</td>
<td>torment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>satisfaction</td>
<td>fortitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>back to right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>being lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>hopelessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>misunderstanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>understimation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reality denial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>alienation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>denial</td>
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<td></td>
<td>illusion</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>reality denial</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Conclusions

The analysis of negation as a critical stylistic device in the two young adult science fiction novels of *The Maze Runner* and *Ready Player One* has led to the following conclusions:

1. As a critical stylistic device, negation is a dutiful linguistic tool. It steers the texts in a flexible way to portray people, places, times, actions, entities and the world in general in one way rather than the other.

2. The young adult science fiction represents an ideology rich discourse that forms a two-edged sword. It deals with all aspects of life, but it mainly focuses on the digital side of life that has become a vital, fascinating issue for young adults. This digital aspect represents the gate through which writers can deeply penetrate the young adults’ minds to form certain ideologies in an effective way. The unique aspect of this process is that it all happens through language that can create extraordinary worlds to attract people in general because of the uniqueness and perfection of these worlds.

3. Table (1) shows that the majority of the ideologies associated with order are negative. Fortitude, harshness, ignorance, illusion, phantom satisfaction, phantom security, denial, and reality denial are severe and critical ideologies which need attention. Young adult science fiction makes reality, law, humanity, and other domains of ordinary, secure life negative for the young adults. Dealing with such receptive minds, one needs to be so cautious that every word counts. The only two positive ideologies found are indiscrimination and satisfaction as two aspects that order provides for humanity.

4. The table also shows the considerable number of negative ideologies associated with chaos; denial, subservience, being lost, hopelessness, misunderstanding, underestimation, reality denial, and alienation. It is worth mentioning that these ideologies do not criticize chaos in a direct way. Instead, they criticize the life issues associated with the chaotic situation. These ideologies produce a dark view of life. They deliver the message that Chaos is part of the real world rather than the virtual or fake world in which the writers have usually put their characters. In other words, young adult science fiction stories employ negative ideologies to criticized many domains in the real world (in comparison to the virtual world of, for example, video games) rather that criticizing the chaotic situation itself.

This paper is a call to young adult science fiction novelists to start a new turn and redirect the tendency of the plot, characters, settings, and events. Our world is suffering from increasing rates of autism cases, suicide, ingratitude towards parents and family, crime, and many other adverse devastating social problems. Thus, let us use this young adult fascinating literary genre to
steer the social situation towards a positive direction and try to portray good deeds and genuine emotions in bright images.

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References


An Action Research on EFL Writing Dilemmas: A Case of Saudi Students and Instructors

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Abstract:
Learning to write in a second language is a great challenge for students; however, certain factors might minimize these challenges. In general, the Saudi students face difficulty to develop the writing competence in a foreign language because they rely on instructors as a sole source of knowledge. Therefore, the study investigated the English language writing in a university in Saudi Arabia. It implemented an action research design based on three main phases; namely, exploration, intervention, and reflection stage. The main questions asked include how the instructors view the writing style of students within the setting and how they perceived the English language writing curricula among the students. The data drew several conclusions that provided insight into the Saudi Higher Education concerning English as a foreign language (EFL) classes. The first is the spoon-feeding of Saudi learners throughout their educational years; therefore, they find it challenging to gain hold of their learning. Second, writing in English is a challenging task for Saudi students. Third, some of the students memorize writing passages to pass their English course. Fourthly, teaching to write was done by focusing on form, writing mechanics, rather than communicative aspects of writing and genre. This study has contributed towards the understanding of Saudi learners in university language classrooms analyzing their perceptions and expectations.

Keywords: Action research, EFL writing, English language learning, foreign language learners, instructors, Saudi higher education, Saudi students.

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Introduction

In the history of language teaching, significant changes are occurring in the writing instruction for the second language. Restriction such as non-creative acts (copying and dictations) were applied to write in classical education that advocates education based on the traditions of Western culture (Timothy, 2015). According to Ferris (2016), in the early 20th century, second language writing (SLW) was taught through guided composition methods. However, in language instruction, the writing was significantly affected by the audio-lingual method in the latter half of the 20th century. It used a repetitive pattern of the grammatical sentences in oral drills for teaching second language learners. The writing was likely to assist in reading, listening, and speaking skills of the learners, given it recognition as a secondary skill. The structuring of this teaching approach is necessary to minimize the rate of errors made by the students (Ferris, 2016). The approach used for teaching the students is adapted through composition in the first language pedagogy so that they can write composition in the prescribed patterns. It is because writing in a foreign language requires a specific type of organizing patterns of organization to be followed with certain linguistic features functioning as units to communicate.

The students, who are unable to write cohesive and coherent essays in the second language tend to memorize sentences before exams (Kabouha & Elyas, 2015). Saudi students are incompetent in using their language; despite their exposure for about six years of English language instruction before entering the university. Al Fadda (2012) evaluates the difficulties experienced by students in learning to write English. The results showed that the differences between written and spoken English serve as a significant challenge to the students. Moreover, attention to different learning styles, the usefulness of certain strategies, and computer-assisted writing instruction were drawn by the students as they expressed their preferences towards writing. This finding highlighted the need to investigate conventional approaches to teach writing as perceived by the instructors and the students.

Writing is an entirely different task for individuals in a foreign language setting because everyone in the surrounding community speaks the target language. In a foreign language context, the social aspects of writing (authentic purpose, audience, and context) are often absent from the second language writers. Students face a variety of challenges in learning to write in a second language. However, none of the studies have articulated specific challenges of Arabic speaking student writers in the Saudi context. A previous study conducted by Kabouha and Elyas (2015) explain the pressure experienced by the students in passing the English language test after conducting a specific module in a limited period. The power of memorization is upstanding among the Arabic-speaking learners; therefore, they can write down in their exams. A concrete-sequential learning style is encouraged by the majority of the speaking cultures in Arab as they require specific planning, analysis, memorization, review, and searching for perfection.

There is a need to investigate the perceptions of instructors and students regarding the writing classes to improve the quality of teaching skills that would help in the promotion of instructional changes. The teaching methodology plays a vital role in the way students perceive the writing process. It is crucial to evaluate the instructors’ approach towards writing instruction given his frequent complaints about low writing proficiency of the students. Therefore, the present study aims to analyze the perceptions of instructors and students on writing classes in Saudi university,
improvements required in the quality of writing instruction, and preferences of students. This study’s aim was implemented through an action research-based workshop intervention that is likely to render the learning needs of students. The study results would bring significant improvement in understanding the challenges faced by Saudi students as they learn to write in English.

Literature Review

The systems, other than those learned during the process of first language acquisition, are referred to as second language writing systems. It is required to improve the awareness level of different linguistic units for the writing systems; for instance, Arabic learner requires exposure to the consonants, English learner needs to be introduced to syllabus and characters as he/she aims to learn the Japanese language. The way a learner learns the second language writing system depends on the discrepancies between two language systems. Benahnia (2016) states that it is difficult for second language learners to adapt to the meta-linguistic, cross-cultural differences, and complexities of English language and syntax. These problems may continue with some learners through their journey of learning different styles that delay their progression of second language acquisition and proficiency. The indications about differences between first language writing system and second language writing system were presented by Cook & Bassetti (2005), as they were well-aware about the impact of other writing systems. Different areas, such as metalinguistic and reading, refer to cognitive ability to transfer linguistic knowledge across languages.

The users of first language writing systems using Roman alphabet produce more spelling errors; moreover, they even face difficulty in learning a second language system. The Arabic speaking individuals learning to write in English face difficulty to write from left to right, as previously they used to write from right to left. The level of phonological transparency may even cause confusion between both the languages, which plays a vital role in knowledge transfer while learning to write in the second language. Reading is likely to become beneficial for a learner if first and second language learners possess similar linguistic units (Cook & Bassetti, 2005). These students are capable of reading faster and encoding the language more vastly. It observed that more time is required by the Arabic learners to encode the phonological passage in English.

Hyland (2015) describes writing as disembodied, which shows no connection between the context and any personal experiences of the writers and readers. The text is likely to be decoded and understood because of adopting the right skills. Testing the ability of learners to communicate based on purpose and genre is considered reliable because it is easy to count assessment on grammatical structures, writing mechanics, and vocabulary choices. It shifts the role of instructors towards examiner from being a writing instructor. The examiner is the one who perceives texts as a mean of demonstrating linguistic skill, rather than just expressing ideas through written texts. Hyland (2015) states the audience concept a debatable issue observed by the linguistic choices in the writeup. This approach of learning demands familiarization of the instructors towards the discourse community of the learners.

Writing is a taught skill for the native speakers of English; however, the process is complicated for the non-speakers writing in English as they had acquired a particular type of contrastive
rhetoric, which reflects their culture. A study conducted by Rass (2011) suggests that cultural transfer results in failure of the Arabic speakers to think of their readers. The way of writing is rather lengthy and indirect in the Arabic written rhetoric. The reader is kept busy guessing what he/she would get, rather than clarifying the point in the beginning. The spelling errors of the learner are significantly affected through the Arabic language interference, resulting in learners to recall articulation of words (Alhaisoni et al., 2015). The Saudi instructors face time shortage as a challenge that is dedicated to the practice of teaching to write in the Saudi context.

The problems faced by English language learners were sought by Javid and Umer (2014), by highlighting severe problems in organizing ideas, lexical items, spelling, and grammar. However, the implementation of pair and group work was suggested to practice more, as the time for writing courses was not adequate. The difficulty faced by second language learners in writing was confirmed by Aldera (2016), after analyzing the cohesion and coherence of eight participants writing a few compositions based on their undergraduate learning. The results showed that areas of logical thoughts, inter-sentence relations, lacked proficiency in syntax, advanced composition methods, and cohesive devices were scored poorly by the learners. The learners failed in differentiating between good and bad models of English language writing because of inadequate application of primary language and writing mechanics.

Hameed (2016) investigates the mechanics of writing and analysis of spelling errors by students of varying proficiency levels. The participants were instructed to complete dictation of words that were considered problematic. It helped in indicating the major types of errors made by these learners that include transposition, substitution, insertions, and omission. Writing errors were also investigated by Al-Khairy (2013), who found significant problems in spelling, irregular verbs, punctuation, and lexical items. Rajab et al. (2016) identify the perceptions and practices that prevail among the instructors in the provision of feedback on writing. The obstacles faced in delivering corrective feedback in writing classes include large class sizes, limited time, and an overwhelming workload. The perceptions of instructors on these issues were either disregarded or made invisible. Alqurashi (2015) explores the perspective of students on the responses provided by the instructors. The study showed the willingness of the English language learners in rereading their work after receiving comments on it by the instructor. It signified the need for acknowledging the value of written feedback provided by the instructor on the surface and meaning-level errors.

Methodology

The study has employed an action research design based on three main phases that include exploration, intervention, and reflection stages. The use of an action research project generated a vast amount of data. The perceptions of students and instructors on writing in the English language was investigated by conducting interviews, field notes, classroom observations, and classroom diaries. Exploring the writing setting of the workplace was conducted during the first phase, that is the exploration phase. This phase completed by achieving classroom observation through the academic year 2017 – 2018. Here, the writing classes were observed concerning teaching and responding to the writing instructions. It conducted semi-structured interviews with the instructors and the students. The main questions asked from the instructor include;

- How did instructors view the writing style of students within the setting?
- How did instructors perceive the English language writing curricula among the students?
The students, along with the instructors, were also interviewed. It conducted an intervention consisting of 24 writing workshops throughout the academic year in the second phase of the study among the student committing to the project. The workshop comprised of four cycles with six workshops in each. The main aim of writing workshops was to fulfill the needs of students by identifying topics and differentiating approaches to teach writing. The study followed an action research approach within each workshop for designing the writing workshops, rather than following a pre-set plan. The workshops were planned based on the notes taken through observations, which acted as guidance for conducting the study. The students were prompted to use writing portfolios, including a vocabulary log and classroom diaries during the workshops. It analyzed collected data from the previous two phases in the third and final phase known as reflection phase.

Results and Discussion
Phase 1 - Exploration
Instructor’s Interview Analysis
The interviews conducted with the instructors helped in understanding the way instructors taught writing in their classes, the reluctance of students in participating, along with reasons behind student’s frustration. These interviews justified the procedure used to conduct writing workshops in the second phase. The interviews with the instructor pinpointed the major highlights as the questions revolved around teaching to write in a second language, the needs of students, methods of instruction, and usage of resources and material required for delivering lessons.

According to two of the instructors, the engagement of the students lacked in the correct levels of English language learning; although, students had undertaken placement tests. It considered the lack of basic ability to construct simple sentences, including subject, verb, and object as the most severe drawback. However, English was known as an important course for students in the field of Science and Medicine. One instructor stated,

“I was [surprised] to see that despite attempting the placement test, the basic sentence construction in the English language was inadequate among the students, which further increased our responsibility."

Another instructor shared her experience of free writing in an elementary school in detail that offered freedom to the students to write anything they wished. The students intended to freely write because they knew that no grading was to occur for it. Instructor quotes her experience,

“[W]hen I asked my students how did they feel about the test, all of them were pleased; I also saw those students participating that were previously reluctant to participate in the writing class.”

Although the instructors believed freewriting to be efficient, students would not know how and why it was essential to use a writing pack in the curriculum. Such as, only one instructor used this approach; while, some of them just wrote down words.

According to Instructor B, the process approach adopted for the writing is a plan mapped out in the learner’s books. She prioritizes the activities, i.e., “brainstorming, activities, then the first
draft, and then they have to make the final draft.” It reflects that they were aware of the practices that promote their students to learn, as stated;

“[A]t the end I think that they all use the same style that they want to find out what is right and what’s wrong in their writing and they have to pass. And even for us instructors, we’ve to follow what’s in the writing booklet or writing packs. So whatever brainstorming activities, we have we go through with the students.”

The use of innovative teaching methods was limited as they lack the interest to execute it. The lack of interest further amplifies when a task is to be completed in a limited time. It leaves no room for the instructor to execute new or exciting strategies. The writing of the learners is likely to improve when there is an improvement in their proficiency level. Moreover, the instructor observed that the schooling of the girl (private and public) affected their proficiency level;

“Also, I find a difference between students who graduated from public schools and those who graduated from private schools. I guess those who come from private schools; are exposed to different, another curriculum. It’s different from what they take in public schools. So, I find the level of creativity in writing with those students a bit higher than the government schools.”

Instructor C and D had similar views as that of Instructor A and B, who considered the writing of the students inadequate along with their willingness to learn more. The more apparent strategy adopted by the students was to memorize the content as they felt it could save their grades in the exam. Instructor C states,

“[S]tudents feel safe as they can do things on their own and get good scores; also, students can imitate the sentence which gives them a sense of accomplishment.”

Likewise, it observed a similar pattern, i.e., lack of inclination towards writing was observed for the instructor who was trying to communicate the writing techniques to the students, who eventually failed to learn. According to instructor C, the word ‘secure’ best describes the students’ memorization feeling as they were aware of what to write in an exam. The strategy of instructor D of providing a format to the student also failed, as despite having the format, students writing fail to meet the expectations of the instructor. However, Instructor C explained that unwillingness of EFL student and their resistant accounted for their lack of learning, as stated;

“[I] think. However, we try even if they are reluctant, we try to make them love it and start to be interested and motivated but sometimes, yeah it’s hard to make them accept the idea of writing a free paragraph.”

At the end of the term, the interview could only be conducted with instructor D, as other instructors did not have the time to participate. The researcher met instructor G for the first time, maintaining a formal conversation style. The interview was conducted in a classroom as other instructors occupied the staff room. Since instructor G is non-Saudi; therefore, she does not know how to communicate in Arabic. Due to this, she only delivered lectures in the English language.
She supported another instructor statement by highlighting that it is imperative to learn; although, writing is difficult. She stated that;

“[I] know it’s a challenge but I definitely think it’s important for them to be able to learn writing from their English instructor just so that it could help them in the future with their studies and even beyond their studies when and if they decide to get a job, they should be able to do some basic writing. Even if they don’t decide to get a job, at least, they can help their children when they do have them. So yeah, I think for the overall development of any new language, the writing is an important skill for a student.”

It found that written communication occurred just once throughout the interview with the instructors, reflecting the grammar, vocabulary as well as writing mechanism. It was briefly highlighted by instructor G, who emphasized that the writing should be primarily focused on how to achieve the communicative purpose, rather than on the grammatical structure. Such as;

“But then I don’t know how, when you’re pressed for time, and you know, and we need I think that’s something we have to communicate to instructors to instructors more to, to shift their focus more away from you know just there, you know there are 5 grammar mistakes [indiscernible]. And more to what are they communicating and it’s not; it’s not [indiscernible] the change can’t happen overnight.”

Instructor J describes that the use of collaborative working may not be instrumental in every field, and every subject as a classroom instructor may have limited time to complete the work and learn about each practice. The instructor highlighted the capability of students to learn writing using technology, such as with the use of visual technology. Similarly, the instructor showed that using a material consistent with the culture helps them in learning. In this context, one of the instructors stated that;

“Once I [indiscernible] something a song and I was so very excited, and I prepared the worksheets, and one of the students said it’s haram (meaning it is Islamically prohibited) and she was insulting about it. “Excuse me, instructor,’’ uh, she, uh I remember her with her friend, they were very [indiscernible] direct. “Instructor please we don’t listen to songs by her if you are going to use them, the song, we will, can we get out?” I told them okay, no songs, okay, you can keep your seats, we can do something else, and it was like I spent a long time, [cross talk] to find the right song, to find them.”

Student’s Interview Analysis

The researcher conducted seven interviews, each with different students. Initially, it conducted interviews at the inception of the classes. The duration of the interview ranged from ten to twenty minutes. Students were hesitant and spoke very little as a result of the asymmetrical relationship between the student and the researcher. The students provided short answers as they were not comfortable, despite making significant efforts. Two more reasons that contribute to the low response of the participants include lack of time and questions about their learning. According to student A, writing is essential; however, she did not provide details as to what was necessary as evident from the respective quote,
“[I] know that writing English is very important for understanding it and becoming self-independent in it.”

Student A attended an English course and had been taught language in schools for about ten years. She was unable to share her opinion on the teaching of the English curriculum and the use of different approaches. Also, she faced difficulty in answering the questions. At times she would stay quiet, and the researcher had to move to the next question. She was unable to recommend anything which could have improved her writing competence; although, she shared that she enjoyed working with her pair and had no experience working in a group.

Contrary to this, student B articulated the opinions presented by student A, as to why she felt that English is vital for her;

“Let us take social media as an example when someone asks me about Islam; I can only reply in Arabic; that’s why no one would understand me. I must communicate in English so that they can understand what I’m saying [...] So if someone disapproves of Islam in some way, I can discuss it with them in English.”

English learning was enjoyed by student C as she reflected the advantages of learning English as for her future; she perceived it to be beneficial in the long run for her career and its development.

“[I]’d like to learn English as it is the only way I can be successful in my career, or grow.”

Similarly, student D opinionated that the methods of teaching should be improved; although, she accepted that the deliverance of the curriculum was good. Student E stated that learning English is significantly crucial as she has to communicate with people in England. She stated that simple English is good as she finds it more interesting, which allowed her to focus on the task at hand. She discussed that there were many grammatical errors in the curriculum, which made it dull. She generally wrote sentences in Arabic and then convert it in English.

“[L]earning English is crucial for me as it is my only mode of communication with the people in England. However, to be honest, I find the curriculum quite boring”.

Consequently, student F believed that English leaning is crucial if she wants a good GPA and a successful career. She found English leaning to be boring; however, realized its significance for learning. She stated that according to her college, the writing of English was considered to be insignificant until examinations occurred. She also likes to work with her pair, i.e., Amani and felt that group work is messy. She supported the use of visual technology in class. She also stated that the repetition of the concept makes writing dull. According to student G, English and its writing is necessary for progress and working in groups was much more enjoyable. The college’s material, according to her, was dull and repetitive. Technology assistance was supported by her; while, she was also able to produce and compose content.

Similarly, student D also realized the significance of English as she traveled a lot. She expected that the university would focus on the learning of the students; however, she felt that the university
ignored it due to the student’s low proficiency level as her. She also believed that a lack of pace with the instructor also impacted her learning. She stated that instructors were less considerate towards the students. She stated that her main objective was to improve her grammar.

**Phase Two – Intervention**

A one-day writing workshop was arranged for all the seven students as an intervention. It conducted a total of six workshops in one cycle, and there was a total of four cycles. The students were asked to write their experience in Arabic for each workshop. It should comprise of what they learned, what they found interesting, what was challenging, and what were their thoughts on the topic as well as the writing strategy. Such as, students were encouraged and were asked to reflect. They were also asked to share their thoughts on the workshop, write about their activities, and their feelings. They wrote of what they found exciting and provided very little explanation of it. Realistically, it is better to provide some training to the students on the procedures before the workshop. The diaries were maintained in Arabic as the objective was to assess student’s perception, rather than their language. Given the constraints of time, some students were unable to write their experience regularly. The following section shares a narrative account of the four cycles of the workshop.

**Cycle One**

Cycle one aimed to know about the creation of a relaxed learning environment by the students. It considered the ability to write short notes as the overarching learning objective for this cycle. The workshops picked up pace after the introduction of visual aids through video clips, which was a positive sign. It also increased the motivation among the students to write as the medium of instruction attracted their interest.

**Table 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop</th>
<th>CEFR Descriptor</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Medium of Instruction</th>
<th>Writing Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 1</td>
<td>Students’ choice</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Writing as personal expression: Freewriting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 2</td>
<td>Use of dictionary</td>
<td>Writing and reading</td>
<td>Visual aids</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 3</td>
<td>Students will be able to write sample notes</td>
<td>Visual aids</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 4</td>
<td>Describing appearances of different individuals</td>
<td>Video clips (Visual and auditory)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Video clips (Visual and audio)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Video clips (Visual and audio)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Cycle Two**

In cycle two, students provided a total of 24 positive observations. New vocabulary was presented using pictures through the observations, and the students found it enjoyable and
motivating that increased their ability to construct sentences. A total of seven negative observations were detected. The negative observations were related to time constraints, understanding of the video clips, and writing lengthy texts.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop</th>
<th>CEFR Descriptor</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Medium of Instruction</th>
<th>Writing Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 1</td>
<td>Students will be able to write sample sentences and provide descriptions</td>
<td>Basic Sentence Structure</td>
<td>Data show (visual and audio)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 2</td>
<td>Compose simple sentences</td>
<td>Video clip (Visual and audio)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 3</td>
<td>Pronouns + People Descriptions</td>
<td>Pictures (Visual aids)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 4</td>
<td>Describing faces</td>
<td>Worksheet (Visual aids game)</td>
<td>Writing and speaking</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 5</td>
<td>Describing themselves</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 6</td>
<td>Revise previous activity</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Cycle Three**

Fashion was chosen as a topic to write about in the third cycle. The task had to be kept simple to maintain the students’ interest and motivation. Students were suggested to construct a collage of favorite fashion pieces. Students were instructed to cut the fashion pieces in pairs and write a short description of the items after tagging them. A total of 20 positive comments were summed up by the students in cycle 3, with a single negative comment that was a time constraint. However, positive comments achieved for the workshop include that it was helpful, beneficial, fun, enjoyable, etc.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop</th>
<th>CEFR Descriptor</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Medium of Instruction</th>
<th>Writing Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 1</td>
<td>Students will be able to write short notes on the topic of choice</td>
<td>Revision (Basic Sentence Structure)</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Writing as a cognitive process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 2</td>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cycle Four
Writing as a cognitive process was focused on cycle four by practicing the use of mind maps, formulating drafts, and outlines. Time was the main issue here because students were in their final term and had a high GPA as of their target. The instructors use a short writing test to assess students with different types of writing. These tasks were provided as homework to the students, which provided them unlimited time to practice extensive writing. The instructor inquired about a few queries from the students as they came to the class, and it seemed that the majority of the students were struggling and require proper guidance.

Table 4
Workshop design for cycle four

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop</th>
<th>CEFR Descriptor</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Medium of Instruction</th>
<th>Writing Approach</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Paragraph modeling</td>
<td>Reading and writing</td>
<td>Writing through reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Drawing mind maps</td>
<td></td>
<td>Writing as a cognitive process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Writing an outline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 4</td>
<td>Student was able to write a paragraph</td>
<td>Complete paragraph writing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Writing as a cognitive process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 5</td>
<td></td>
<td>Complete paragraph writing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Writing as a cognitive process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop 6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Freewriting</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Writing as a personal expression</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phase Three – Reflection
Instructors’ Reflection
Instructors viewed the perfection of writing as the essence of good writing. The instructors’ approach to writing was similar to that of a building block approach or “grammar-translation” method. This building-block approach to writing was considered a good one by the instructors. One of the instructors describing the approach used to teach writing stated that;
“Last year we had these building blocks, the older writing booklet, it was like building blocks of the same structure of sentences then we moved into a paragraph, all the sentences talk about the same thing. But now we have a genre approach for this year trying to give students models on the same genre to help them try to write something similar.”

The writing rules comprise of punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and grammar. Instructors mainly focused on the writing mechanics during teaching, and he tested the student’s ability through the application of writing mechanics during the exam. The writing mechanics were considered necessary for students to become proficient writers. In a similar context, one of the instructors outline that;

“even though how many times you mentioned to them that you have to start with the title, you have to do the indentation, you have to, these things I think we have to focus on more maybe because they are useful for them.”

The exam conducted at the end of each module was the main reason for focusing on writing mechanics. A rubric was determined that helped in the assessment of sentence structuring and writing mechanics. According to one of the instructors;

“You could label our writing technique or style here and as focused writing. If you compare it a little bit to the IELTS when you take an IELTS course before the exam, they prepare you to take the exams, so they don’t teach you creative writing. So, it’s more like focused writing than any other.”

Students’ Reflections

The students believe that writing is secondary in comparison to the other skills, which include listening, reading, and speaking. According to the students, writing is a subordinate skill used for practicing vocabulary and grammar with little attention paid to writing skills. Teaching writing also needed reinforcement of vocabulary items through reading, recomposing correct sentences, and practicing grammatical rules. Students perceived writing similar to the instructors and believed that instructors did not pay much attention to teaching writing;

“I’ve noticed that there is not much concern for writing. In the first level, they used to give us paragraphs and then let us write, memorize, and train ourselves. We never had real training in writing. They just let us write paragraphs thinking that they’ve taught us everything. No one was even there to correct for us.”

In regular classes, learning takes place at minimum, as compared to the learning strategies applied in the workshops. The students lacked the skills to use the correct words in their writing; although, their primary focus was on the vocabulary;

“I originally didn’t know grammatical rules or writing principles, so the workshops helped me in that way even in level one, they didn’t use to tell us the organization of the sentence like the first subject and then verb. I never knew anything like that, so in the workshops, you gave us rules in the beginning and benefited a lot from it. Also the vocabulary, there are words in the books, but we don’t benefit from them in writing, even when you write, you don’t think of using them, which
is the opposite of the workshops, the words we take are varied and can use them in the writing, so it helps a lot.”

There is a significant difference in the way’s students perceives their writing objectives. While the instructors criticize the attitude of students without making any attempts to make the material enjoyable, they blame the students for not following appropriate objectives towards learning. The teaching approach used by the instructor to make the students learn in the second language does not foster learning because it is somewhat outdated. The instructors need to build confidence among the learners for enhancing their language abilities and transpire students through their positive outlook. On the contrary, students are more inclined towards using compensational strategies (like memorizing paragraphs) to make up for lack of learning.

Conclusion
This research investigated the challenges faced by the English language learner as they learn to write in a higher education setting. The study has also explained the factors affecting how students reflect on their practice and their decision-making power. The study helped in highlighting teaching practices of the instructors, student’s perceptions on their learning, and dynamics between instructor and student. The learners were responsible for constructing knowledge based on their beliefs, experiences, and culture, followed by the instructor to create their reality. The study results have significantly contributed towards the understanding of Saudi learners for analyzing their perceptions and expectations to make teaching practices much better in university language classrooms. Possible solutions can be enabled by investigating the challenges faced by the students and instructors. The study would provide an initial base for continuing investigation about writing pedagogy. The study also has highlighted the importance of listening to the voices of students and instructors from the classroom, considering the broader contribution to the field of second language writing. Future studies need to conduct longitudinal studies to provide qualitative results on Saudi learners in various higher education settings. The challenges are likely to be minimized by improving the language learning system, along with the quality of teaching and learning in the Saudi language classroom. There is a significant implication for this study, as it would positively affect the English curriculum and educational policy within the Saudi higher education system.

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References


Student Engagement for Quality Enhancement and Responding to Student Needs in the Moroccan University: The Case of the English Studies Track

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Abstract
The present article aims at providing some empirical evidence on the important role student engagement plays in responding to student needs and in enhancing the quality of the teaching and learning environment in Moroccan universities. Student engagement happens at many levels that correspond to the “principles of good practice in undergraduate education” that were suggested by Chickering and Gamson (1987). This article tries to identify these aspects of student engagement and good practice in the English Studies Track (EST) program from the EST students’ perspective. The data were collected in three Moroccan universities: Abdelmalek Essaadi University in Tetouan, Ibn Tofail University in Kenitra, and Cadi Ayad University in Marrakech. An adapted version of Student Engagement Questionnaire (Kember, Leung & McNaught, 2005 in Kember & Leung, 2009) was administered to 883 EST students. The data were submitted to a statistical analysis of frequencies using SPSS. The results of this study show that EST students experience a low level of engagement with their studies and that the EST program lacks some aspects of “good practice” in higher education. This study can help enhance the quality of university programs as it reveals some gaps and negative practices that need to be taken into account in the reform process Moroccan universities are going through. Another implication of this research is that students are aware of their needs and, hence, are able to provide useful feedback that can be used to improve the quality of the teaching and learning environment in Moroccan universities.

Keywords: Moroccan university reform, quality enhancement, student engagement, student needs

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Introduction

The educational system in Morocco has undergone different reform attempts since 1999 with The National Charter of Education and Training (Commission Spéciale Education Formation, 1999) up to The Strategic Vision of the Reform 2015-2030 (Conseil Supérieur de l’Éducation, de la Formation et de la Recherche Scientifique, 2015). The main aim of these reforms has been to improve the quality of the Moroccan educational system and to make it easier for Moroccan students to integrate the European and the American educational systems, especially at the level of higher education. One of the main reform principles that has been emphasized throughout the various reform documents is the shift towards a more student-centered pedagogy that promotes the learner’s cognitive capabilities, life skills, critical thinking, and initiative taking (The Strategic Vision of the Reform, 2015). This entails giving the student more room to express their points of view about their studies and engaging students at different levels of the educational process. However, despite all the efforts and the good will, Morocco still lags behind in the international rankings as far as education is concerned. The Global Competitiveness Report (2018) reveals that out of 140 countries, Morocco ranks 117th in the category “skillset of graduates” and 138th in the category “critical thinking in teaching”. This means that the Moroccan higher education system has not yet made the crucial shift from a teacher-centered to a student-centered pedagogy that would take into account students’ needs and that would allow the achievement of the abovementioned outcomes. In a study carried out among 55 university students belonging to different higher education institutions (Ben Ajiba & Zerhouni, 2017) it has been found that needs analysis is not a common practice in Moroccan universities as 78.8% of the respondents said they never took a needs analysis survey in their higher education institutions. Even the ones (18.8%) who reported that they rarely took this kind of survey were skeptical about its worth: “I guess they are just trying to give the impression that they care about people’s opinions but they actually don’t.” (Ben Ajiba & Zerhouni, 2017, p. 171) Such a negative attitude is likely to hinder the development of student engagement and the improvement of university programs. Indeed, research has:

Consistently shown correlations between engagement and improvements in specific desirable outcomes, including: general abilities, practical competence and skills transferability, cognitive development, self-esteem, psychological development, student satisfaction, accrual of social capital, improved grades, and persistence. (Trowler & Trowler, 2010, p. 9).

The present article is an attempt to delve into the condition of student engagement in the Moroccan higher education and to provide evidence on the significance of this construct in responding to university students’ needs as well as in the enhancement of the teaching and the learning environments in Moroccan universities.

Theoretical Background

As can be deduced from the title, the present article is based on three concepts: student engagement, student needs and quality enhancement. This section will define these concepts and will lay the ground for the methodological section of this article.

1.1 Student engagement

There is a large body of literature dealing with the concept of student engagement due to its critical role in achieving learning and improving the quality of higher education (Trowler &
Trowler, 2010). Since the late 1980s, researchers have investigated how to increase engagement among students in order to “restructure” the educational system (Keedy & Drmacich, 1991) and to improve student success and reach the desired outcomes (Zepke & Leach, 2010). Student engagement is a complex construct that has a behavioral, a psychological, a psycho-social, and a socio-political dimension. However, in the context of higher education, it is the behavioral perspective that has been most emphasized because there is a deeper concern with “student behavior and teaching practice” (Kahu, 2013, p. 759) and “a desire for enhancement” (Trowler & Trowler, 2010, p. 7).

Among the many definitions of student engagement, Jones (2009) provides the following definition:

Learner engagement is [the] extent to which all learners (1) are motivated and committed to learning, (2) have a sense of belonging and accomplishment, and (3) have relationships with adults, peers, and parents that support learning. Students need to be engaged before they can apply higher order, creative thinking skills. They learn most effectively when the teacher makes sense and meaning of the curriculum material being taught. This can only happen if the teacher has created a safe learning environment that encourages students to meet challenges and apply high rigor skills to real-world, unpredictable situations inside and outside of school. (p. 24)

Jones’ definition indicates that student engagement is a construct that goes beyond motivation. Student engagement is the result of students’ positive interaction with their teaching and learning environment (peers and teachers) and their social environment. It is also the result of students’ involvement in “educationally purposeful activities” (Coates, 2005, p. 26). Finally, student engagement is the product of students’ sense of belonging to their institutions not because they are enrolled in these institutions but because they are given the opportunity to voice their points of view about their studies and because their needs are taken into consideration.

In this regard, Zyngier (2008) suggests that teachers and students must work together within the framework of an “engaging pedagogy” that is based on the principles of “Connecting, Owning, Responding, and Empowering” (p. 1772). This engaging pedagogy is likely to improve students’ motivation which “is an essential element […] for quality education” (Williams & Williams, 2011, p. 2).

1.2 Student needs

Student engagement is closely related to the concept of student needs and the very essence of education. According to Tyler (1949), education consists in “changing the behavior patterns of people”; hence, it is necessary to study the learners in order to diagnose the kind of changes required in a given educational context. A common misconception about student needs in the Moroccan higher education context is that it is a luxury and a way to ‘spoil’ students. The idea that students do not know their needs is quite widespread among university teachers and staff. The reason may be due to a lack of awareness of the difference between needs and wants. It is thought that if we study student needs and if we involve students in this process, teachers will have to submit to students’ whims and fantasies. Tyler’s definition of student needs dissipates this
confusion and attests to the extreme importance of having a clear idea of student needs in the educational process:

"Studies of the learner suggest educational objectives only when the information about the learner is compared with some desirable standards, some conception of acceptable norms, so that the difference between the present condition of the learner and the acceptable norm can be identified. This difference or gap is what is generally referred to as a need." (Tyler, 1949, p. 2)

In fact, student needs are closely related to the changes and outcomes that the educational system is supposed to achieve.

According to Harris (2010) graduates of the 21st century need to study in a learning environment that is fair, engaging and motivating, accessible, challenging, appropriate, comfortable, and is also a learning community. These criteria can be identified in Chickering and Gamson’s article “Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education” (1987). These seven principles are based on what students need in their higher education programs, regardless of the field of specialty, in order to achieve a high level of engagement and the ultimate purpose of undergraduate education which is to “prepare students to understand and deal intelligently with modern life” (Chickering and Gamson, 1987, p. 3)

According to Chickering & Gamson (1987), “good practice in higher education
1. Encourages contacts between students and faculty
2. Develops reciprocity and cooperation among students,
3. Uses active learning techniques,
4. Gives prompt feedback,
5. Emphasizes time on task,
6.Communicates high expectations, and
7. Respects diverse talents and ways of learning.” (p.2)

If these principles are practiced, they are likely to increase student engagement and enhance the quality of the higher education programs.

1.3 Quality enhancement

Quality is one of the main concerns in the 21st century education context. Quality assurance mechanisms and agencies are created by governments to maintain and raise the quality of education. However, many quality institutions in the world are focusing more on enhancement rather than assurance. Biggs (2014) states that quality enhancement is broader than assurance because quality enhancement veers towards “addressing problems as they arise and takes steps to prevent them, ensuring that teaching will be better” (p. 19). Quality enhancement or improvement is a cyclic process that aims at refining the educational practices in a way that helps achieve the set goals and objectives. According to The Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), Scotland (2017), enhancement is “taking deliberate steps to bring about improvement in the effectiveness of the learning experiences of students even when threshold quality is secure” (p. 3).
For this purpose, the QAA Scotland has designed the Quality Enhancement Framework that encompasses five elements: “Enhancement Themes, institution-led review, student engagement in quality, public information, and Enhancement-led Institutional Review” (QAA, 2017, p. 2). Student engagement plays an important role in the Scottish Enhancement Framework for two reasons. First, students are believed to have an important role in the “formulation, operation and evaluation of the institution’s approach to enhancement” (QAA, 2017, p. 27). Second, the Enhancement-led Institutional Review team takes into consideration in its evaluation “the approach institutions take to engaging students in their own learning” (QAA, 2017, p. 27).

In light of the aforementioned evidence from the literature, the present article argues that student engagement is a key factor in responding to higher education students’ needs and in enhancing the quality of the teaching and learning environment in the Moroccan tertiary level. The less students are engaged in their studies, the less quality there is in the higher education programs and the less students are satisfied with their studies. This premise will be examined through the fieldwork that will be presented in the following sections.

Methodology

2.1 Research questions

The two questions this article tries to answer are:

1. To what extent are the English Studies Track (EST) students satisfied with their teaching and learning environment in EST?
2. To what extent does the EST program respond to Chickering and Gamson’s seven principles of good practice?

2.2 Research setting

The study was carried out in the English departments of three Moroccan universities: Abdelmalek Essaadi University in Tetouan (AEU, North of Morocco), Ibn Tofail University in Kenitra (ITU, North West of Morocco), and Cadi Ayad University in Marrakech (CAU, Center of Morocco). The choice of these universities was based on two criteria: representativity, i.e. representing universities from different regions of Morocco; and accessibility.

2.3 Research Population and sample

The research targeted the English Studies Track students in the English departments of the abovementioned universities. 883 students studying in Semester 2 (S2), Semester 4 (S4), and Semester 6 (S6) participated in the study. Table 1 gives more information about the distribution of the participants in terms of the university and the semester they belong to.

Table 1 The participants’ distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The English Department</th>
<th>Semester 2</th>
<th>Semester 4</th>
<th>Semester 6</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AEU</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITU</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAU</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>321</strong></td>
<td><strong>211</strong></td>
<td><strong>351</strong></td>
<td><strong>883</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.4 Research instrument
Data was collected using Kember, Leung, & McNaught’s (2005) the Student Engagement Questionnaire (SEQ) (in Kember & Leung, 2009) which was adapted to the Moroccan context. The adapted version of the SEQ contains 32 statements. Each statement is followed by a five-point agreement Likert scale or a five-point frequency Likert scale. The present article will report the findings related to eight items of the questionnaire; namely the ones that will answer the aforementioned research questions.

Results
3.1 First research question results

The first research question “To what extent are the English Studies Track (EST) students satisfied with their teaching and learning environment in EST?” was answered in the survey through the following statement: “I have been satisfied with the quality of the program.”

Figure 1 shows that 32.4% of the respondents cannot make up their mind on their level of satisfaction with the program. However, a striking phenomenon that arises from the results yielded by this item is that the percentage of students who are satisfied with the EST program (27.7%) is lower that the students who are dissatisfied (38.6%). The reasons for students’ lack of satisfaction with the teaching and learning environment in the English Studies Track may be due to the information revealed by the answers to the second research question.

3.2 Second research question results

The second research question “To what extent does the EST program respond to Chickering and Gamson’s seven principles of good practice?” was answered through seven statements in the survey. The results will be presented in the order Chickering and Gamson’s principles have been presented in the theoretical background. Each principle will be followed by its corresponding statement in the SEQ.
3.2.1 Principle 1: encourages contacts between students and faculty

“I can have meetings with my teachers if I need extra help.”

![Figure 2 Frequency of EST students’ meetings with teachers](image)

The majority of the respondents state that they never (41%) or rarely (25.6%) receive any kind of tutoring from their teachers if they face any academic difficulties (Figure 2). 18.6% claim they can sometimes meet their teachers if they need extra help. However, only 14% of the respondents have been able to meet their teachers to get some kind of counseling.

3.2.2 Principle 2: develops reciprocity and cooperation among students

“I have developed my ability to work effectively as a team or group member.”

![Figure 3 Team work in the EST program](image)

Figure 3 shows that 38.4% of the respondents consider that the EST program has always or usually provided them with opportunities to work effectively in a team. However, 33% deem
that these opportunities happen sometimes only; and 28.5% think that it has been rarely or never possible for them to develop effective collaborative skills in the EST program.

3.2.3 **Principle 3: uses active learning techniques**

“I have been given the chance to participate actively in classes.”

EST students’ perception of their participation in the program they study is not very positive (Figure 4). Only 15.1% of the respondents state that they have always been given the chance to participate actively in classes. 36% say they sometimes participate actively in class; whereas, 21.1% declare they rarely do so. 10.2% of the participants consider they never experience an active participation in class.

![Figure 4 Students’ active participation in the EST program](image)

3.2.4 **Principle 4: gives prompt feedback**

“I am given enough feedback on activities and assignments to ensure that I learn from the work I do.

![Figure 5 Feedback in the EST program](image)
Figure 5 uncovers an unsystematic practice of giving feedback to students on the activities and assignments they do in the EST program. 38.3% of the participants get feedback only sometimes and 27.5% rarely or never receive any feedback. Only 9.7% claim they always receive feedback from their teachers and 23.8% say they usually do.

3.2.5  **Principle 5: emphasizes time on task**

“I can complete the requirements of the program without feeling overly stressed.”

![Figure 6 Enough time to complete tasks in the EST program](image)

It can be deduced from Figure 6 that 40% of the participants think that the workload in the EST program is quite stressful because of a lack of time. 30.2% are not sure if they can complete the requirements of the program without feeling overly stressed. The students who believe that they can deal with the program requirements represent 28.4% of the respondents.

3.2.6  **Principle 6: communicates high expectations**

“I am aware of the outcomes I have to reach by the end of each course.”

EST students’ lack of awareness of the program outcomes is the most striking result shown by Figure 7. Almost 40% of the students are only partially aware of the program outcomes; while, 13.8% are rarely aware of these outcomes. The percentage of students who know what they are supposed to achieve in the EST program reaches 40%. This means that the program does not communicate (high) expectations to 60% of the students.
3.2.7 Principle 7: respects diverse talents and ways of learning
“I have experienced a variety of teaching methods (lectures, group work and group discussions, class discussions, peer instruction, online courses …)”
percentage (29.1%) is scored if we add up the percentages of the students who believe that varied teaching methods have been rarely (18.2%) or never (10.9%) used in the EST program.

Discussion

The results of the study have shown, on the one hand, that the EST students are not quite satisfied with the teaching and learning environment in the three participating Moroccan universities. On the other hand, the study has revealed that the EST program does not fully respond to the seven principles of good undergraduate practice. Indeed, there is a permeating sense of confusion and lack of certainty among students that can be deduced from the participants’ answers that fall within the “sometimes” and “I’m not sure” categories, as the abovementioned figures illustrate. The only time when students gave a clear-cut answer was to say that the program does not provide opportunities of contact between students and faculty. This means that the EST program in Moroccan universities lacks “the most important factor in student motivation and involvement”, which is the “frequent student-faculty contact in and out of classes” (Chickering & Gamson, 1987, p. 3).

The present study provides evidence that the Moroccan higher education still adopts a teacher-centered pedagogy that does not create enough opportunities for student engagement and does not respond to the needs of the 21st century graduates. As a matter of fact, the instances of good practice in higher education are usually not instilled by the institutions. They are the result of the initiative of individual teachers who believe in their students’ capacities.

The reform of the Moroccan educational system will not achieve its desired outcomes unless it pays more attention to classroom practices. It is not enough to create quality assurance institutions and evaluate the performance of higher education institutions on the basis of accreditation criteria. It is urgent to “engage with a research-informed, evidence-based approach to evaluation and enhancement” (Harvey & Newton, 2004, p. 160). In this regard, evidence from the literature and the practice of some Quality Assurance Agencies like QAA Scotland has proved that student engagement and a student-centered pedagogy that responds to student needs are the best way to enhance the quality of university programs. There is also an urgent need for more internal reviews within the Moroccan higher education institutions because, according to Harvey & Newton (2004), “it is more difficult for external review to engage with the learning-teaching interface” (p. 153). Enhancing the quality of programs entails getting to the core of the classroom experience in order to identify the positive and negative practices. However, these internal reviews have to be research-informed and not politically oriented.

Conclusion

The main objective of the present study was to shed some light on student engagement in the Moroccan tertiary level context, and its close relationship to student needs and quality enhancement. Little, if no attention has been paid so far to this key element in education in Morocco, hence, the importance of the current study. Great efforts are being made to enhance the quality of the Moroccan higher education system at the macro-level (reform projects, guidelines, new buildings …); nonetheless, it is high time more attention was paid to the micro-level of classroom practices and the students’ role in the educational process.
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References


Spelling Problems and Causes among Saudi English Language Undergraduates

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Abstract
Arab students who learn English as a foreign language, especially Saudi students, face different challenges during the process of learning of the four English language skills, especially writing and its component (spelling). This paper aims to investigate the preceded causes of students’ spelling errors. The main research question sought to be answered is: What are the causes of spelling errors made by the Saudi university students? The research participants were 15 students in the English Language Department at Tabuk University and 15 English language lecturers from the same department. Group structured interviews were designed for the lecturers and students. The findings reveal that there are different causes of students’ spelling errors such as the education system and university syllabus, students’ learning attitude, and the interference between English and Arabic language. This paper concludes that the spelling errors which Saudi university students commit were caused by the negative impacts of their education system and syllabus, where the syllabus ignores the importance of spelling rules and techniques, and the interference between English and Arabic language when the learners refer to their mother tongue while writing in the English language. It is hoped that the findings revealed in this study will help the policymakers in taking necessary actions in improving the learning experience of Arab learners of English. This paper calls for a reform in the English language teaching in Saudi education system so that spelling is given the required emphasis as it is the foundation of English proficiency.

Keywords: English language teaching, Saudi learner, spelling error, foreign language learner, vocabulary

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Introduction
Learning a second language is often challenging for learners as their native language has language rules according to which they pronounce and spell words. A second language has patterns different from their native language, which creates problems for learners as the patterns of their mother tongue become part of their linguistic instinct, which they attempt to apply to the second language (Nor & Rashid, 2018). In order to learn any other language, the learner’s linguistic instinct has to undergo various modifications to accommodate the understanding of the second language and thus developmental stages and encounters with the language many times (Kocatepe, 2017; Zuriyani & Mohamed Ismail, 2019). During the process of learning, the speaker hears sounds different to those she/he instinctively knows and has to form hypotheses about their use. Learners of a second language can have implicit knowledge about the orthographic structure of the target language insofar as they may be able to pronounce or spell a word in their second language without having explicit knowledge of the particular rule they are using.

Spelling is considered an essential component of written language. The potential mistakes in written spellings may change the meaning and understanding of written material and would make it unclear. Hence, it is essential to use the correct spelling of words in order to convey the exact intended meaning of the content. In this context, Babayiğit and Stainthorp (2010) state that grammatical and phonological skills make a significant contribution to spelling performance. Therefore, it can be asserted that spellings play a pivotal role in being a primary and essential skill required by students. Accurate spelling enables writers to express their ideas and thoughts within a standard framework, which is easily understandable by their readers. For effective writing, spelling must also be effective.

Among various difficulties faced by Arab learners of English, the most common error relates to the spelling of words in documents (Al-Bereiki & Al-Mekhlafi, 2015). Students, due to ineffective learning, continue to repeat the same spelling errors, even after they have completed high school or university or have started in their field of work, which can create obstacles to their progress and development. Consequently, spelling errors can handicap students in various ways. According to Rosenthal and Ehri (2010), spelling out loud practice increases the pace of learning the pronunciation of new words. The present study suggests that a good command of spellings enables an individual to communicate his/her thoughts more clearly and openly in their writing. Poor spelling not only makes a bad impression; it also inhibits communication as the reader has to puzzle over the writer’s message.

Literature Review
The concept of spelling has been defined differently by various researchers over the years. Pusapndari (2017) defines spelling as a process of representing the spoken language in a written form that consists of a sequence of letters composed to form words in their generally accepted usage. On the other hand, Mpi (2012) defines spelling as a process that encompasses a number of skills: phonological, morphological, syntax and semantic knowledge, as well as the ability to formulate words based on visual memory along with applying the orthographic rules. Moreover, Perveen and Akram (2014) define spelling as the method for writing words in their correct and acceptable forms. In other words, it is a process of assembling the letters of a given language in
accordance with their correct sequence according to the official orthographical rules of that language otherwise; it would be viewed as a spelling error.

In addition, Ahmed (2017) views spelling as a linguistic method that deals with phonemic orthography. In other words, spelling is the process of word formation by representing the oral language by using the conventional, accepted individual letters according to the rules of that particular language. According to Johnson (2008), spelling is the act of recognizing or mimicking oral or spoken words by the equivalent correct sequence of letters taking into consideration phonological and alphabetical skills and knowledge.

**The Case for Good Spelling**

Researchers and educators are concerned with mistakes and errors made by students in the process of learning a second or a foreign language (Dweikat & Aqel, 2017). One of the requirements for students, especially at higher levels of academic education, is to be able to communicate, to represent oneself through writing or speaking. Students should master the correct spelling to avoid the misunderstandings or miscommunications that can occur as a result of poor spelling. Hence, the proper spelling is one of the qualities that most students should acquire during the development stages of their education.

Alhaysony (2012) claims that people can turn their thoughts into clear and unambiguous written messages with the help of proper spelling. There could be a situation where there was a valid justification for figuring out how to spell which the traditional instructor never tried to make explicit. The reality of the situation may prove that there is something to be said for exercises of a formal sort to cope with different levels of ability. Clearly, if there was no point in spelling correctly, the subject of spelling would not be given so much consideration, still less an appropriate topic in language teaching.

Peters (2013) lists some of the reasons for teaching and learning spelling. First, there are reasons related to communication and concern for others. Poor and careless spelling may hinder communication. The reader may be constantly held up through having to puzzle out what a word is meant to be, or else he may be misinformed. Thus, the degree of precision necessary in spelling relates to the ease and smoothness of communication. Second is the issue related to the question of courtesy. Failure to speak clearly, to write legibly and to spell correctly are signs of discourtesy.

Thirdly, there is an issue of habit-formation. Right spelling as a skill means being precise; the habit of being correct is one of the essential virtues to be acquired by educated persons. Precision is important for communication, especially for the person who is receiving the information, while it is highly significant for the person who wishes to construct the communication (Banfi et al., 2017). Spelling precision can be viewed from two different dimensions: accuracy and stability. Spelling accuracy refers to the correct spelling of a word or the attempts made by a person to spell a word. They may always spell as word accurately (always right), inaccurately (always wrong), or inconsistently (sometimes right) (Rossi, Martin-Changa, & Ouellette, 2018). Inconsistent spelling can sometimes be attributed to a transition period when the learner is in the process of acquiring the correct spelling, but it is not yet stable.
Based on this presumption, the process of learning could include the transfer of training and that what is transferred is a skill such as spelling. The transfer, however, in this context, is not a technique but the basis for the construction of a habit of care. There is a causal relationship between the habits, skills, and ability involved in, handwriting, spelling, punctuation, and sentence construction and paragraphs formation. All these aspects require careful attention by learners who want to acquire a good command of a language (Ouellette, Martin-Chang, & Rossi, 2017). On the other hand, good spellers must also possess some orthographic knowledge which established on a word-by-word basis (Perfetti, 2007).

Fourthly, an important case for good spelling is that it contributes very effectively to learners’ self-concept development. It allows the learners to communicate precisely and acceptably in writing and receive high esteem for their spelling accuracy. The fifth reason for learning to spell is that nearly all spelling systems have been conventionalized years ago by linguists. It is difficult to change or reform spelling systems because they become internalized effectively by the speakers of the language. People will resist any attempt to change a spelling system as it is deeply ‘petrified’.

The sixth good reason for learning to spell is the educational importance attached to it, which is connected to the freedom to write. The freedom to write or creative writing does not mean that people are free to create new spellings (though they can generate new words) but they must develop the spelling skills that allow them to write freely, without making orthographical errors. It is only when people have attained machine-like spelling that is automatic, predictable, and infallible, that we can say they are free to write with confidence, with no backward glances to see if a word ‘looks right’.

The Causes of Poor English Spelling

Different causes of English spelling errors have been mentioned and examined in various studies. In this sub-section, the four most common kinds of spelling mistakes and errors in the written work of students of English are discussed. Overall, spelling errors can be a result of omission, or substitution or insertion, or the misplacement of a letter when writing a particular word.

Omission Errors

Omission is concerned when the inflectional or derivational morpheme in English words is left out, when the speller does not complete a word something is left out. Derivation errors occur when the student does not apply a basic rule or follow the basic instructions for spelling a particular word; for instance, they write *snobish for snobbish. Inflection errors occur when the student ignores or does not make the necessary changes when adding the inflection. For instance, students forget to drop or remove “e” when adding “ing” to some words, producing *timeing for timing or *reduceing for reducing. Residue error is when students forget to drop letters in a particular context like *bite when the past form *bit is required. Phonetic errors are produced when students spell words as they are spoken, like *yot for yacht or *wacht for watched.

Omission Errors

Omission is concerned when the inflectional or derivational morpheme in English words is left out, when the speller did not attempt the morpheme at all, e.g., *bill as an error attempt of billed, or *behin as an error attempt of behind. Omission errors also refer to the omission of one of the double letters in a word with the same two adjacent letters; for example, *hapy (happy) and *speling (spelling). In other words, this kind of error occurs when the speller leaves out one or two
letters from the standard spelling of a word. Moreover, this sort of spelling error may be caused by the inconsistency of the sound and the letter system in the English language (Critten, Connelly, Dockrell, & Walter, 2014).

Substitution Errors
The second kind of error is a substitution, which occurs when the speller substitutes one of the letters of the standard spelling of a word with another. The main cause of substitution and omission errors of English spelling is silent letters (Sénéchal, Gingras, & L’Heureux, 2016). Sénéchal et al. (2016) further explain that there is some statistical evidence that children used their prior orthographic context knowledge when making substitution errors. This can also be because some English letters have inconsistent pronunciation, depending on the context. For instance, the sound /l/ can be represented by letter f, ff or gh as in life, different and laugh. The letter C can be pronounced as /k/ in car, microphone and it is pronounce as /s/ in another context in words like city, nice, and mice. In addition, another sort of substitution error in English spelling occur as result of the inconsistent pronunciation of English vowels; for example, *hangry (hungry), *thes for (this), *fascenating (fascinating), and so forth. Al-zuoud and Kabilan (2013) posit that vowels are another major reason why Arabic students struggle to write error-free English.

Insertion Errors
Another sort of English spelling errors most commonly committed by learners are insertion errors where the spellers add an additional letter when writing a word. A study conducted by Alhaisoni, Al-Zuoud, and Gaudel (2015) shows that insertion errors of spelling are very common among Saudi EFL learners, which may be a result of different sound systems. Examples of insertion errors may be different from person to person. For example, a speller may wrongly write words like, *famous (famous), *prouduce (produce), or by doubling a letter in a word as in: *assisstant (assistant), and *inclusion (inclusion) (Gail, Hantler, Laker, Lenchner, & Milch, 2016).

Ambiguous Errors
These are mistakes that can be seen as either inter-lingual or developmental, as for the most part, they mirror the learner’s mother tongue structure while resembling the expressions of very young mother-tongue learners (Al-Buainain, 2012). Al-Harrasi (2012) refers to a concern in the matter of categorisation, because these categories do not account for why a student may have more than one kind of spelling mistake in a single word (e.g., *discrbiption = depiction) or why two students may make different sorts of blunder spelling the same word, (e.g., *permition, *permision, *permmission = authorization), so the categorisation of errors may be of limited help in the understanding of spelling errors. Allaith and Joshi’s (2011) analysis suggested that Arabic students make mistakes using phonemes that doesn't exist in their own language; for instance, (/p/and/v/) so they substitute similar ones that do exist in Arabic for example, (/b/→/ب/and/f/→/ف/). They also examined students’ ability to distinguish between/b/and/p/and between/f/and/v/. A few incorrect spelling events thus occur because of phonological issues.

Methodology
This research paper employs case study approach. Data were gathered through structured group interviews with the students who are in the final year of their degree in English language at university college of Haqel and their instructors. 3 group interviews are used in this study for the
students (A, B, C) in each group five students. In addition, three group interviews were also used in this study for the lecturers, whereas in each group consist of five lecturers. All the interviews were recorded, analyze, and codes manually. For example, (S1/GA) means student number 1 from group A and (L2/GB) means lecturer number 2 from group B.

**Findings**

**Students’ Views**

Different students from different groups shared different comments toward the causes of their spelling errors. For example; the education system and university syllabus, students’ learning attitude and the interference between English and Arabic language.

The participants felt that spelling problems are due to the poor education system in Saudi Arabia. For example, a participant mentioned that *students in Saudi Arabia have been learning Arabic since childhood and the education system only focuses on Arabic so becoming competent in English is very difficult (S1/GA)*. The responses revealed that as English is a foreign language, they face many challenges and there is lack of focus of the educational system to train students at beginner level at school so that they can learn to overcome language issues. Sawalmeh’s (2013) study found that the Saudi government and Ministry of Education focuses only on Arabic and Arabic communication skills. There are many challenges for EFL students because they fail to understand even basic English instructions.

A participant from Group A pointed out that *they lack proofreading as a strategy or any reading skills in [their] syllabus or to check [their] writing, which is the real reason for the spelling mistakes in writing (S2/GA)*. The student claimed that lack of reading skills and proofreading strategies taught by lecturers, means most students fail to identify their spelling mistakes. However, with the help of proofreading, many of their writing issues can be improved. O’Brien’s (2015) study used qualitative methods and found that proofreading helped students to identify their spelling mistakes, which is one of the most effective ways of preparing error-free scripts.

In the same vein, a participant from Group A stated *that [their] syllabus during [their] studies in the university lacks the four English language skills and the spelling rules or any kind of writing techniques (S3/GA)*. Some spelling problems occur due to lack of knowledge of writing rules, listening rules, reading rules, and speaking rules. The participant above pointed out they don’t study any English language skills in their studies at University as these skills are not part of the students’ syllabus. According to Murphy, Macaro, Alba, and Cipolla’s (2015) qualitative study based on observation techniques, the findings revealed that understanding writing rules allows students to identify key ideas, which helps them avoid spelling errors. Alhasiany’s (2014) findings suggested that those students who learn writing and speaking rules from the beginning of their studies can avoid many kinds of spelling mistakes.

A participant from Group B mentioned that *students face many challenges about how to deal with language writing issues because there is poor concept building at primary level (S2/GB)*. This participant sees language issues are mostly due to the education system failing to develop clear concepts for students in their early ages of education. This finding is supported by those of Al-Jarf
(2008) that educational institutions need to focus on the concept of educational development at basic levels.

A participant from Group C commented on *the syllabus that is taught to [them] during [their] academic studies is limited and it does not help [them] to overcome the basic level language challenges [S1/GC]*. Similar findings were obtained by Al-Nofaie (2010) that the education system and institutions need to plan beyond the structural ways of teaching the English language so that spelling can also be improved.

A student from Group A stated that:

*The English syllabuses do not include spelling rules and patterns which can be applied to a large number of words, with few exceptions (e.g. the effect of (e) on the vowel in some words, e.g. rat /ræt/ vs. rate /reɪt/; tub vs. tube) (S3/GC)*

The limited rules and guidelines offered in the syllabus fail to fulfill the students’ needs and queries regarding writing techniques and spelling rules which could allow Saudi students to potentially produce error-free scripts. Alharbi’s (2015) analysis also proposed that at tertiary level, students are not provided with basic instruction, which means there is a lack of clarity concerning writing skills.

Students’ lack of interest in learning Basic English language skills results in their not being able to improve their spelling. For example, a participant stated that *students do not practice or memorize English on a daily basis, so they often make spelling mistakes (S6/GA)*. This has encouraged them *to stop writing and memorizing the spelling of difficult words (S7/GA)*. Chou’s (2014) observations revealed that learning English requires memorization and similar practices on a daily basis so that students can quickly correct their mistakes. It is clear that, when the students found themselves far removed from writing skills and if their university as well their lecturers pay no any attention to this skill, the students will stop practicing this skill even if they know the benefits of it.

There is a wide range of studies concealing the reasons for spelling mistakes. Alhasiany (2014) showed that students make a spelling mistake because of their own careless attitude. Yen, Hou, and Chang’s (2015) mixed method research found that students do not practice or memorize English on a daily basis, which inhibits their learning and often creates problems like multiple spelling mistakes. The findings show that the poor writing practice results in extensive spelling mistakes and the text books available to the learners are limited and this reduces their opportunities to learn spelling and limits the texts they write and knowledge of writing methodologies.

A participant from Group B mentioned that *students don’t care about the rules and the structure of English language; the students do not pay any attention to English spelling rules (S8/GB)*. It seems that most of the students do not even bother to learn the correct spelling even after noticing their mistakes. Basoglu and Akdemir (2010) found that it is the students’ attitude that is the problem, as many students do not have much interest in correcting their common spelling errors.
This problematic attitude is associated with the nature of English language which makes students reluctant to show interest in learning basic forms (S10/GB). It seems that students are not interested in finding their common mistakes; there is lack of self-evaluation by students, which reflects their unwillingness to learn English. Figueredo’s (2006) study revealed the same results that EFL students’ attitude is highly influential for increasing (or reducing) their interest in learning and writing in the English language.

A student from Group C stated that Saudi students come and sit in the classroom and expect the lecturers to do all the work. The students just listen to their lecturers and do not contribute in class (S8/GC). The attitude of students in not participating in class, but expecting their teachers to do everything, ignore the fact that spelling rules have to be learned and remembered by the students themselves.

Regarding the interference between English and Arabic, the lecturers from the different Groups shared different ideas for example; Saudi university students make spelling errors due to inter-lingual or intra-lingual errors. The inter-lingual errors start when students make spelling errors due to their native Arabic transfer. On other hand, their intra-lingual errors are because of poor learning of the second language (S3/GA). The respondent suggests that inter-lingua and intra-lingual errors cause the students in Tabuk University to misinterpret English words and sentences. The students believe that because Arabic is their mother language and proficiency in it is most important, other languages are difficult for them. In this way, another language like English is not conceived as a means of communication, so the students of Tabuk University do not try to master any foreign language.

Another comment regarding the interference between English and Arabic language shared by the lecturers, the nature of English language is also a cause of spelling errors. English is a difficult language, which is not easy to understand or learn. The main cause of students spelling errors is due to the number of silent letters or the grouping of letters makes it hard to understand for Saudi students to spell words when the students compare it with Arabic (S3/GC). The response suggests that the nature of English language in terms of the silent letters or group of letters makes it hard for the students to understand how to spell words especially when the students compare it with Arabic. Silent letters also affect the pronunciation of the preceding vowel (like the difference between hop/hɒp/ and hope /hoʊp/) although they themselves are not pronounced. Hence, members of the teaching staff find English is often difficult for Saudi students because the relationship between the spoken and written form is not straightforward as it is in Arabic; the function of the silent letter cannot be understood easily because there are none in Arabic and most of the students refer to their mother language rules while writing in English.

Lecturers’ Views
Different lectures shared different comments or ideas toward the preceded causes of students’ spelling errors. For example; poor syllabus and education system, students lack knowledge of spelling rules and techniques and administrative constraints.

A participant from group A reported in the Saudi context, English is taught as a foreign language (EFL). Students are supposed to master the four language skills within English. Teaching
the skill of writing, especially mastering the spelling component, is one of the major areas challenging language instruction and learning in Saudi EFL (L1/GA). The response points out that because English is a foreign language in Saudi Arabia, it is difficult for students to gain expertise in all four skills, including spelling as the main component of the writing skill. The major challenges that are faced by learners are due to the teaching system, especially teaching the skill of writing is one of the challenges that face Saudi students and lecturers. Another participant reported that, in some contexts, Saudi students are not able to master the four English language skills, especially in Tabuk University, because the students do not study writing as a compulsory subject, so this may be one of the reasons why Saudi students in Tabuk University face a problem with spelling (L2/GA). As pointed out by the lecturer, students could make spelling errors because of their University (Tabuk University) ignores the writing skill in the students’ syllabus.

Another participant from Group B commented that the Saudi government focuses on Islamic studies rather than on English. This is because Saudi Arabia is an Islamic country and they must keep the focus on Arabic rather than any other language. Again, this corresponds to one of the major root causes of spelling issues among Saudi students, as the government makes schools prioritize Islamic studies and Arabic rather than focusing on English language (L2/GB). The response of the lecturer suggests that because Saudi Arabia is an Islamic country, where the government and other agencies focus on their religious values, they believe that Arabic is the only language which needs to be spoken as a means of communication throughout the country, therefore learning English has very little value.

The five participants from group C shared the same views regarding this reason. For example, the major problem is due to the fact that the students do not know the spelling rules. They are unaware of English sound recognition, and they are not familiar with the correct pronunciation of words (L5/GC). This participant believes that Saudi students currently enrolled in Tabuk University are unaware of the interconnectedness of writing, listening, and reading and speaking and how they affect each other. Another participant from Group B shared a similar comment, this major problem is due to the fact that the students make spelling errors because they have no idea how the word is spelt or the different spellings of words that are homophones (L8/GB). The response suggests that neither in Tabuk University nor during their previous school experience have students been provided with adequate spelling rules for writing in English, consequently, they seem unaware of them or how they operate.

The participants from Groups A, B and C agreed that administrative constraints contribute to the reasons for the students’ spelling errors, for example, Saudi students make spelling errors because of their universities’ administrative constraints the amount of class time, for instance or when the lecturers are more focused on earning money and doing the minimum, rather than helping their students to learn or master English language skills. While the universities do not have certain clear guidelines to follow so that their students have learning goals, improved learning outcomes are difficult. If all the universities shared formal requirements such as a common test for all the students in all English departments, this would help general planning to improve students’ performance (L5/GA). This response suggests that Tabuk University lecturers need to support themselves and their families financially, and that is their main focus, or they feel unsupported by the administration in their teaching. Pieretti and Roseberry-McKibbin (2016)
approached 110 teachers of English in Saudi schools. Their findings revealed that these teachers were mainly novice teachers, more concerned with earning money than effective teaching. Hence, the findings of their study are similar to the comment above, about teachers being more likely to be concerned about making money, than helping students learn, especially if the administration and organization of teaching are not supportive.

A participant from Group B reported about the administrative constraints as a cause of students’ spelling errors, "Saudi students make spelling errors because in many Saudi universities, there are no clear or specific rules for selecting lecturers, which means that sometimes, you can find a lecturer who has majored in science but is teaching English, especially if he is a native English speaker lecturer (L7/GB)." The response suggests that Saudi learners may be taught by untrained teachers of English, especially if they are native speakers, and do not think in terms of second or foreign language learners’ need for explicit teaching, so students misspell words because they are not provided with the proper rules and guidance because their lecturers are not EFL teachers. The University prefers lecturers who are native speakers of English to teach English regardless of where they come from, and their specialization can be Science or Computer background. If their only advantage is that they are native speakers of English, this may not be enough for them to teach English if it is outside their own field and they are untrained or are not fluent in another language beside English. Liu’s (2017) sample of teachers in Nigeria and demonstrated that teachers’ selection criteria are often neglected when appointing staff who are not qualified to teach specific courses and so are unable to improve the performance of students.

Discussion
Learning English can be particularly challenging for native Arabic speakers due to pronunciation and orthographic differences. Previous studies agree that the causes of spelling errors tend to be related to interference from the native language in areas where it differs from the second or foreign language (e.g., Ahmed, 2017; Al-Sobhi, Rashid, Abdullah, & Darmi, 2017). This study confirms the findings of the existing studies and at the same time, puts forth another factor, which is the nature of classroom instruction and teachers education. As highlighted in the findings part, students’ lack knowledge of spelling rules and techniques and administrative constraints can be considered as perceived causes of spelling errors in addition to the nature and influence of the learners’ mother tongue.

It is often more difficult for someone to learn something entirely new or very different from what they already know. Since English writing system is very different from Arabic, this could help explain why English spelling poses such a problem for Arabic speakers. In the interviews, the participants claimed that the majority of students made spelling errors related to prefixes, apostrophe usage, reduplication of letters, and omission of letters and addition of letters. The participants felt that the mistakes are due to influence from their mother tongue, which supports the finding of Al-Khairy (2013), as well as a result from irregularities in the English spelling system, which is in agreement with (Babu & Gibreel, 2018). The participants in Al-Khairy’s (2013) and Babu and Gibreel’s (2018) are different from the participants in this study, yet all of them agreed that their mother tongue contributes to the spelling errors made. This reflects that mother-tongue interference has a strong influence in Arab students’ learning of English.
Tackling the mother-tongue influence is challenging. It is impossible for Arab learners to abandon their mother tongue as they grow up with this language. Thus, the challenge facing policymakers in Saudi Arabia is to find ways to lessen the effects of this mother-tongue interference. One possible way is perhaps to introduce English as early as possible, which can be done by including English as a core subject in early childhood education.

The present paper is also in line with Rass (2015) regarding the lack of administrative support for teachers. The findings show that the EFL lecturers believed they did not receive any training that could improve their performance in class. This suggests that novice lecturers are provided with inadequate resources, making it harder for them to develop useful activities for spelling or listening tasks. As a result, they often just teach directly from the textbooks provided to them, a finding supported by Witzel (2015). However, these textbooks do not contain writing activities that teach students about English spelling rules. Consequently, the Saudi EFL classes frequently ignore this important area. A contributing factor to instructor efficiency is the hiring practices at Saudi universities. When hiring lecturers from other countries, universities often only care whether individuals are native speakers of English regardless of their academic background or professional experience. This practice leads to teachers who do not learn effective methods of delivering information about language skills, a finding shared by Hervey, Dickins, and Higgins (2016) and Olson (2017). This practice results in fewer teachers and trainers qualified to teach English spelling rules. This situation would appear to negatively affect classroom performance because teachers appeared unable to deal with learner errors.

Perceived causes of Saudi EFL student spelling errors tend to include the major linguistic differences between English and Arabic, which affect their reading, writing, and listening abilities. Learning a language is a multi-sensory process that should include visual, auditory, morphemic, and etymological strategies to reduce spelling errors. Unfortunately, low quality of instruction is provided in the classroom, as perceived by the students and the teachers interviewed in this study. The teachers have limited experience, lower-quality training, and inadequate resources hence hampering them from being an efficient instructor to further develop their learners.

Conclusion
There were many perceived causes of spelling errors either reported by the respondents or observed in this study, in particular, according to the respondents, the interference between English and Arabic language, poor syllabus and education system, students lack knowledge of spelling rules and techniques, administrative constraints and students’ learning attitude can be considered as the main causes of Saudi university students spelling errors.

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References


The Effects of the Use of First Language on Learning English as a Second Language: Attitudes of Arabic EFL Learners

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Abstract
Teachers may wonder whether the use of first language (L1) in the second language (L2) classroom is beneficial or detrimental to L2 learning. The present study investigates the attitudes of L1 Arabic speakers towards the use of English in the L2 classroom. The study examined the following: a) whether Arabic is used in English language classrooms; b) students’ attitudes towards their English teachers’ use of Arabic; c) students’ attitudes towards their classmates’ use of Arabic; d) whether the use of Arabic facilitates L2 English learning. The study was conducted with 149 male Saudi university English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners studying in a Saudi English department. They were asked to complete two questionnaires: a) a background questionnaire; and b) an attitudinal questionnaire. The findings revealed that the participants believed that: a) Arabic is seldom used by their teachers; b) the use of English is more beneficial than Arabic to learning English; and c) Arabic can be used in some situations by teachers when communicating important information.

Keywords: Arab EFL learners, attitudes, English classroom, learning, using Arabic, second language

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Introduction
Teachers’ strategies and practices in the classroom influence the success in learning English as a foreign language (EFL) (Çelik & Aydın, 2018). What teachers implement in the classroom has been the focus of education researchers in terms of enhancing the classroom environment. Researchers and language teachers have long debated the issues surrounding the use of students’ L1 in L2 (Adnan, Mohamad, Yusoff, & Ghazali, 2014; Sadighi, Rahimpour, & Rezaei, 2018). A watershed moment in the teaching of English came when the grammar-translation method was abandoned in the late 19th century, a method promoting the use of L1 in the L2 classroom (Almohaimeed & Almurshed, 2018). In other words, using students’ L1 in the L2 classroom was considered a hindrance in the L2 classroom (Hall & Cook, 2014). Cook (2001) maintains that since L2 learners acquire their L1 without the help of any other languages, they do not need to use their L1 to help them acquire their L2. Nonetheless, he proposes that teachers may use L1 for class management and explaining difficult grammar; this view is supported by Cole (1998), who also suggests that L1 should only be used with students who have low levels of proficiency. Conversely, Krashen (1983), among others, makes the assumption that L1 would influence the plethora of L2 input necessary for the acquisition of L2. There is a dearth of research addressing the perspectives of students regarding their use of L1 (AlSharaeai, 2012) and the use of Arabic in the EFL classroom (Al-Balawi, 2016). The current study aims to examine the perspectives of Arab students as they pertain to their teachers’ use of Arabic in the EFL classroom. Moreover, it examines the potential influence of Arabic on the success of students learning English.

Literature Review
Numerous researchers have focused on the success of L2 acquisition during adulthood (Al-Balawi, 2016). Researchers differ in their views regarding whether full acquisition is possible during adulthood (e.g., Schwartz & Sprouse, 1996; Vainikka & Young-Scholten, 2011) or not (e.g., Bley-Vroman, 1990). Regardless of their position, all researchers appreciate the value of L2 input for the success of L2 acquisition. This is why teachers wonder whether their use of students’ L1 may hinder their learning success.

Before discussing relevant studies, the following question must be considered: do teachers use their students’ L1? A study was conducted by De la Campa and Nassaji (2009) with two language teachers who were teaching EFL at a German university. They were observed for 12 weeks and the findings revealed the occasional use of German to illustrate difficult English words and for other reasons that they believed would facilitate students’ learning. Hall and Cook (2014) conducted a study with 2,785 teachers from 111 countries (including Arab countries, such as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates). All the teachers completed a questionnaire and 20 teachers participated in semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed the wide use of students’ L1 and that the teachers used students’ L1 for those who had low levels of proficiency or to communicate important information; these findings support earlier research (e.g., Cole, 1998; Cook, 2001). Hall and Cook’s (2014) international study indicates that teachers (regardless of their nationality) tend to use students’ L1. The question is whether students advocate the use of their L1. Zhao and Macaro (2014) propose that researchers’ positions regarding the use of L1 in the L2 classroom fall into one of three categories: a) L1 should not be used; b) L2 use should be maximised; and c) equal amounts of L1 and L2 can be used. Studies that are for and against the use of L1 are reviewed below.
Tang (2002) conducted a study with 100 students and 20 teachers in China to examine whether the use of Chinese would have an adverse effect on EFL learning. A mixture of interviews, classroom observations and a questionnaire was utilised. The findings indicated that students and teachers generally favoured the use of Chinese. With regard to the Saudi context, Al-Nofaie (2010) investigated students’ and teachers’ perspectives concerning using Arabic in a Saudi EFL girls’ intermediate school. The study was conducted with 30 students and three teachers. Data were gathered using: a) classroom observation; b) a questionnaire; and c) interviews. The findings revealed that students and teachers had positive attitudes towards using Arabic in EFL learning. The study results were confirmed by Alshammari (2011), who conducted a study of 13 teachers and 95 students in a technical college in Saudi Arabia. He administered a questionnaire and found participants had positive attitudes towards the use of Arabic when teaching English.

Conversely, several researchers have found that their participants opposed the use of L1 in the L2 classroom (e.g., Kharma & Hajjaj, 1989; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Nazary, 2008; Sharma, 2006). Nazary (2008) conducted a study with 85 L1 Farsi speakers on an English extracurricular course in Iran. He administered a 16-item questionnaire and found that the participants did not favour their teachers using their L1. They state that success in the EFL classroom depends on an abundance of L2. Their views support two views in the literature on second language acquisition (SLA). The first was presented by Krashen (1983), whose comprehensible input hypothesis assumes that success in L2 acquisition relies solely on exposure to L2 input. The second is related to the position adopted by Bley-Vroman (1990), who suggests that child L1 acquisition is different from adult L2 acquisition, and that full L2 acquisition is not possible post-childhood. Apart from this, those who are against the use of L1 in the L2 classroom assume that students are motivated to learn their L2 through their L1. This may result in what is known as L1 transfer of grammatical features that the L2 does not accommodate (Schwartz & Sprouse, 1996).

It can be observed from the studies conducted in Saudi Arabia that L2 learners prefer their teachers to use their L1. Do students’ educational backgrounds affect their perspective when it comes to using L1 in the L2 classroom? Nazary’s (2008) study indicates that their participants did not prefer the use of their L1 as they were taking an optional English course to improve their English. The aim of the present study is to address the following questions:

1. Is Arabic used in university-level English language classrooms in Saudi Arabia?
2. To what extent do Saudi students who specialise in English have positive attitudes towards the use of Arabic and English in the English classroom?
3. Do Saudi students assume that the use of Arabic facilitates learning English as a second language?

Methodology

Participants

The study was conducted with 149 male participants (mean age 21.7 years; SD=1.2), all of whom were male Saudi EFL students in an English department in Saudi Arabia. The average age at which they started taking formal English classes was 11.1 years. The participants were chosen at random and the original number was 161. Nevertheless, participants were excluded from the study if they were bilingual or began learning English before the age of 7 years. Therefore, such participants...
may have attitudes towards the use of Arabic that fall outside the scope of this study. This precaution was taken as the aim of the study is to examine students’ perspectives on their teachers’ use of L1 (Arabic) in the EFL classroom.

**Instruments**

A questionnaire is considered a reliable source of information (McGuirk & O'Neill, 2005). Following studies that investigated students’ perceptions and attitudes (e.g., Al-Nofaie, 2010; Alshammari, 2011; Hall & Cook, 2014; Tang, 2002), two questionnaires (written in English) were administered: a) a background questionnaire; and b) an attitudinal questionnaire. The background questionnaire comprised nine items that addressed basic information about the participants, such as their age and when they started their formal English learning, and whether they had ever lived in an English-speaking country. Moreover, the background questionnaire addressed whether Arabic is used in the English language classroom, as this would provide me with information regarding the use of Arabic where the participants were studying. Conversely, the attitudinal questionnaire comprised 17 statements that were distributed over three constructs: a) attitudes towards teachers’ use of Arabic and English; b) attitudes towards students’ use of Arabic and English; and c) attitudes towards the possible impact of using Arabic and English on L2 learning of English. The 17 statements were inspired by statements used by other researchers (Al-Nofaie, 2010; Alsuaibani, 2015; Sbaihat, Al Duweiri, Hashem, & Kalaldeh, 2018). Five-point Likert scales (from *always* to *never*) for the background questionnaire, and (from *strongly disagree*, to *strongly agree*) for the attitudinal questionnaire, were adopted.

**Procedure**

Written consent was sought from all participants and assurances were given that all personal information would remain confidential throughout the process. The participants were told that they could withdraw at any time without providing any reasons. After handing out the questionnaires, the participants were informed that they could request clarification or translation of any words they did not understand. Most completed the questionnaires in approximately 15 minutes.

**Results**

Table 1. below illustrates the findings that emerged from the background questionnaire (statements 7, 8 and 9) regarding the frequency with which Arabic is used in the EFL classroom. Moreover, the results of the three constructs display: a) attitudes towards teachers’ use of Arabic and English (statements 1–8); b) attitudes towards students’ use of Arabic and English (statements 9–12); and c) attitudes towards the possible impact of using Arabic and English on the L2 learning of English (statements 13–17). The tables below display the responses as numbers (frequency) and percentage scores (the number of responses is divided by the total number of participants, which is 149).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire item</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>33.6%</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The responses to statements 8 and 9 demonstrate that the participants were divided with regard to how frequently they spoke Arabic; however, it appears that they preferred to speak Arabic, and those who seldom or never spoke Arabic were relatively few in number. Statement 8 responses revealed that around half of the participants (48.3%) maintained that their teachers seldom spoke Arabic.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for attitudes towards teachers’ use of Arabic and English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire item</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8. Arabic is spoken by my teacher in the English-language classroom.</td>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.4%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
<td>48.3%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Arabic is spoken by my classmates in the English-language classroom.</td>
<td></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>32.9%</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The responses to statements 8 and 9 demonstrate that the participants were divided with regard to how frequently they spoke Arabic; however, it appears that they preferred to speak Arabic, and those who seldom or never spoke Arabic were relatively few in number. Statement 8 responses revealed that around half of the participants (48.3%) maintained that their teachers seldom spoke Arabic.
The table highlights that a significant proportion of participants preferred their teachers to speak English when explaining challenging concepts (statement 1) or introducing new material (statement 2). Their attitudes differed with regard to the use of English when providing exam instructions (statement 3), as about half of the participants opposed the use of English. A significant number of participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with the constant use of Arabic (statement 4); however, the majority of participants expressed that it did not cause them concern (statement 5). For statements 6, 7 and 8, the participants’ attitudes were divided, but a large proportion expressed uncertainty with regard to statement 8.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for attitudes towards students’ use of Arabic and English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire item</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. English should only be used by students when they are working on a task as a team.</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. When talking with my classmates, I do not use Arabic.</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>31.5%</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I prefer my classmates to use Arabic.</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>24.8%</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I think I am better understood by my classmates when we talk in Arabic.</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
<td>30.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Concerning their use of Arabic and English with their classmates (statements 9, 10 and 11), the participants seemed to have different opinions that ranged from strongly disagree to strongly agree. However, a relatively large proportion agreed and strongly agreed with statement 12, i.e. their classmates understand them better when they communicate in Arabic.
Table 4. Descriptive statistics for attitudes towards the possible impact of using Arabic and English on L2 learning of English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaire item</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Uncertain</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. It is essential to speak only in English in order to improve my English.</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>36.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. I understand English-language lessons better when the teacher speaks Arabic.</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. I enjoy English-language lessons better when I am permitted to speak Arabic.</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Having a teacher who speaks English during lessons is an effective way to learn English.</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. When the teacher is correcting my mistakes, I prefer him to speak in Arabic.</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>51.0%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statements 13 and 16 reveal that a large proportion of the participants believed that using English in class would improve their English. The participants’ opinions regarding statements 14, 15 and 17 demonstrated that the majority of participants opposed the use of Arabic.

Discussion
This section will discuss the results in terms of the three research questions:
1. Is Arabic used in university-level English language classrooms in Saudi Arabia?
2. To what extent do Saudi students who specialise in English have positive attitudes towards the use of Arabic and English in the English classroom?
3. Do Saudi students assume that the use of Arabic facilitates learning English as a second language?

With regard to research question 1, the results of the background questionnaire indicate that a small proportion of participants (7.4%) reported that they had seldom or never (12.8%) used English. From the results, it is observed that 48.3% of the participants maintained that their teachers seldom or never used Arabic (8.7%). However, 19.5% of the participants reported that their teachers used Arabic sometimes (often 18.1% and always 5.4%). In other words, 43% of the participants reported
that Arabic is used in the English language classroom. This supports studies conducted by De la Campa and Nassaji (2009) and Hall and Cook (2014), who reported that teachers sometimes tend to use their students’ L1.

Concerning question 2, the majority of participants (above 70%) expressed a preference for their teachers to use English when explaining challenging concepts or introducing new materials. However, around 55.7% of the participants agreed with statement 3, ‘It is necessary for teachers to speak English when conveying important information: for example, exam instructions.’ It seems that when it comes to conveying important information, most students preferred the use of their L1 to L2. Probably, since the statement included ‘exam instructions’, this led most of the participants to disagree with the use of English due to the importance of exam-related matters. This highlighted that the participants did not want to miss any piece of information due to the use of L2 (English). I wonder if their choices might have been different had the statement not featured ‘exam instructions’. Participants’ preference for the use of Arabic for important matters only was confirmed by the fact that a large majority (80.6%) opposed the constant use of Arabic (statement 4). Nevertheless, a large proportion of participants (78.5%) reported that they did not oppose the use of Arabic by teachers. This could be because they believed, as demonstrated by the results for statement 3, that Arabic may be used by teachers to ensure students understand a matter completely without jeopardising that by using English. The participants were divided between agreeing or disagreeing with regard to statement 6, ‘When talking with my teacher, I am more comfortable speaking Arabic’, and statement 7, ‘English should only be used by students when talking to their teachers.’ This could be because the participants considered the use of a mixture of Arabic and English useful when speaking to their teachers in some situations, without having a clear preference for Arabic or English. However, overall, students tend to have lower proficiency levels than their teachers, which could explain why the participants in the present study did not disagree with the use of Arabic by their teachers, and why some (41.6%) were uncertain; 22.8% agreed and 19.5% strongly agreed with statement 8, ‘I want my teacher to permit the use of Arabic by students.’ This supports the findings of a number of researchers (e.g., Cole, 1998; Cook, 2001) whereby teachers used students’ L1 when they have low levels of proficiency.

Regarding statements 9, ‘English should only be used by students when they are working on a task as a team’, 10, ‘When talking with my classmates, I do not use Arabic’, and 11, ‘I prefer my classmates to use Arabic’, their opinions were divided (ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree). These statements were related to whether or not the participants prefer speaking to their classmates in English or Arabic. However, this division disappeared in their selections for statement 12, ‘I think I am better understood by my classmates when we talk in Arabic’, as 73.8% of the participants were in favour. This demonstrates that while the participants differed regarding their preference for the use of Arabic and English with their classmates, they agreed that Arabic is preferred when it comes to understanding.

Question 3 addressed whether the use of Arabic would facilitate the learning of English. For statement 13, ‘It is essential to speak only in English in order to improve my English’, 28.2% of participants agreed and 36.9% strongly agreed. This is similar to how some of them (28.2%) agreed and (45%) strongly disagreed with statement 16, ‘Having a teacher who speaks English during lessons is an effective way to learn English.’ For statements 14, 15 and 17, more than half
of the participants disagreed that Arabic would make understand their lessons easier (statement 14), make them enjoy their lessons better (statement 15) or make them better understand teachers’ corrections (statement 17). The findings revealed that participants maintained that using English would lead to improving their grasp of the language.

The results above support other researchers who found that students do not prefer the use of L1 in the L2 classroom (e.g., Cole, 1998; Cook, 2001; Kharma & Hajjaj, 1989; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Nazary, 2008; Sharma, 2006). With regard to studies supporting the use of L1 (e.g., Al-Nofaie, 2010; Alshammari, 2011; Tang, 2002), it has been demonstrated that the participants' preference for using Arabic was in some specific situations, such as exam instructions (statement 3), or that Arabic is the best tool when speaking to their classmates (statement 12). The reason why the present study’s findings differ from other Saudi-based studies (i.e., Al-Nofaie, 2010; Alshammari, 2011) is that Al-Nofaie’s study was conducted in an intermediate school while Alshammari’s was conducted in a technical college. Moreover, since the participants in the present study were students in an English department, and they had to improve their language given that this is their major, this affected how they viewed the use of Arabic. In other words, it seems that educational background may play a role in students’ and learners’ attitudes.

**Conclusion**
The literature pertaining to language learning cites the use of L1 in the L2 classroom as a controversial topic. Views vary concerning whether the use of L1 helps students learn a second language (e.g., Al-Nofaie, 2010; Tang, 2002) or not (e.g., Kharma & Hajjaj, 1989; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Nazary, 2008; Sharma, 2006). The current study investigated Saudi university students’ attitudes towards using Arabic in the English L2 classroom. The results revealed that the participants preferred the use of English over Arabic. They thought that Arabic should only be used by teachers when they are talking about important matters and believed that using English in class is effective for learning English.

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**References**


English Language Education in Algeria: Hostage of an Exam-Centric Education System

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Abstract

The present research paper is a plea for a reform policy of English Language Education in Algerian secondary-school education. It attempts to redraw the boundaries of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) from a teaching-testing perspective based on two fundamental questions: the ‘what-to-teach’ and the ‘what-to-test’, which represent the rationale of Algerian EFL classrooms. It also expands into a discussion of the discrepancies existing between stated objectives and classroom practice. This deviation from the prescribed syllabus is dictated by the Baccalaureate exam, a standardized test par excellence and the ‘entry visa’ to university. The study was carried out with a sample population composed of twenty-eight male and female students from the English Department of the University of Tlemcen, Algeria during the first term of the academic year 2018-2019. The data collected tools employed in this pilot experimental study, a pre-unit test (a pre-test), remedial activities, and a post-test, were conducted on the sample at the end of the experiment. The research paper culminates with a formulation of initial pedagogical steps that are likely to develop students’ communicative abilities within an exam-centric education system characterized by a grammar-focused and vocabulary-building test-oriented teaching. Hence, to negotiate a balanced approach that would accommodate both effective teaching and efficient testing.

Keywords: Communicative abilities, English Language Education, high-stakes exam, teach-to-the-test pedagogy

Introduction
The increasing importance assigned to testing and assessment within a highly exam-centric education system has given birth to the proliferation of a pedagogical ‘malpractice’ which has *de facto* imposed itself in many EFL classrooms forcing, therefore, teachers, in the name of politico-educational considerations, to devote most of their teaching time to students test preparation. The term ‘malpractice’ is put between inverted commas for a good reason that is explicitly stated in many parts of this article. The overtly-manifested importance attached to scoring well in exams, be they low stakes or high stakes, has set the pace for the EFL teaching-learning process, as high scores have become indicative of high-quality schooling. The term ‘achievement’ has, thus, lost its intrinsic value in the sense that it means nothing more than scoring well on tests, deviating, therefore, teachers to teach for the test and students to learn for the test respectively. However, teachers ought to be able to show that students are learning English and in parallel inculcate in their learners that ability to use the language appropriately both receptively and productively in real situations, to use an alternative definition of communicative competence. Time and again, the teacher has proven to be the most influential school-related force in student achievement (Stronge, 2018).

Undeniably, English Language Teaching (ELT) may add something to the learners’ inheritance, [and the Algerian EFL learner is no exception] as familiarity with other languages might add something to ours (Barrow, 1990). Thus, English Language Education, in our opinion a more comprehensive term, will be used throughout this article as a substitute to both ELT and EFL teaching-learning. Yet how can English Language Education, as such, be reconsidered and appraised in the light of the 21st century communications schemes? The task does not seem to be an easy one. In Algeria, the French language still takes the lead in economic development, technological advancement and commercial expansion. What is more, the Francophone lobby and the ‘angel guardians’ of the French language are still out there blocking the road for the emergence of other languages, not least English.

1. Statement of the Problem

1.1. High Scores: High Quality Schooling
Rightly or wrongly, grades and marks have always been used as signposts to learning and seemingly reliable pedagogical indices. Stiggins (2007) describes the use of standardized testing in the 1950s as a means to compare and rank schools, school districts, states and nations. This high-stakes testing results culture is still a commonplace heresy in the educational milieu in Algeria. Boards of Education, school principals and headmasters not only have recourse to results data to track the performance of their educational institution but compare their school’s performance with that of other institutions in the province or county.

Admittedly, if learners’ performance is viewed this way and hijacked for, non-elitist or at least non-meritocratic purposes, the Algerian education system ought therefore to go through a radical change and English Language Education a metamorphosis. However, how to avoid unintended consequences and resulting ‘side-effects’ when setting goals remains the crux of the matter to be documented in the present research work.
1.2. Research Questions
This pedagogical perspective reflects a serious endeavour to change the traditional relationship of assessment to learning in a probationary year where students are to sit for the Baccalaureate exam. It is curious to note that at this level, paradoxically, formal examinations often hinder rather than help students learn English for communicative purposes. However, authentic and meaningful communication should be the ultimate goal of language activities in an English Language Education classroom.

Nonetheless, it is this growing interest in the teach-to-the-test approach that provides the basis for this article; it will address the following questions:

1. What are the main communicative deficiencies that first-year EFL students lack due to an intensive grammar and vocabulary-focused test-oriented teaching (See Appendix A) in secondary education, especially during their third probationary year?
2. How can teachers at university level help EFL students make up for that serious deficit in students’ communicative abilities to achieve functional ability in English Language Education?

1.3. Research Hypotheses
In an attempt to provide satisfactory answers to the research questions mentioned earlier, we have constructed our hypotheses which formally stated are:

1. First-year EFL students display some serious deficiencies in terms of language use. This represents a major handicap affecting negatively their communicative abilities as a result of an English Language Education which draws heavily on the principles of the teach-to-the-test approach at the secondary education level as a preparation for the Baccalaureate Exam.
2. First-Year EFL students can be offered supplementary learning sessions aiming to upgrade their communicative abilities. This compensatory language adjustment would consist of communication-based activities.

2. Literature Review
2.1. Genesis of a System
The current positivist-oriented education system with its emphasis on the acquisition of facts is, in effect, a legacy of the French colonial times. The French education system, heavily imbued with the Napoleonic thought, was highly marred by hierarchical hurdles that had to be passed before moving up from a lower level to a higher one. This is how an exam-centric model of education works and this is the model which independent Algeria inherited from France and is being practised and perpetuated in post-independent Algeria. This state of affairs illustrates clearly that there has never been a deep concern among education policymakers about many aspects of education. Educationalists’ attempts at reforms have always been well intended, but rarely have professionals had the opportunity to participate in the solving of background educational issues.

Worse still, attempts at reforming the education system have always moved in the reverse order, i.e. at the expense of academic standards. On the other hand, the pseudo-reform committee
meetings are deliberately orchestrated to gain the acceptance of what has already been taken before the meeting and allow only ‘cosmetic changes’. One may add for the purposes of this argument and making use of statistical evidence, that the success in the Baccalaureate exam noticed a steep fall in its rate. In the 1970s, the rate of success was between 60% and 70% (Benghabrit-Remaoun, 1998); at present, it oscillates between 50% and 55% (2016: 49.79%; 2017: 56.07%; 2018: 55.88% Algérie Presse Service, July 2018).

Demands and calls for a global and profound educational reform and the inception of a quality-based education have always been the hobbyhorse of many opposition parties. Though the situation stands in a different light today, it is not likely to change soon. An exam-centric education system may be at odds with the requirements of the 21st century constructivist-oriented educational paradigms, and as Bolitho (2012) posits: There is no doubt that in educating the citizens of tomorrow, we should be preparing them to cope with change in our increasingly globalised world. Among other things, this seems to mean laying emphasis on using language as a tool for communication and accessing information. These features should be in evidence in the curriculum and in textbooks as well as in classroom practices (p. 35).

2.2. Clearing the Ground
The core of the issue in the present article is, in effect, an attempt to understand how a pedagogical ‘malpractice’, driven by high-stakes testing, influences stakeholders’ perception of English Language Education from a teaching-testing perspective. This approach to language teaching-learning-testing has led to the emergence of a number of alternative terms and phrases, item teaching, curriculum teaching, test-oriented teaching and teaching to the test, to refer to a classroom setting in which testing is regarded as an end in itself rather than a by-product which the student will take in his stride (Alexander, 1972). For the sake of methodological uniformity, the term teach-to-the-test approach will be used throughout this research work...

2.3. Defining an Approach
The term teaching to the test is used to refer to the implementation of an ensemble of in-class pedagogical practices and activities and out-of-school remedial coaching services aiming primarily to prepare learners for standardized tests and high-stakes exams, and by extension to cover all types of exams and tests. This approach to language pedagogy is very likely to lead to a type of teaching and learning which focuses on a mere reproduction of memorized isolated grammatical items, or at worse to outright and downright cheating. Therefore, in one way or another learners’ success becomes highly dependent on their ability to reproduce a fixed body of knowledge (Schweisfurth, 2011). This has always been the main argument made in pedagogical terms against the abuses of the teach-to-the-test approach at the expense of communication practices and high-order thinking skills. This question represents the fundamental paradox in English Language Education in the sense that, “If schools largely test and award grades for factual recall, teachers will, therefore, stress memorization and recall in their teaching, possibly at the expense of communication skills and critical thinking that are vitally important for students to possess” (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2013). Thus, the teach-to-the-test approach, as a teaching-testing procedure, has become both ‘carrot and stick’, dictating respectively what teachers ought to teach and what learners ought to learn.
3. Purpose of the Research

3.1. Pilot Experiment

This research paper closely relates to a pilot experimental study which is part of an overall language research project, the Language and Culture Adjustment Programme, hosted by the ESP Teaching Laboratory at the Algerian University of Tlemcen. Since its inception in 2016, the programme has served a three-fold purpose: for one thing it aims to provide a linguistic support to students who suffer from a serious lack at the level of the communicative skills drawing on the principles of a communicatively-responsive pedagogy, for the other to help student whose knowledge about Anglo-Saxon culture, namely British and American, falls short of the level demanded to adopt a culturally-responsive pedagogy and thirdly, to invest in the rehabilitation of the ESP enterprise. In short, the programme is intended for university students, regardless of their specialism, who wish to develop their communicative abilities (communicative competence) and cultural competence in English and in ESP training. The programme is collegially run and is imbued with a good sense of teamwork. A group of EFL teachers and doctoral students offer those remedial courses on a regular basis and whose efforts, hopefully, will be validated. The first objective of the Language and Culture Adjustment Programme is our direct concern.

To limit the scope of the present research paper, no reference will be made to the culturally-responsive pedagogy, and the term communicatively-responsive pedagogy will be used throughout this article in its inclusive sense. It is hoped that it stands sufficiently following the different views to be ambivalent and cover all aspects of the models relating to the concept of communicative competence (Hymes, 1972; Canale & Swain, 1980, 1983; Bachman, 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 1996). Secondly, it is clear that an exhaustive survey of the different components of the communicatively-responsive pedagogy, though they are of value to EFL students, would be well beyond the scope of this research work.

3.2. Participants

Twenty-eight EFL students, representing our sample population, were selected for the pilot experiment based on the results obtained in the English test in the Baccalaureate Examination (June 2018). Worth noting here is that the Algerian academic evaluation system follows the French numerical scale moving from 0 to 20. The students scored reasonably well in the English test (between 14/20 and 17/20). At this level, it should be noted that there is less need for pattern control, as the foundations have been laid. The students demonstrated a good working knowledge of the English language structures (usage); yet, unable to express themselves appropriately in terms of some language functions (use), to use Widdowson’s (1978) dichotomy. In down-to-earth terms, their communicative skills leave a lot to be desired.

3.3. Communicatively-Responsive Pedagogy

By way of introduction, it is worth noting that the term communicatively-responsive pedagogy is used as an extension to Ladson-Billings’ (1994) term culturally-responsive teaching, i.e. the ability to develop one’s cultural competence on a cross-cultural basis. In our very specific context, communicatively-responsive pedagogy recognizes the importance of the language functions the student will learn and the topics and notions he will learn to talk about.
3.4. Description of the Course
The communicatively-responsive pedagogy, as a course, tries a much as possible, to cover the four language skills, as well as improving pronunciation and building vocabulary. Particular emphasis is placed on listening and speaking as they represent the hallmark of any communicatively-oriented pedagogy. The language used in the course is predominately British English, however, reference is made whenever the difference between British English and American English is significant, especially at the level of vocabulary. As a syllabus, the course links communicative functions to topics through carefully graded grammatical structures that are needed for a basic level of proficiency. In this way, there is a link between grammatical form and communicative function.

As for the map of the course, in very broad terms, it is divided into six units each of which consists of three Parts. The units are preceded by a Pre-Unit Test (See Appendix B) and followed by a Consolidation. The searching test, based on an assumed knowledge, is administrated to the students before they embark on the unit properly. The test aims to assess much more the students’ communicative abilities before the course begins. It closely relates to the functions that subsequently the teacher is to deal with in the Unit. The Parts are interrelated based on a synchronic progression, and the consolidation closely relates to the language structures, words and expressions to remember from the different parts.

3.5. Pre-Unit Test
At first sight, the activities in the Pre-Unit Test seem to be within the reach of an Algerian first-year EFL student who has a fair knowledge of the English language. A student who spent seven years of English Language Education, four years at the middle-school level and three years at the secondary-school level, i.e., (B1) intermediate level on the Common European Framework of References for Languages scale, (CEFR). A word of information is necessary here; the activities in Appendix B were chosen randomly from the Pre-Unit Test. Through the different exercises, our sample population was asked to perform specific language tasks:

- To provide suitable conversational expressions for specific purposes (opening conversation and expressing apologies).
- To complete the missing parts of a conversation while focusing on some grammar points, vocabulary, fixed conversational routines, and tag questions.
- To supply information following a model provided in the instructions.
- To read words (names of countries and their corresponding proper adjectives and occupations) aloud with the correct pronunciation.
- To behave linguistically in a socially appropriate way to the setting (formal/informal language).
- To correct language mistakes in sentences.

3.6. Correction
Two teachers, a doctoral student and a senior lecturer, were designated to correct (C1) and cross-correct (C2) the Pre-Unit test in accordance with a pre-defined correction grid. The students’ exam copies were corrected anonymously, substituting, therefore, the names of the students by letters in a bid to avoid any subjective and biased evaluation (See Table 1). The marks were then compared to the marks previously obtained in the Baccalaureate EFL exam. This clearly showed discrepant
results. Six overall language remarks were made concerning the test’s results. These remarks reflected the students’ weaknesses at different language levels (each number referring to a specific remark), and were formulated as follows (See Table 2):

1. Inability to differentiate between formal and informal discourse.
2. Inability to select appropriate conversational routines.
3. Inability to provide suitable expressions.
4. Inability to complete the sentences with the correct word.
5. Inability to choose the word/phrase to complete the sentence.
6. Inability to supply information following a model.

Table 1: Recap of the marks scored by the sample population in the Pre-Unit Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>C 1</th>
<th>C 2</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>C 1</th>
<th>C 2</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Student</th>
<th>C 1</th>
<th>C 2</th>
<th>Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13.25</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14.75</td>
<td>T</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.75</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12.75</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>Z</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>Z1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows that the two corrections (C1) and (C2) do not differ greatly in most cases. Thus, this quasi-absence of significant differences between the assigned marks clearly indicates that the teachers in charge of the correction followed rigorously the correction grid instruction.

Table 2: Interpretation of discrepant marks scored in Baccalaureate EFL exam and in the Pre-Unit Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Mark Scored in Baccalaureate EFL Exam</th>
<th>Mark Scored in Pre-Unit Test</th>
<th>Overall Remarks on Students Language Area Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
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</table>

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Table 2 confirms our first research hypothesis; most first-year EFL students at the Algerian University of Tlemcen, to some extent and by extension of our sample population, display serious weaknesses at the level of language use. When asked to perform communicative functions, they rely mostly on the Knowledge about Language (KAL) they have gained though an intensive learning of the English language which has always drawn heavily upon the basic principles of the teach-to-the-test approach. This is another way of saying that the marks obtained in the Baccalaureate English exam, somehow, do not faithfully reflect the students’ real good command of the English language. Consequently, a compensatory language adjustment imposes itself to redress inefficiency in students’ communicative abilities to hopefully entrench quality in English Language Education. This remedial work, an integral part of The Language and Culture Adjustment Programme, comes to confirm our second research hypothesis.

3.7. Recommendations
Arguably, it is high time teachers should realize the very limits of examinations-oriented teaching approaches on quality education, and account for the negative effects they yield on learning achievement among EFL students at different levels. Learning a language is not a matter of producing and reproducing, on the basis of a stimulus-response scheme, fixed bodies of knowledge
consisting of grammatical structures and lexicon for the purposes of scoring high and passing of exams. A language, not least English as a global language, ought to be learned not only of as systems of systems, phonological, grammatical, semantic, but also as a means of communication embodying a set of competences: linguistic, communicative, pragmatic, and cultural.

Within the globalization framework, a good working knowledge of the English language has become a *sine qua non* -condition to positively cope with the market demands and efficiently respond to the requirements of the communications schemes of the 21st century. In this very specific context, teachers and students should view the teaching-learning of the English language from three different yet complementary perspectives:

1. The pedagogical perspective in which English is seen as an important subject of the school curriculum, and, therefore, as an asset that can enrich the students’ exit profile.
2. The educational perspective in which English is viewed as a sign of a well-rounded education.
3. The philosophical perspective in which English, as an international language, can help increase cultural awareness and cross-cultural understanding, which in turn help to promote international understanding, and ultimately develop the sense of tolerance vis-à-vis others’ differences.

4. However, these cannot be achieved without first and foremost a teaching-learning of English which moves beyond exam-oriented instructional models of English Language Education.

**Conclusion**

This research paper is a report of a pilot experiment on the negative effects of the exam-centric education system, not least in English Language Education classrooms, on students communicative abilities. As teachers of English, we have always complained about this ‘unhealthy’ and ‘unethical’ and counter-productive system which has led to the proliferation of a type of teaching drawing extensively on the teach-to-the test principles. The immediate goal and the principle motivating drive for students are, therefore, to pass exams. We have always believed, and our experiment supports our opinion, that this shift in interest would lead to the emergence of successful learners on ‘Exam English’ seats but ineffective and very incompetent ‘English users’ in real-life context.

What is more, a discrete-item oriented teaching and the teach-to-the-test approach make a perfect marriage. The memorization of the grammar rules and the application of the deductive processing to the various English language tests are vivid illustrations of a harmonious union. Thus, by analogy with what was said more than fifty years ago by Rivers (1968), we can confirm that many a student well-taught Exam English and well-trained in exam-technique preparation will find himself at a loss in conducting a conversation with a native speaker of English. Such a student may be perfectly at home with the grammar of English and its meta-language, yet find his ears assailed by unfamiliar phrases as soon as he hears two Britons or Americans in a discussion. He may be able to talk fluently and prescriptively about tenses and prepositions, conditionals and the like, but unable to greet, introduce, begin conversations with strangers and foreigners or say goodbye according to the rules of speaking, to borrow Hymes’ (1972) term. This is another way of saying that the teach-to-the-test, the incarnation of an exam-centric education system *par excellence*, not
only does harm to the communicative abilities of EFL learners but in the long run to the promotion of lifelong English Language Education as well. However, in this very specific context, the equation between teaching and testing becomes more complex.

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Algérie Presse Service, July 2018. Available at www.aps.dz
Appendix A
Samples of Baccalaureate EFL Tests (June’18 Session)

Islamic Civilization enormously contributed towards the well-being of humanity through advancements in different fields including science and technology. But, the decline of Muslim scholarship coincided with the early phases of the European intellectual awakening.

The translation of most Islamic works into Latin during the 12th and 13th centuries had a great impact upon the European Renaissance. The 12th century was one of the most intensified traffic of Muslim learning into the western world through many hundreds of translations of Muslim works, which helped European seize the initiative from Islam when political conditions in it brought about a decline in Muslim scholarship. Most of the important Greek knowledge was preserved in Arabic translations. Although the Muslims did not alter the foundations of Greek science, they made several contributions within its general framework. When interest in Greek learning revived in Western Europe during 12th and 13th centuries, scholars turned to Islamic Spain for the scientific texts.

Working within a predominantly Greek framework, scientists of the Middle Ages reached high levels of sophistication and prepared the ground for scientific revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries. According to Will Durant, the Western scholar, “for five centuries, Islam led the world in power, order and extent of government, in refinement of manners, scholarship and philosophy.”

An extract from Encyclopaedia Britannica

1- Say whether the following statements are True or False? Write T or F next to the letter corresponding to the statement and correct the false one(s).
   a) Islamic works translations into Latin were unbeneficial.
   b) The 12th century was marked by the transmission of the European knowledge to Muslims.
   c) Muslim scholars improved most of the important Greek works.
   d) Western scholars used to refer to Muslim works to improve theirs.

2- Identify the paragraphs in which the following ideas are mentioned.
   a) Muslim scholars did not make a radical change in Greek science.
   b) Muslim achievements’ recognition by western scholars.

3- Answer the following questions according to the text.
   a) How did Islamic Civilization contribute to the European Renaissance?
   b) What caused the collapse of the Muslim scholarship?
   c) How did scientists pave the way to scientific major changes just after the Middle ages?

4- Find who or what do the underlined words in the text refer to.
   a- Which ($§$)
   b- its ($§$)
5- Give the general idea of the text.

B/ Text Exploration
1- Find in the text words whose definitions follow:
   a) The conversion of a text from one language to another (§2)
   b) Make a change (§2)

2- Complete the chart as shown in the example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Noun</th>
<th>Adjective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To contribute</td>
<td>contribution</td>
<td>contributory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>civilization</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>intense</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To influence</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3- Rewrite sentence (b) so that it means the same as sentence (a).
A) a- Greek scientific texts were preserved by Muslim translators
   b- Muslim translators .................................
B) a- If Muslims didn’t translate Greek works, western scholars couldn’t study Greek science.
   b- Unless ................................................................

4- Classify the following words according to the stressed syllable.
   political – Latin – civilization – revolution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1st syllable</th>
<th>2nd syllable</th>
<th>3rd syllable</th>
<th>4th syllable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

5- Fill in each gap with the appropriate word from the list given.
   developed - became - Indian - independently - contact - philosophy

The Muslims had come into......1..... with Persian astronomy, history, and medicine; ...
   2.....mathematics; and Greek science and ...3..... They made significant contributions of their own in
   mathematics, medicine, astronomy, and other sciences. They also .....4.....literature of their own in
   Arabic.

Part two: written expression

Choose ONE of the following topics.

Topic one:
   You visited the historical site of Timгад. You noticed that people ignore its value and write their
   names on columns, walls and throw trash everywhere. Write an article of about 80 to 100 words for the
   World Heritage Centre magazine in order to raise people’s awareness about the importance of preserving
   such historical sites.

   The following notes may help you:
   - Mankind common property - Attract tourists - Cultivate pride / distinctive value - Preserve
   history/ deep understanding of identity

Topic two:
   You are working for a private company and your manager is unscrupulous, corrupt and nepotistic.
   Write a letter of about 80 to 100 words to the workers representative to denounce his unethical behaviour.
   (N.B: sign as Mr Yasser)
Part one: Reading

A/ Comprehension

Read the text carefully then do the following activities.

Brain drain, which is the action of having highly skilled and educated people leaving their country to work abroad, has become one of the developing countries’ concerns. More and more third world scientists and technology educated people are heading for more prosperous countries seeking higher wages and better working conditions. This has of course serious consequences on the sending countries.

While many people believe that immigration is a personal choice that must be understood and respected, others look at the phenomenon from a different perspective. What makes those educated people leave their countries should be seriously considered and a distinction between push and pull factors must be made. The push factors include low wages and lack of satisfactory working and living conditions. Social unrest, political conflicts and wars may also be determining causes. The pull factors, however, include intellectual freedom and substantial funds for research.

Brain drain has negative impact on the sending countries economic prospects and competitiveness. It reduces the number of dynamic and creative people who can contribute to the development of their country. Likewise, with more entrepreneurs taking their investments abroad, developing countries are missing an opportunity of wealth creation. This has also negative consequences on tax revenue and employment.

Adapted from Myenglishpages.com

1- Say whether the following statements are True or False. Write T or F next to the letter corresponding to the statement and correct the false one(s).
   a) Brain drain is a phenomenon related to the shift of uneducated people to wealthy countries.
   b) It has become a real issue for the developing countries.
   c) Low incomes are one of the causes of brain drain.
   d) People share the same opinion on brain drain.

2- Put the following ideas in the order they appear in the text.
   a) Brain drain drawbacks on economy.
   b) What brain drain refers to.
   c) The causes that make educated people leave their countries.

3- Answer the following questions according to the text.
   a) Why do intellectuals leave their countries?
   b) What is the difference between push and pull factors?
   c) How does brain drain affect employment?
   d) Do you agree with intellectuals who leave their countries? Justify your answer.

4- Find who or what the underlined words in the text refer to.
   a- this (§1)        b- their (§3)

5- Give a title to the text.
B / Text Exploration (07 pts)

1. Find the text words or phrases that are opposite in meaning to the following:
   a) host (§1) = ..............
   b) joblessness (§3) = ..............

2. Complete the following chart as shown in the example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbs</th>
<th>Nouns</th>
<th>Adjectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To differ</td>
<td>difference</td>
<td>different</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>............</td>
<td>freedom</td>
<td>............</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>............</td>
<td>............</td>
<td>prosperous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to believe</td>
<td>............</td>
<td>............</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Combine each pair of sentences with one of the connectors provided. Make changes where necessary.

   such...that - provided that - so that

   a) Highly educated people are heading towards Europe. They want to get higher wages.
   b) Intellectuals do not leave. The sending countries improve the socio-economic situation.
   c) Brain drain has a negative impact on poor countries. Therefore, it reduces their evolution.

4. Classify the following words according to the number of their syllables.

   - prosperous - phenomenon - social - brain

   | One syllable | Two syllables | Three syllables | Four syllables |

5. Fill in each gap with the appropriate word from the list given.

   avoid - various - homeland - unrest - freedom - situations

   People leave their ....1.... and move to another country for .....2.... reasons. Some emigrate to ....3....starvation. Some seek adventure. Others wish to escape unbearable family ...4.... Still others desire to be reunited with loved ones.

Part two : Written Expression (06 points)

Choose ONE of the following topics.

**Topic one:**

Your cousin is an intellectual who obtained a scholarship to the USA. He is planning to settle there. Write an e-mail of about 80 to 100 words to convince him to return to Algeria and benefit his country from his knowledge and skills.

The following notes may help you:
- far from family - Algerian scholarship - benefit/country/experience - create wealth
- help fellow citizens

**Topic two:**

You read an article in a newspaper about a person who was accused of bribery. However, the journalist presented no documents to support his allegations. Write an article of about 80 to 100 words for the school paper to inform your fellow students about the importance of taking into account the code of ethics and the humane qualities when journalists write articles about people.
Appendix B

Pre-Unit Test One: Assumed Knowledge

- Saying hello and goodbye (Formal-Informal)
- Asking and saying where people come from (Country-Nationality)
- What do people do? (Job-Occupation)
- How old are they? (Age-Numbers)

If the students can do this test the teacher can go on Unit One

1. Supply the missing words.
   1. Hello, ……. ……. ’s Peter Matt.
   2. Is ……. ……. Mary Brit? No, it isn’t. ……. Betty Taylor.
   3. Is ……. ……. Betty Taylor? Yes, ……. ……. ……. …..
   4. Betty is my ……. ……. and Taylor is my ……. ….... ...

2. Complete the following sentences:
   1. I have got three………, two boys and a girl.
   2. ……. many children have you got?
   3. My father ……. got two brothers.
   4. I haven’t got ……. sisters.
   5. ……. you ……. ……. brothers and sisters?

3. Complete the following conversations:
   Peter: Excuse me. ……. ……. your ……. Martin Luke?
   Mary: ……. ……. I’m sorry. ……. ……. It’s Henry James.
   Henry: ……. ?
   Mary: It’s Henry James.
   Henry: ……. sorry.

   Peter: Excuse me. Are ……. ……. Martin Luke?
   Martin: Yes, I ……. ……. 
   Peter: Oh, my ……. ……. ……. Peter Johnson.
   Martin: Oh, yes. ……. ……. do you ……. ?
   Peter: ……. ……. ……. ……. ?

4. Complete the following dialogue:
   Sam: ……. ……. Betty.
   Betty: Hi, Sam.
   Sam: How are you?
   Betty: ……. ……. ……. And you?
   Sam: I’m fine.
   Betty: Sorry Sam, I have to go now. Bye Sam.
   Sam: ……. ……. Betty. ……. you.
5. Complete the following dialogue:
   X: Good morning, Mrs Carter.
   Y: …………………
   X: Please sit down.
   Y: …………………
   X: ………………… Mrs Carter?
   Y: I’m forty-nine.
   X: Are you married?
   Y: Yes, I …………
   X: What’s your …………’s name?
   Y: Peter.
   X: And you’re Welsh, ……… you?
   Y: Yes, that’s ………
   X: How ……… ……… ……… ……… ………?
   Y: fifty-two.
   X: Have ……… ……… ……… ………?
   Y: Yes, ………… A boy and a ………

6. Look at the following example:
   John has got a daughter. She is fifteen.
   *John’s daughter is fifteen.*
   1. Mrs Harris has got four children. They are students.
   2. Mary has got a brother. He is an engineer.
   3. My father has got a brother. He is a doctor.
   4. Bob has got a son. He is a pilot.
   5. My mother has got a sister. She is a nurse.

7. Complete the table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Name</th>
<th>Surname</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>William</td>
<td>Shakespeare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>………………</td>
<td>………………</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>………………</td>
<td>………………</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>………………</td>
<td>………………</td>
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<td>………………</td>
<td>………………</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>………………</td>
<td>………………</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Complete the following sentences:
   1. Paul is from France. He’s …………
   2. Alice is from ………… She’s British.
   3. Harry is from the ………… He’s American.
   4. Shufiko from Japan. He’s …………
   5. Karima is from ………… She’s Algerian.
6. Bob is from .............. He’s Australian.
7. David is from Scotland. He’s ..............
8. Jillian and Peter are from Wales. They’re ..............
9. Samuel is from Ireland. He’s ..............
10. Carlos is from .............. He’s Spanish.

9. Read these words with correct stress.
   England Japan Japanese
   China Chinese Austria
   Germany Italy Argentine
   Britain Switzerland Canada
   Wales American Canadian
   Scotland Algeria Holland
   Ireland Australia Dutch

10. Read these words with the correct stress.
    artist housewife
    electrician doctor
    engineer Accountant
    architect dentist
    teacher photographer

11. Read the conversations and complete the table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conversation 1 (Formal)</th>
<th>Conversation 2 (Informal)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good morning</td>
<td>Hello/Hi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jillian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are you?</td>
<td>How are you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fine/Not bad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thanks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>And you?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conversation 1
X: Good morning, Mr Watson. How are you?
Y: Oh good morning, Dr Harris. I’m very well, thank you. And you?
X: I’m fine, thank you.

Conversation 2
X: Hello, Jillian.
Y: Hi Bill. How are you?
X: Fine thanks. And you?
Y: Not bad, but my mother’s not well today.
X: Oh, I’m sorry to hear that.
The Perceptions and Beliefs of Saudi Preparatory Year Program Learners Towards Learning English: A Case Study

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Abstract
Learning English in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) can be a challenging experience. Nevertheless, being proficient in English language guarantees better job opportunities in various fields and thus learners need to acquire an acceptable level of proficiency. Recognizing its significant role in the learners’ academic and professional excellence, the English language has gained the status of a mandatory language in the Saudi higher education institutions. As students enter universities for higher studies, they are often required to take prerequisite courses in English to gain a higher level of proficiency. This qualitatively driven descriptive case study investigated the attitudes of EFL students who were enrolled in the Foundation Year Program. This study aimed to examine the learners’ feelings, emotions, and attitudes in the light of their academic performance. In total, thirteen male and seventeen female students were interviewed using semi-structured interviews as a main tool for the data collection. They were asked to recall and write their narratives regarding their experience of learning the English language throughout the foundation year program. The socio-constructivist nature of this qualitative case study offered an opportunity to participants to share their stories. Consequently, it highlighted the factors that motivated them for a language learning experience. Moreover, it allowed them to reflect on the challenges that they encountered during their learning odyssey of the English language course as part of the preparatory year program (PYP). Findings from this research study suggest that the participants’ motivations to learn English are primarily related to socio-economic reasons. Besides, students were particularly motivated to learn English when they were encouraged by their families and by ‘good’ teaching practices. Nevertheless, these findings failed to establish an association between the learners’ attitudes and their performance on the assessments during the course. This case study adds to the existing literature by examining a context that lacks empirical evidence on the topic of EFL learners’ beliefs about English learning. More research in this area is required to determine why this discrepancy occurred.

Keywords: EFL, learners’ attitudes, qualitative research, sociocultural, Saudi Arabian context

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1 Introduction

In 2008, the Saudi government initiated educational reforms in the realm of the English as a Foreign language (EFL) teaching and learning that led to massive transformations in pedagogy and learning in schools and universities. Although the reforms appeared to be promising, these changes have yielded various challenges for teachers, course designers and other stakeholders in educational institutions, such as using teaching methods. Moreover, the newly introduced changes gave rise to concerns related to the learners’ attitude towards English language learning that might influence the implementation of teaching and learning plans (Hult, 2017). In the Saudi EFL setting, the major concern of the teachers and course designers is the learners’ low level of motivation that often makes it difficult to implement the reform agenda in educational institutions. This situation in itself has caused various societal and cultural factors (Costa & Norton, 2017; Pennycook, 2017), which are related to language.

Language is considered the most “important channel of social organization embedded in the culture of the community where it is used” (Dörnyei, 1998, p. 118). When learners undertake to learn a second language (L2), their attitudes and learning are influenced by the culture of their mother tongue and the culture of the target language. Since language is socially and culturally bound, it makes language learning a deeply social experience that involves the integration of a wide range of elements of the target culture (Dörnyei, 2003). This can be deemed a vital issue due to the nature of the English language in a non-English society where EFL learners have limited access to the target culture and its language. Hence, it is significant in the case of Saudi EFL learners who attempt to negotiate with two very different cultures and languages that include Arabic as their L1 and English as the target language and their learning goal in the classroom. We can assume that the enormous challenge of adapting to the new ‘culture’ and worldview correlated to learning English has impact on the attitudes of the Saudi EFL learners. This challenging situation also suggests that the EFL learner attitudes and motivations may play an important role in determining the outcomes of an EFL reform agenda (Ushioda & Dörnyei, 2017). Bearing in mind the associated hurdles related to the reform agenda, it is vital to explore and understand the EFL learners’ attitudes that stem from their cultural and social milieu and they impact the teaching and learning practices of English language (Savignon, 2018). More rigorous research in this direction will help the practitioners as well as add to the existing literature on the learners’ beliefs, dispositions, attitudes and opinions about English language learning which will improve the pedagogical practices in the Saudi EFL context. Hence, this study aims to examine the attitudes and beliefs of the Saudi students enrolled in an EFL program and explore their experiences, perceptions, and motivations.

2 Literature Review

The constructivist paradigm recognizes the learner’s functional role in creating personal knowledge. It holds the view that due to the expression of the self and the individual perspective; the creation of knowledge varies in its exemplification of reality. These four basic principles form the basis for pedagogical process in classrooms, which is described as constructivism (Wilson, 2017). Romanowski, Alkhateeb, and Nasser (2018) and Bosman and Schulze (2017) also suggest that knowledge is not passively acquired and that it is acquired when a person is thinking actively. They also posit that behavior is transformed through cognition so that individuals can function
The Perceptions and Beliefs of Saudi Preparatory Year Program

irrespective of their social settings. The understanding offered by Nguyen (2016) proposes the description of the constructivist approach into two precise categories, which encompass the constructivist and socio-cultural worldviews, also identified as socio-constructivist perspective.

Within the socio-constructivist realm, attitudes towards English language learning play a vital role. Many researchers have defined “attitude” from a socio-cultural perspective (Jones & Moreland, 2015; Norton & Toohey, 2001; Singh & Richards, 2006). Some researchers believe that second language (L2) achievement is influenced by attitudes, although this influence is mediated by motivation (Ho Kang, 2014). In early research, attitudes were defined as: “sum of beliefs about a particular behavior weighted by evaluations of these beliefs” (Miller, 2005, p. 126), which influenced how the individual responded towards related subjects in addition to situations. Later definitions defined attitudes as “the overall positive or negative evaluation of the behavior. In general, the more favorable the attitude toward the behavior, the stronger the individual’s intention is to perform it” (Lipnevich, MacCann, Krumm, Burrus, & Roberts, 2011, p. 106). Some researchers perceive attitudes as biologically driven (Cantril, 1947; Gonzalez, 2007), while others have theorized that these are learned and hence susceptible to modification (Spencer & Horowitz, 1973; Xuan & Yihong, 2017). According to Maio and Haddock (2010), “they all emphasize the notion that reporting an attitude involves the expression of an evaluative judgment about an object. Indeed, most attitude theorists would argue that evaluation is the predominant aspect of the attitude concept. In other words, reporting an attitude involves making a decision about liking versus disliking, or favoring versus disfavoring a particular issue, object, or person. Thus, we define an attitude as an overall evaluation of an object that is based on cognitive, affective, and behavioral information” (p. 3). However, Chambers (1999) offers a different perspective on attitudes towards language leaning. He argues that socio-cultural elements affect attitudes to language learning which are perceived as a set of values that the language learners bring to the Foreign Language (FL) classroom. In classroom environment, these values are shaped by anticipated psychological benefits and benefits of learning the target language. Several factors affect the values that the learner holds which might be manipulated by a range of factors including the language learning experience, the community of the target language and the attitudes towards the target language demonstrated by parents and peers of the language learner.

There is an agreement in the current research that the language learners’ attitudes affect the overall outcome of a foreign language learning program (Cook, 2016; Gardner, 2014), and that motivation has a vital role to play in this process (Gardner, 2014; Lasagabaster, 2017; Woodrow, 2017). Therefore, various pedagogical approaches mainly stemmed from the notion of social interaction, have occurred and progressed in a bid to developing positive language learner attitudes. A survey of these illustrates the role these approaches has to play in supporting EFL learners to develop a positive outlook of English language learning in their classrooms. In the first instance, family-school partnerships are believed to represent approaches that focus on
the child within a framework of cooperation, coordination and collaboration established between families and educators so as to improve opportunities for “children and adolescents across social, emotional, behavioral, and academic domains” (Kim et al., 2012, pp. 3-4). Understanding the impact of such partnerships upon the language learning of English learners, research shows that parents of ELLs play an essential role in their children’s motivation to learn English (Rowe, Ramani, & Pomerantz, 2016). In this respect, Peeters (2015) argues that peer collaborations have the potential to influence learner attitudes in a positive and beneficial manner. More importantly, learners’ motivation is “socially distributed [and] created within cultural systems of activities involving the mediation of others” (Rueda & Moll, 1994, p. 131). Therefore, social interaction seems to be an important factor in language learning (Savignon, 2018), which engages learners in peer collaborations and helps teachers to use it as a teaching tool for developing learners’ attitude towards EFL learning.

Literature suggests an alternative teaching approach which can be useful in developing EFL learners’ attitude. This approach involves creating a supportive environment and developing learners’ autonomy. It is a positive approach “as learner control characterized by self-directedness” (Huang, Chandra, DePaolo, & Simmons, 2016, p. 738).

A contemporary pedagogical approach that has recently been suggested for shaping EFL learners’ positive attitudes is the utilization and integration of technologies and the Internet into classroom practices. The incorporation of educational technology in teaching practices has a positive influence on the EFL learners attitudes, which is supported by the relevant literature (Healey, 2016; Liu & Lan, 2016). As Yang (2018) contends, web-based language learning can stimulate learners to engage in creative and collaborative learning through self-directed learning.

The fourth approach thought to be of considerable usefulness in influencing EFL learner attitudes is that of Extensive Reading (ER). The ER approach is a “reading pedagogy in which language learners freely choose reading material of their interests and, in a rather fast pace, they read large quantities of material for enjoyment, information and comprehension” (Lin, 2014, p. 48). The ER approach encourages EFL learners to read and comprehend texts that are reflective of their proficiency level and aims to motivate them to continue reading. Moreover, this flexible approach allows the learners to choose the texts they want to read, same as they may enjoy in their first language as well as to stop reading a text, they do not find exciting or too challenging to read.

3 Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative and descriptive case study design. According to Edgar and Manz (2017), “descriptive studies focus in-depth on a specific case of some system” (p. 131). The qualitative research descriptive case study design is appropriate for uncovering the meanings individuals attach to an event, situation, or phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The study utilized semi-structured interviews as its mail tool supported by learners’ diaries and
their life histories, which were collected in Arabic. Similarly, the collected data from the semi-structured interviews were transcribed in Arabic. Excerpts included in the findings section of this paper were translated into English. Twenty-nine students enrolled in the Preparatory Year Program (PYP) at a leading Saudi university were selected to take part in the study. Aged between eighteen and twenty, thirteen of these students were male and sixteen were female. All the participants studied at separate, gender-segregated campuses. It is important to note that these students had no exposure to the English language or classrooms where English was the medium of instruction. Although the participants were sciences and arts entry-level students enrolled in a foundation years program who were all required to take the similar subjects for a year. The participants shared a similar socio-economic background who had both both native and non-native EFL teachers on the foundation year program, hence having a considerable consistency in terms of learning English as a foreign language. This particular study utilized the flexible design method for sampling the students. The aim was to collect relevant data to improve the individual learning environment, methodology, setting, and approach depending upon what the findings showed (Lumley, 2011). Due to the nature of this study, convenience sampling was conducted. This approach allowed the researcher to conveniently choose the participants based on their location and accessibility on the campus (Robinson, 2014). As the data collection involved three main sources, such as semi-structured interviews, diaries and life histories, the researcher gathered the data from the same participants to ensure the trustworthiness of their views.

3.1 Data Analysis
The collected data was presented in the form of words, phrases, quotes and excerpts that offered valuable insights into the learning experiences of the participants. These extracts helped the researcher to analyze the data in the form of codes, categories and themes. Those formed codes were extracted from the specific text, phrases, or ideas that were shared by the participants (Saldana, 2015).

3.2 Thematic Analysis
The collected data were thematically analyzed. As thematic analysis is effective for its flexibility, it suited the nature of the current qualitatively driven study since the focus was on the content of a participant’s story, the ‘what’ rather than ‘how’ it is told (Willig & Rogers, 2017). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), “through its theoretical freedom, thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex, account of data” (p. 5). More importantly, as the study’s aim was to inform the program designers and policymaker, the thematic analysis proved to “… be useful for producing qualitative analyses suited to informing policy development” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 37).

The researcher considered both the advantages and the disadvantages of employing thematic analysis and took extra steps to guarantee the validity of the identified themes, which were evidently supported by the primary data. The validity procedure included member checking since the researcher aimed at shifting the validity procedure from the researcher herself to the participants (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe the importance of member checks in a research study by stating that it is: “the most crucial technique for establishing
credibility” (p. 314). Furthermore, the researcher conducted a triangulation of the data as an additional validity procedure (Flick, 2018). Creswell and Miller (2000) consider triangulation a crucial tool for researchers as “it [triangulation] is a systematic process of sorting through the data to find common themes or categories by eliminating overlapping areas” (p. 126).

In the first stage of the thematic analysis, initial codes were put together in order to merge the identical ones and create broader categories. This was followed by merging categories and developing overarching themes. Some of the major themes included: the influence of friends and family on the EFL learners’ attitudes towards English language learning; the impact of education on EFL learners’ attitudes towards learning English; the influence of economic status on the EFL learners’ attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language, and key motivations for learning English. As part of the data analysis, conceptual and thematic labels were ascribed to the words, phrases and sentences in the interview transcripts in order to apprehend what each participant had expressed. From this point, themes were defined and named, and a report on the findings was created utilizing NVIVO.

4 Findings and Discussion

The qualitatively driven case study research aimed to determine the attitudes and emotions of the EFL learners studying English in a foundational year program at Saudi Arabian university. This case study aimed to explore the impact that English language learning had on the EFL learners who strived to achieve their academic goals. There are particular complexities of teaching EFL in the Gulf States (Belhiah & Elhami, 2015; Mahmoud & Al-Mahrooqi, 2012) and in Saudi Arabia (Barnawi, 2017; Elyas & Picard, 2018; Shah, Hussain, & Nasseef, 2013). Hence, this case study tackled a vital issue to explore EFL learners’ views and understand their motivations behind English language learning. To achieve the objectives of the study, the following four key questions were answered via discussing the qualitative findings.

1. What are the key attitudes of the foundation year students towards learning English as a foreign language in the Saudi EFL context?
2. What are the factors, according to the foundation year program EFL learners, which shape their attitudes towards learning English as a foreign language in the Saudi EFL context?
3. What, if any, is the relationship between the attitudes of the Saudi EFL students in EFL classes and their wellbeing and performance?
4. Is there a relationship between the EFL learners’ attitudes and academic achievement in EFL classes?

This case study research has a significance in the Saudi educational realm as the government has invested in the foundation year program across the country and hopes to achieve the desire outcomes in the light of the Vision2030. To be specific, the Saudi Ministry for training and development has taken major steps to improve the EFL teaching practices and enhance learning outcomes (Elyas & Picard, 2010). As part of the teacher development, the ministry has focused on teacher evaluation and on employment on non-Saudi teachers in order to diversify the teaching and learning experience in the Saudi EFL context (Al-Omrani, 2008; McMullen, 2009). This primary plan of teacher evaluation had inherited issues as it failed consider the sociocultural
differences in pedagogical practices (e.g. the teachings of Islam) for classroom practices (Ali, 2009; Barnawi & Le Ha, 2015; McMullen, 2009). This case study intended to benefit the educational program designers, curriculum designers, teacher trainers and strategy makers who had the responsibility to develop and improve the quality of the existing EFL education in the Saudi EFL context.

The predominant themes were consistently reflected in the collected data in different forms as it was the needed for learning the English language. This does not suggest that all the students felt the need for learning English, rather it was mandatory for them to learn it. Nevertheless, their ability to communicate in English would certainly benefit them later in their professional life. For some, this ‘benefit’ was an entry into a program of their choice. While others associated it to securing a better job. Some of the participants found English would as a helping tool in their travels and studies abroad, whereas others believed that English would assist their understanding of English media, books and culture. It is also evident that not every student liked English, and some even admitted to hating it. The findings conclusively suggest that at the end of the Foundation Year Program, all the students on this study successfully completed the program, regardless of their feelings towards learning English.

4.1 Attitudes
Dörnyei (2003) considers language learning as a deeply rooted social event that leads to the construction of new knowledge in a given context. From this perspective, various sociocultural aspects such as, such as history, culture, and the learners’ L1 context provide the foundations for developing target language proficiency. Giles and Rakić (2014) propose that attitudes are acquired and related directly to the sociocultural constituents of a society where learning is taking place. The findings showed that the EFL learners expressed their opinions which could be attributed to specific categories, such as cognitive, affective and behavioural. In the process, certain limitations were placed on these categories to code the participants’ responses appropriately. Outcomes from the cognitive attitudes section focused on the importance of learning English, which was to some extent, focused on its necessity. Responses were classified as positive, negative, or neutral. Overall, there were more positive answers than negative or neutral ones, though numerically, because of the small sample size, this is not particularly relevant. What was perhaps more useful was the diversity in the positive cognitive responses. This diversity-related in part to the idea of the ‘self.’ According to Dornyei, (2003), ‘self’ can be recognized in three different manners; first the ideal L2 self, second the ought-to-be L2 self, and third the L2 learning experience in a given context. In the light of the cognitive framework of attitudes, the EFL learners could show the presence of all three constructs of ‘self’ and how they might influence their future endeavors in relation to learning English as a foreign language in the Saudi EFL context. Moreover, affective and behavioral attitudes were recognized to show how much they appreciated the English language and how their views were associated to the learning outcomes. It is evident from the data the key goal of the EFL learners was to learn English irrespective of their use if it in near or far future. The participants of the study were expected to show individual attitudes due to internal or external social pressures which would push them to come up with their own justifications for learning English or successfully completing the FYP.
4.2 Factors affecting attitudes
The literature shows various factors that can have an impact on an EFL learner’s attitude. These factors include, social pressure or family obligations, economic propositions, goals related to higher studies and intentions to travel or study abroad. These findings were consistent in the Saudi context within the participant group of this study. Within this study, motivation seems to be closely linked to these factors which was categorized into integrative, instrumental and developmental motivation. These three types of motivation were abundantly found in the literature. In the case of the current research, there appears to be no big difference between the males’ and females’ responses on this issue. However, some differences were apparent, as some females had a more positive attitude than males towards learning English in an EFL context. Beyond the motivational factors, it was the role of the teachers and chosen pedagogy within the participants’ previous learning experiences of English language that emerged as an essential theme. The participants could recall a particular language teacher and specific learning events that might have contributed to their own learning and development. In some cases, the participants who could recall positive experiences from their past seemed to be more motivated to learn English than those learners who could not recall any positive experiences related to their classroom learning. This difference in the level of motivation did not necessarily propose that a positive teaching experience of the past led to a higher level of motivation. Instead, it could be the learners’ positive attitude and individual motivation that helped them recall their good learning and teaching memories. However, more research is required in this area to determine the full extent of this relationship.

The findings also indicate a link between the teaching material, its implementation and the learners’ motivation. For example, the students suggested that when the language material was taught through active learning, such as games or other interactive activities, there was a higher level of motivation to learn from the same material. Irby (2017) suggests that technology integration in the classroom was strongly and positively associated with desire and motivation of the EFL students. As in the Saudi EFL context, EFL teachers often consider a more traditional and lecture-type approach at the university level, there is an urgent need for updating this pedagogical method and introducing more innovative approaches into teaching the EFL classrooms.

4.3 Relationship between attitude and performance of EFL learners
The findings explicitly indicated the wellbeing of the EFL learners. In the coding process and the framework of this project, the wellbeing of EFL learners centered mainly upon the feelings and emotions of the participants. In the light of the findings, we can divide wellbeing into positive, negative, and neutral constituents. The participants were specifically asked to know whether there was a relationship between their feelings and their performance. The participants who were able to suggest a positive association scored better on the final assessment than the students who indicated a negative relationship. However, given the relatively small sample size of the participant group, more research is required to understand this relationship more conclusively. In some of the existing literature, emotions and wellbeing have been linked to stress and anxiety as seen in the work of Bennett and Dorjee (2016). In these instances, students undergoing a higher level of stress are more likely to show negative emotions and feelings. This study did not explicitly consider the learners’ stress and anxiety and the participants were not asked about their
level of stress; however, it was obvious that pressures of academic success and acceptance on a
desired program could have played a considerable role in their stress levels. It would be
interesting to examine whether there is relationship between the participants’ performances
reflected on their academic achievement over more extended period and a more standardized or
rigorous examination of the testing instruments, as both of these factors could have significant
influence on the final outcomes.

4.4 Attitudes and academic achievement
The findings from this study included the grades that the participants received on their four
assessments that they were required to take in order to complete the foundation year program.
These findings indicate a lack of relationship between the EFL learners’ achievement on the final
assessments and their level of motivation or attitudes towards learning English as a foreign
language in the Saudi EFL context. This absence of connection seemed particularly baffling;
therefore, it requires further research. The EFL learners that took part in this case study research
all scored particularly high on all of the required assessments. Their good performance raised
questions to the validity of the evaluation tool that tested and determined the level of academic
English demonstrated by the students. One of the final research questions aimed to determine
whether or not there was a relationship between the students’ attitudes and their academic
achievement. The findings of this study suggest that no relationship could be established but the
future research on the topic would further contribute to the understanding of the research
phenomenon.

5 Recommendations for further research
The future research may consider the possibilities of investigation afar from the EFL learners’
domain and include EFL teachers’ perspectives. As the findings of this study indicated that the
Saudi EFL learners had a clear picture of their past learning experiences, more research on this
topic can develop better understanding of what factors lead learners to remember their good or
bad learning experiences in an EFL classroom. The future research may also consider the attitudes
of EFL teachers who teaching professionals currently work in the Saudi EFL context. While some
previous research indicates that teachers may not be culturally equipped to work in the Saudi
context, much of this outdated research assumes that teachers lack contextual knowledge due to
which their pedagogical practices are impacted. As more and more Saudi teachers are trained
and equipped with top-notch pedagogical tools, there is a need for further research on classroom
practices to see the current level of teaching and how to take it to the next level. It may also be
useful to assess the effectiveness of existing teaching approaches, as new and innovative
strategies might not only benefit the students but the teachers who need to consistently upgrade
their pedagogical repertoire.

It may also be possible to examine students over an extended period of time. Most of the
participants in the current study suggested that their motivation to learn English was linked to the
necessity entering a degree program, finding job opportunities, travelling or studying abroad, etc.
It would be interesting to explore whether or not the students achieved these goals, and possibly
if their attitudes or emotions changed over the course of any future study or employment period.
There is also room for negotiating what is meant by ‘attitude’ or ‘emotion’. As this case study
has considered and assessed the definitions of ‘attitude’ and ‘emotion’ in a language learning
milieu, they appear to be two very different constructs. Future research may take both into account as different notions that might lead to varied interpretations of the teachers’ and learners’ perspectives. Moreover, investigators can use the findings of this research as a guideline and pursue other areas related to the learners’ motivations, dispositions, attitudes and emotions in the EFL context of Saudi Arabia. More research in this direction will assist course designers to develop a new framework or model related to testing, evaluation and assessment and provide a new longer-term context-specific plan to enhance the effectiveness of the foundation year programs across the Kingdom.

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Dr. Rola Ahmed Massri is an Assistant Professor at the English Language Institute, University of Jeddah, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. She has been a TEFL lecturer since 2003 and was appointed into several administrative positions. Dr. Massri is interested in learner psychology, educational psychology, attitudes, learning beliefs, and motivation. She is also interested in English Phonetics and Phonology. Dr. Rola had participated in a number of conferences around the world presenting her studies.

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Creative Writing from Theory to Practice: 
Multi-Tasks for Developing Majmaah University Students' Creative Writing Competence

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Abstract
This research investigates the efficiency of applying creative writing multi-tasks in developing level 4 female English major students’ creative writing competence. The study conducted for 12 weeks in 2018-2019 academic year, in Zulfi College of Education, Majmaah University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). The sample consists of 64 female students divided equally into two groups: experimental and control groups. The experimental group studied an advanced college writing course supported by the creative writing multitasks designed by the researcher. A group of pre and posttest design was applied in the study. When the pre and posttest’s scores of the experimental group were analyzed and compared, it was detected that there was a statistically considerable difference in the pre- and posttest scores, in favor of posttest’s score. Also, it shows that there was a significant difference in the mean scores of the experimental and control group posttest’s scores, favoring the experimental group posttest’s score. These results prove the main research hypothesis: Creative writing multi-tasks have a significant impact on developing the experimental group’s creative writing competence, compared to the control group. The findings indicate that using creative writing multitasks has a positive effect on developing the students’ creative writing competence in both fiction and nonfiction essays. It is recommended for English language teachers to adopt similar creative writing multitasks when teaching writing skill.

Keywords: creative writing, creative writing competence, multitasks (MULTSK), techniques, strategies, and processes

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1.0 Introduction
Creativity, in general, is defined by Boden (2001, p. 95) as, the skill of coming out with new ideas that are surprising, intelligible, and also valuable in some way. Creativity is essential to innovation, novelty, and sustenance (Kaplan, 2019). According to Barnet, Borto & Cain (1997, p. 17), writing is not just a way of expressing pleasure, but it is also a way of learning and teaching others. They added: Writing skill is one of the essential language skills requires for both academic and professional performance. Developing English as foreign language creative writing skills is an inevitable task. Today, written communication is necessary for social and business purposes through platforms such as Google, e-mail, and other applications ‘text messaging. Creative writing is more than just a passion; it is a craft for practicing, individual writing awareness, and following effective writing processes all play decisive roles in producing written texts (Larkin, 2009). Teaching creative writing is to encourage the students to write by drawing upon their imaginations, and other creative processes may support writing development in all its component as suggested by (Barbot, Tan, Randi, Donato & Grigorenko, 2012).

Creative writing goal is not just assisting and enabling learning; it can also provide alternative ways of expressing and demonstrating teaching (Everett, 2005). Unfortunately, schools don’t pay much attention to teach creatively or train their teachers on how to teach creatively (Kim, 2011).

1.1 Purposes
Although many research were carried out in creative writing’s field, it still needs more efforts to design and describe new activities accompanied by modern methods and techniques for teaching and assessing creative writing skills. Therefore, the primary purposes of the current study aimed at a) Develop EFL students’ creative writing competence by making a connection between creative writing theory and practice. b) Design a plan for intensive multitasks to dedicate more class time to practicing writing. c) Create opportunities and motivation for EFL university students to engage in enjoyable activities and discover their writing skills and bring them to be alive. d) Create a standardized assessment scoring scale that helps teachers to learn the assessment criteria for evaluating students’ creativity as well as discover what to assess and what to focus on while teaching creative writing.

1.2 The problem
Developing English language students’ writing skills, in general, and creative writing skills, in particular, seen as difficult tasks for non-native speaker. They need mastery of its mechanism and process such as contents, organizations, vocabulary, punctuations, spelling firstly, and creativity secondly. The researcher assumed the problem originated from the lack of adequate practice time. Besides, the suitable writing techniques and processes are poorly taught at schools as experienced by the researcher. Nowadays, university students complain of wasting a full university year as freshmen in a preparatory English course. At the university level, the students are asked to write assignments and papers creatively in different English language courses. Furthermore, curriculum designers in EFL countries avoid introducing creative writing as a separate course into the curriculum at all levels. Instead, all English language courses focus on academic writing, grades, and circling the correct answer in tests and have no space to write.
1.3 Hypotheses
The researcher proposed the following hypotheses:

1) There is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the experimental group in pre and posttest, favoring the posttest scores.

2) There is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the experimental group posttest compared to the control group scores, favoring the posttest scores of the experimental group.

3) The creative writing multi-tasks have a considerable impact on developing the experimental group’s creative writing competence, compared with the control group.

1.4 Significance
The significance of this study arises from its various roles in building and creating positive attitudes and confidence toward creative writing among EFL students. It tries to stop the harm backwash about creative writing telling them; it is just like any craft, such as cooking or driving a car, that can be learned through continuous practice, as stated by Langan (1996). Second, it has a significant role in developing other EFL skills, such as writing research accurately and creatively. Third, creative writing multi-task design by the researcher share in solving some EFL students’ difficulties in composing a coherent, creative written text. Fourth, above all, by improving students’ creative writing competence, they can easily interact creatively through social media, emails, and in their future dealings with business’ documents, which often must be written creatively to attract attention.

1.5 Research Settings
The study is limited to the following settings:

1) Experimental and controlled groups of 32 female EFL English major students at level 6 attending Zulfi College of Education in Majmaah University, KSA.

2) Creative writing multitasks prepared by the researcher that was integrated and taught within Zulfi College of Education’s writing skills course.

3) It lasted for twelve weeks of the first semester of the academic year 2018–2019.

2.0 Background
2.1 Creative Writing
Scholars have developed several theories on writing skills, but these can be confusing for pre-service and in-service teachers searching for the best methods or philosophy to learn how to teach writing. Teachers and students may ask themselves whether creative writing can be taught, whether it can be learned, and about the challenges that both teachers and learners face.

One answer for the above questions provided by Hamand (2014, p. 24): “In order to learn or teach how to write, learners and teachers should adopt the following techniques: firstly, by creating a sentence and stringing another after it, but this needs hard work and practice”, another way, as she adds, imitating the great writers’ description techniques”. According to Earnshow, (2014, p. 4), learners need to read first and foremost about how others did it, and teachers should provide students with a generous and exciting reading list as a resource for writing. He added, to learn how to write, you have to repeat the action many times as a musician and dancer do, must repeat the step enough.
The power to be creative, as stated by Thomas (2014, p. 21), is within each one, but the challenge is to open ourselves up to it. He added, there are many keys to keep in your mind to write creatively: curiosity, passion, determination, awareness, energy, sensitivity, a listening ear, and an observant eye. An advantage of creative writing is that it has various healing powers and can reduce depression and rumination, improve self-image, and organize thoughts, emotions, and behavior. (Kaufman and Kaufman, 2009). There is a saying that claims all people have a book inside them, and anyone has dreams, ideas, hopes, and fears, as well as a certain amount of imagination (Morley, 2007). What most people lack, however, are skills and knowledge of how to turn ideas into a story that others want to read; writers are born to put words on paper and show the life of the language. (Gaffield, 1998).

James (2009) suggests some guidelines of (Emshoff, 2008; Mowbray et al., 2008, p. 4) for teachers to put them in their consideration when implementing Fidelity Criteria Program model as following:

- to draw from a specific program model that has already been explicitly described,
- to conduct component analysis to determine which program components are essential,
- to draw upon the program’s logic model to build upon the theoretical linkages between the activities and outcomes.

In his debate on educational change, Elliott (1991) states that “students seem to waste a lot of time in the class and he looks into the ways that teachers can increase the time students spend on tasks” (p.72). The researcher followed this recommendation and implemented it through CW multitasks.

2.2 Creative Writing Competence
Creative writing competence is the knowledge, skills, and abilities and behaviors that study tries to improve to build individual’s ability to: a) apply flexible writing skills appropriate to a variety of writing tasks and genres. b) Organize a piece of writing into a coherent and readable piece of writing. c) Create their fiction and nonfiction. d) Able to criticize and analyze several genres of writing.

2.3 Creative Writing Techniques
The best techniques to get students to write creatively are: First, teachers need to give transparent writing processes’ instructions, procedures, and mechanism. Second, students have to practice writing regularly in all subjects. Third, teachers must provide models of excellent essays in all target subject areas. Fourth, sometimes students are confused by the various requirements from topic to topic. Therefore, teachers should keep cycling through the writing process. The fifth technique is that at the latest stages the teacher has to direct the students to be responsible for assessing their writings and proofreading to improve the accuracy of their works, which is very important for future writing progress. The final technique, the teacher should give appropriate written feedback on students’ errors to support students’ writing competence growth and to reach their intended goals and improve their outcomes. Feedback plays a significant role in correcting students’ mistakes. (Indira, 2017).
2.4 Creative Writing Strategies

There are some useful strategies students should be aware of that may contribute to the success of any given piece of creative writing, as stated by Morley (2007, p. 28): “Creative reading is the kindest favor students can do for themselves if they aspire to be a creative writer because serious writers allow themselves to be open to influence”. He adds, “writing is stronger and more focused when the students learn to think of a specific moment in time or a specific effect or image that he or she wants to use to interest and surprise their readers.” The last point is providing details, which is very important for creating an image because it moves the reader away from a general idea toward a specific one.

2.5 Creative Writing Process

Concerning the creative writing process, Morley (2007), suggests seven methods of creative writing as follows:

First. is the preparation, which includes active reading, imitation, research, play, and reflection. Second, is to plan using brainstorming. Third, incubation that creates an incoming wave of the subconscious that washes over the pages you will write. Fourth, beginning, begin rewriting some of these into sentences or lines of meaning and start the forward stagger into writing. Fifth, flowing, is to maintain a steady flow of work, even a mechanical word count, putting in the hours, and writing quickly and uninhibitedly. Sixth, the silence reservoir, is to give yourself the time to recover your eloquence through silence. You will find, as you do so, that the reservoir fills quickly, and words and phrases rise. Seven and finally, breakthroughs and finish.” (p. 125).

Based on the above literature review, most scholars and researchers in this field are focusing on the need for paying more attention to developing CW skills at all educational levels. They suggest several strategies and processes for improving creative writing among learners. The significance of this research is in its attempt to implement them to fill the gap between these theories and practice and bring them alive.

There are many recent studies concerning creative writing’s development, such as Alameddinea and Mirzab (2016) that aligned with this study in which they have developed an academic writing essay template for students to follow. They used a pretest-posttest design to obtain the study data, and they used a common core, nationally standardized writing rubric to evaluate the data. Their results showed that using an essay template played a significant role in improving the learners’ academic writing skills.

In a recent study carried out by (Rohmah, Widiati, and Malik, 2017) they found that many students had a big problem with English grammar, appropriate tense, and well-ordered sentences. Moreover, “individual writing seemed to be ineffective because it does not give any chance for the students to learn from their classmates. The current research supports their call for collaboration in writing classes, for its significant role in providing students more space to share experience and make their voice heard by others.
Tok and Kandemir (2015), examined the effects of using creative writing’s activities on 7th-grade students’ achievement in writing skills, writing disposition, and their attitudes toward English. They used pre- and posttests in the study. The findings show that the students’ writing skills and attitudes about writing improved after the intervention, but their attitudes toward English did not change. Finally, it shows that creative writing exercises have a positive effect on creative writing achievement and writing disposition in 7th grade English language classes in elementary school. Their objectives were consistent with the current study aims at developing students’ creative writing competence.

3.0 Methodology
3.1 Design
The research adopts an experimental approach. Two groups were assigned to participate in the research; (experimental and controlled groups).

The researcher will teach creative writing using multi-tasks to an experimental group at Majmaah University. These multi-tasks will guide those students step by step to invent creative writing fiction and non-fiction essays. They are going to follow both the writing and creative writing mechanisms.

3.2 Participants
To achieve the aims, the researcher used a sample consisted of 64 EFL female English major students studying at Level 6, at Majmaah University, KSA. The study divided the participants into two groups; the experimental group of (n=32), and the controlled group of (n=32). The two groups were equal in their previous learning accomplishment in the English language writing courses. The students who participated in the study had already passed two past college writing courses (Writing 1 and 2). The two groups were divided, as shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Experimental</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of a sample</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both groups were in level 6

3.3 Tools
The research used the following tools. The first tool was for testing, the second for teaching, and the third one for evaluating students’ creative writing competence. The pre/ posttest were used to explore experimental and controlled groups’ performance in writing fiction and non-fiction essays. The second tool was CW multitasks, which used to practice CW. The third tool was an analytical scoring scale that modified from John Anderson and Jacobs’ analytical scoring scales after being modified and developed to fit the research objectives in assessing students’ CW achievement. All tools were evaluated by eight referees, who are experts in the field to check validity and reliability. The following is a brief review of the study tools:

3.3.1 Pretest
Writing skill is seen as an essential part of communication that let a writer writes freely away from face-to-face stress. English writing pretest was designed to test the experimental and control groups’ writing competence in general and to depict signs of creative writing in particular, before applying the CW multitasks. The pretest included three fiction and non-fiction options. This pretest not only assesses students’ writing performance, but it also gives insight about the area needs focus. The researcher used the pretest as a ground to build on when starting teaching the creative writing multi-tasks designed by the researcher. The reliability coefficient indicates the reliability of the pretest. The validity of the test was approved and validated by a group of university teachers who are experts in the field. The total score of the pretest was 100 points divided among ten criteria.

### 3.3.2 Posttest
This test was carried out at the end of the course to measure if there is any significant difference between the experimental and control groups on the posttests’ scores. The posttest measures the impact of the creative writing’s multitasks on the experimental group posttest’s scores compared with the control group, which didn’t practice the same creative writing multi-tasks. It also aimed at examining the differences between the means of the experimental group’s scores on the pre and posttests to ascertain the validity of the hypotheses using statistical analysis method. The total of the posttest’s score was 100 points divided equally among the ten criteria.

### 3.3.3 Multitasks’ plan and Instructions
The researcher called it multi-tasks because they varied from non-fiction to fiction (informative and descriptive essays, short stories, past events, and memoirs. To design the CW multi-task plan, the researcher consulted many recent books, textbooks, research, and online resources such as (Earnshow, 2014, Hamand, 2014, Langan, 1996, Morley, 2007) and others. Moreover, a variety of writing tasks (fiction and nonfiction) were checked to help in designing this plan to foster students’ CW competence. The Multi-tasks prepared by following many standard strategies that offered by many professionals, study centers, web centers, web tutorials, and writing centers. They accompanied by videos, photos, stories, links, various prompts, and models, read many extracts from works of famous writers. These samples sent to students via the university Desire2Learn system, then the students write an original guided work. With the assists of these Multitasks, students are expected to complete many intensive classes and homework’s assignments that lead all to full mastery of writings which organized under the term "creative writing.

The research employed some of Langan (1996, p. 28) following techniques and procedures to develop the experimental group’s CW competence: a) having students read to learn and encouraging them to imitate other writers, train the students how to use brainstorming to collect keywords and ideas, outlining, listening, proofreading and publish as the main tools of prewriting technique. b) Let the students continue writing for many sessions without disturbing them or making them stop and revise their work. c) Encouraging students to recall their memories, events, and daydreams by creating an enjoyable environment”. d) Toward the final session, the teacher assisted the students in correcting their work, and later they can work by themselves and be responsible for proofreading their work without the group or teacher involvement.
Elizabeth, Margaret & Jack (2009, p. xx) suggested another technique by forming writing’s groups through which uncreative students can be inspired and come under the umbrella of those who show signs of apparent creativity.

3.3.4 Scoring Scale
The pre- and posttests were assessed using a standardized creative writing analytical scoring scale designed by the researcher after examining many rubrics designed by many scholars such as Blamires and Peterson (2014), and Goos and Salamon (2017). A rubric was then developed to suit the study. The scoring scale consisted of ten criteria, each of which was worth ten points, for a total of 100 points. The scoring scale measured the features of essential writing skill and creative writing competence because both were linked together.

Table 2. *The ten criteria and distribution of marks*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marks</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Criterion</td>
<td>Imagination &amp; vividness</td>
<td>Voice and tone</td>
<td>Images</td>
<td>Style</td>
<td>Advanced Creative Writing’s elements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1. *The ten criteria and distribution of marks*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marks</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Criterion</td>
<td>Organizing &amp; adding details</td>
<td>Mechanism</td>
<td>Basics writing format</td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Originality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.2. *Grading Equivalent*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(strong)</th>
<th>(adequate)</th>
<th>(Partially Adequate)</th>
<th>(poor)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100- 90</td>
<td>85- 75</td>
<td>70- 60</td>
<td>59- 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4 Piloting the experimental tools
The researcher applied pre-the and posttest on a random sample of 20 students. The pilot experiment aimed to accomplish the following:

3.4.1. Establish the clarity of the instructions in the study tools
The pre- and posttest were first tested on the pilot sample to check the clarity of the instructions and the tests’ components. The experiment showed that the pre- and posttest’s instructions and parts were clear because no student raised a question during the pilot period about ambiguity in the guidelines or the test components.
3.4.2 Calculate the stability coefficients of the tests
The study used Cronbach’s alpha and the split-half equation to calculate and confirm the stability coefficient of the tests, as shown in Table 3:

Table 3. Calculation of the stability of the tests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stability of the tests</th>
<th>Cronbach’s alpha</th>
<th>Split-half</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.8835</td>
<td>0.8225</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. shows that the Cronbach’s alpha was 0.8835, while the split-half in the tests’ division was 0.8225. It indicates that the tests have a high degree of stability, which ensures the strength of the research tools.

3.4.3 Calculate the validity of the pre and posttests
The study used Alpha Cronbach’s test to measure the efficacy of both tests. The findings, as in the below table:

Table 4. Calculation of test validity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Validity</th>
<th>Cronbach’s</th>
<th>Validity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.8835</td>
<td>0.9399</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. shows that the validity of the test was 0.9399, indicating that the test was highly valid.

3.4.4 Calculate the Ease and difficulty indices
The coefficients of ease and difficulty were calculated according to the following equations:

Coefficient of ease

\[
\text{Coefficient of ease} = \frac{\text{No. of correct answers}}{\text{total number of students}}
\]

Coefficient of difficulty

\[
\text{Coefficient of difficulty} = \frac{\text{No. of incorrect answers}}{\text{total number of students}}
\]

The results, as shown in the following table:

Table 5. Ease and difficulty coefficients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question No.</th>
<th>The correct answers</th>
<th>Incorrect answers</th>
<th>Coefficient of ease</th>
<th>Coefficient of difficulty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>0.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5 shows that the ease and difficulty coefficients are mostly acceptable. The overall ease coefficient was 0.57, and the total difficulty factor was 0.43, which indicates the ratios are approaching 0.50; this average value indicates a good and acceptable balance in the tests’ components in terms of ease and difficulty.

3.4.5 Identifying the coefficient of discrimination

It refers to the test component’s ability to distinguish between the highest and lowest scoring groups. It means, the tests’ parts that measure students writing skill using a rubric design are valid in achieving their functions in the tests, which means that they are accurate in distinguishing between outstanding and weak students.

The coefficient of discrimination was calculated according to the following equation:

\[
\text{Coefficient of discrimination} = \frac{\text{No. of correct answers in upper group} - \text{No. of correct answers in lower group}}{\text{Total no. of the two groups}}
\]

The grades were divided according to the ETA square to calculate the coefficient of discrimination, where the students were classified into low and high categories. The low group obtained the lowest total scores on the test (7.25 or lower) while the group with the highest score got 10.0 and above, it was the most top scores. The coefficients of discrimination are shown in Table 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria No.</th>
<th>The correct answers in the upper group</th>
<th>The correct answers in the lower group</th>
<th>Coefficient of discrimination</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6 shows that the coefficient of discrimination result was 0.80, which indicated that the test as a whole has an excellent ability to discriminate actively from weak students, as do all of the tests’ components.

3.4.6 Equivalence between the experimental and control groups pretest’ score

A pretest was carried out for assessing and measuring the difference or the equivalent between the experimental and control groups creative writing’s competence; both groups study at the same level. The researcher used an independent sample t-test to find out whether there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test of the two groups or not. The results show that the mean score in the pretest of experimental and controlled groups was at 0.05. The results, as shown in Table 7:

Table 7. The mean scores of experimental and control groups’ pretests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>St. Deviation</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creative writing’s elements</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>27.19</td>
<td>9.41</td>
<td>0.772</td>
<td>0.443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>experimental</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td>12.98</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic sentence constructions</td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12.38</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>1.217</td>
<td>0.230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>experimental</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>10.84</td>
<td>6.54</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11.06</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.210</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above table shows that there was a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the experimental group posttest at (0.01) and (0.05). Based on this result, hypothesis one was accepted.

**Hypothesis 2): There is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the experimental group compared to the control groups posttest scores on the creative writing’ tests, with a higher
posttest score in the experimental group. To determine this, the researcher applied the independent sample t-test and the results, as shown in Table 9:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>Eta square</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creative writing’s elements</td>
<td>control</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>32.44</td>
<td>6.94</td>
<td>-</td>
<td><strong>0.000</strong></td>
<td>0.269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>experimental</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>39.81</td>
<td>5.29</td>
<td>4.781</td>
<td><strong>0.000</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tense, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling</td>
<td>control</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>14.78</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>-</td>
<td><strong>0.000</strong></td>
<td>0.228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>experimental</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18.69</td>
<td>3.84</td>
<td>4.285</td>
<td><strong>0.000</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative &amp; basic writing’s formats</td>
<td>control</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>15.47</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>-</td>
<td><strong>0.000</strong></td>
<td>0.284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>experimental</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20.25</td>
<td>4.77</td>
<td>4.954</td>
<td><strong>0.000</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posttest</td>
<td>control</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>62.6875</td>
<td>9.5931</td>
<td>-</td>
<td><strong>0.000</strong></td>
<td>0.396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>experimental</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>78.7500</td>
<td>10.5311</td>
<td>6.376</td>
<td><strong>0.000</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** The mean difference is significant at 0.01.

Table 9 shows that there was a statistically significant difference at (0.05) in the mean scores of the experimental group posttest compared to the control group scores; it was at 0.01 and below. Based on these results, Hypothesis 2 was accepted because there was a statistically significant difference at (0.05) in the mean scores of the experimental and controlled groups’ posttest scores; this difference was at (0.396) for the dimensions as a whole, and their sub-values ranged from (0.288) to (0.284). The result supports the effectiveness of using multitasks in developing the creative writing competence of the experimental group. Based on this result, hypothesis one was accepted.

**Hypothesis 3): Creative writing multi-tasks have a significant impact on developing the experimental group’s creative writing competence, compared to the control group.**

The first and the second hypotheses supported and proved the third hypothesis that creative writing multitasks were effective and had a significant role in developing EFL female students’ creative writing competence.

**5.0 Discussion**

The primary purpose of this research was to assess the efficiency of using multitasks in promoting creative writing competence among female English majors at Majmaah University, KSA. The researcher hypothesized that continuous practice using diversified creative writing multitasks would play a significant role in improving student writing competence. These results were consistent with Alameddine and Mirzab’s study (2016) about teaching 10th-grade academic writing. They collect the data via pre- and posttest’s essays and were evaluated using the “Common Core Standards Writing Rubric.” The results revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the experimental group’s pre and posttest, with higher scores on
the posttest. These results indicated that applying the designed essay template improved the learners’ academic writing.

The results of this research also went in one line with Arthur and Zell’s (1996) research. Their study aimed at improving a creative writing instructional program focusing on speaking activities, to examine its effect on 4th-grade primary school students’ creative writing achievement and attitudes toward writing. They applied a pre- and posttest model. The study findings showed there were significant differences in the control and experimental groups’ tests scores in writing attitudes and creative writing’s achievement, with higher scores in the experimental group.

The current study also agreed with the study of Tok and Kandemir(2015). They have investigated the effects of using creative writing activities on 7th-grade students’ achievement in writing skill, writing dispositions, and their attitude toward English. A pretest-posttest design was used in the study. In comparing the pre and posttest scores, they found that the students’ achievements in writing skills and dispositions were increased when compared to their level before the experiment, but the students’ attitude toward English courses wasn’t increased. Their findings agreed with the current study’s findings that creative writing activities have a significant effect on developing students’ creative writing competence.

Finally, this study goes in one line with the study results of Naser, Syeda, and Shelina (2013), they aimed to improve the written expressions (composition) skills of 5th-grade students at an Elite Private School. The baseline assessment was carried out to discover the pre-intervention writing skill score of the students before the intervention cycle one. In the end, the intervention and writing skill support strategies were carried out for eight weeks. A post-test was carried out to explore the differences that occurred in the writing score of the students as a post-intervention effect. The findings from the quantitative data showed an improvement in the written expressions skills of the students. These results confirmed the statistical differences in the posttest scores compared with pretest score (favoring the posttest scores). These findings were consistent with the results of the current study.

6.0 Conclusion
As a result of the practical evidence gained from the statistical analysis of the research data; this research can be contributed much in a better understanding of the role that creative writing multitasks may play as follows a) creative writing multitasks played a significant role in developing female EFL students’ creative writing competence in both fiction and nonfiction essays. The evidence is that the experimental group’s high posttest scores compared to their pretest scores and the control group’s posttest scores; b) The creative writing multi-tasks provided EFL students with various activities and samples that started from the early stages of the writing process to the advanced ones, c) These tasks gave the students an opportunity to experience, taste, and sense the beauty of the English language, d) Applying a standardized assessment scoring scale makes the tests more reliable; e) The regular feedback on the students’ writing products helped the students to discover the area that needs more efforts and overcome their prejudice that creative writing’s ability is something born with an individual and it will never learn. Finally, the CW multitasks not only improved CW competence among the students, but also mended and improved their essay formatting, sentence construction, and basic writing techniques.
To conclude, at the end of the experiment, most of the experimental group’s participants became very excited and confident; they were comfortable. The steady and good progress in the students’ creative writing competence shows that through strong determination and regular practice and put in more efforts to learn things; everything can be learned. These provide evidence that applying the creative writing multitasks far more beneficial than the researcher and students predict.

This study was limited to develop EFL female English students’ creative writing competence using a designed multitasks.

7.0 Recommendations
Based on the findings and conclusion of the research, some practical suggestions are presented to meet the interest of English teachers, educators, syllabi, and curriculum designers and the researcher in the field. The researcher recommends the following:

1) Creative writing multi-tasks should consider as the primary tool for building students creative writing in particular and writing ability as general.
2) To improve teaching methods and techniques for building writing skills in EFL writing classes, teachers should design multitasks and assessment scoring scale criteria.
3) Regular assessment and feedback should be used to assess students’ creative writing products to put the students on the right track.
4) Curriculum designers have to introduce creative writing multitasks’ syllabi into all educational levels.
5) Teachers’ education and professional development programs should provide training opportunities, requirements, and facilities for teaching creative writing.

7.1 Suggestions for further study
The researcher suggests the following for future research:

1) Conduct future studies on the obstacles encountered when introducing a creative writing course into the learning and teaching processes.
2) Conduct a future study to invent an electronic application resembling that used for automatic translation consists of written phrases and sentences for EFL learners to use to promote their creative writing competence.

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References


Effects of Integrated Feedback on Academic Writing Achievement

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Abstract
This study examined the effects of integrated feedback on students’ writing achievement. Then, it further investigated the attitude of student towards the implementation of integrated feedback on writing. Twenty students from one class were used as a sample group (intact group) to participate in this study. So the convenience sampling was used to select the participants. Research instruments consisted of integrated feedback model, pretest and posttest, and semi-structure interview questions. The participants did the pretest at the first week of the study. Later on, they were required to write four paragraph writing tasks and all of them were assessed and given feedback. Then they were required to do posttest on week 14. The following week was reserved for in-depth interview. The writing achievement of students was analyzed by Wilcoxon-Signed Rank Test. Week 15 was reserved for interviewing and the results were analyzed by content analysis. The results demonstrated that students improved their writing after they cooperated with the integrated feedback approach. Interviewing results revealed that they had positive attitude towards implementing integrated feedback in improving their writing skill.

Keywords: Integrated feedback, Paragraph writing, Writing achievement and Writing skill

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Introduction

Writing is one of the most important skills for everyone since it can be used to express opinions and thoughts; however, this skill is considered to be the most complicated language skills since it requires a complex process, including generating ideas, communicating in diverse and appropriate context. The ability to write well can have such a great impact on our life including the impact on effective communication and career development (Currier, 2008). However, teaching English writing in Thailand still relies heavily on a product-oriented approach, although some language instructors prefer a process-oriented approach (Tagong, 1991; Sakontawut, 2003). This proposed idea corroborates Susser (1994) to the point that even though in theory the process-oriented approach to teaching writing is accepted, its practical usage of this method is not commonly used. This is because many writing classes still rely on an old-fashioned method of teaching writing (product-oriented approach and its emphasis on form), as Tagong (1991) stresses that many Thai EFL instructors still think that students’ writing problem has emerged from insufficient knowledge of grammar and vocabulary; therefore, lessons also need to be focused on both grammar and vocabulary lessons. Pawapatcharadom (2007) states that there are four main areas of writing problems for Thai students including (1) being unable to write within limited time, (2) being unable to compose an academic paper through the use of English, (3) being unable to utilize the grammar rules in writing and (4) being unable to develop an appropriate structure in content. Another important problem may arise from students’ delayed exposure of English writing because Thai students are exposed to writing at a later stage in their education and some are even introduced to formal writing when they study at the tertiary level (Tangkiengsirisin, 2010). However, assessing writing task cannot be based on grammatical issues solely, so many elements involved with writing need to be taken into consideration. Sakontawut (2003) stresses that even Thai students understand the rule of syntax, they still cannot construct proper writing task because they do not know how to express their thoughts in text and they encounter the problem of organizing ideas. First language interference errors need to be explored seriously for Thai learners since they normally think that writing is simple and they just translate from their mother tongue language to English. Sattayatham and Ratanapinyowong’s study (2008) shows that top four errors of the format of paragraph writing include no transitional words, lack of organization, no introduction and no conclusion. Another important issue that needs to be taken into consideration is effective feedback. Providing feedback helps to improve students’ writing ability because if teacher does not provide any comments, the students will revise in a consistently narrow way and will perceive that there is no need to revise the substances of the texts (Leki: 1992, Raimes: 1983, Ferris, 1995 and Baghzou, 2014). The logic behind the surface of feedback concept is that many teachers often misread students’ text, make arbitrary corrections, provide vague prescriptions, or respond to text as fixed and final products (Zamel, 1985). However, to fulfill the job of providing feedback effectively is not a simple task because when students read feedback given by their instructors, they are often confused. Moreover, Truscott (1996) emphasizes that providing feedback especially in grammatical parts is really harmful for students and teacher should avoid such practice.

Despite some drawbacks of certain types of feedback provided in writing, Zamel (1985) explains that English instructors should implement new techniques of providing feedback such as teacher-student conferencing since it acts as two-way interaction between a teacher and a student to negotiate meaning and facilitate the latter understands of the message. Such knowledge is
beneficial for instructor’s consideration on whether or not using integrated feedback in English writing lesson would hinder or help students. Another point is that many teachers continue to wonder about effectiveness of certain approaches of how the process writing, providing feedback, and revision actually enhance students to write and become autonomous learners in order to construct their knowledge in writing. From such explanation, it can be implied that further studies are really significant to explore and seek empirical evidence about certain type of feedback that might improve students’ writing. Therefore, this study raises two research questions: (1) what effects does integrated feedback have on students’ academic writing achievement? and (2) what are students’ attitudes towards the implementation of integrated feedback on writing?

Literature Review

Feedback in L2 Writing

Feedback is significant in second language writing because it allows each language learner to look and study in more detail about their mistakes, which rarely happen in normal classroom condition. Hyland (2004) explains that feedback itself emphasizes the writing process because it helps the learners to realize their writing through the process of re-writing. Generally, feedback in second language writing is related to certain forms including form feedback, content-based feedback, teacher-student conferencing and peer feedback. Form feedback can be classified as direct and indirect corrective feedback. Direct corrective feedback occurs when the teacher notices the errors produced by the students, the correct form is provided from the teacher (Ferris, 1995; Lalande, 1982). On the other hand, indirect corrective feedback occurs when the teacher just indicates the errors by underlining, highlighting, or coding them and later on students correct the errors by themselves (Guenette, 2007). Nevertheless, many writing instructors do not have certain conclusion about the best type of feedback to improve their students’ grammatical accuracy (Leki, 1990; Susser, 1994 and Reid 1994). The next one is called “content-based feedback”. Providing content-based feedback is not so simple for English teachers to master in a short period since this type of feedback requires teacher not just provide it on the surface level but it must be judged on the depth or the quality of work, often against criteria that either explicit (for example, rubric scoring criteria) or it may be examined through the depth of information (Hattie and Timperley, 2007). In addition, when feedback is provided for the meaning level especially in term of ideas, thus it enhances more revision in both the L1 and L2 contexts (Hillocks, 1982; Ziv, 1984). When students see the text specific comment from their teacher, it leads them to revise more and it can affect their writing positively (Ferris, 1997; Kepner 1991). Another feedback type called “teacher-student conferencing” which means teacher discusses the written task with the student. In such practice, feedback is provided on student writing through face-to-face conferencing (Ferris, 2002). McCarthy (1992) states that teacher-student conferencing means to check the student written tasks and it enhances the opportunities for negotiation of meaning and clear understanding of a text through dialogue. Brookhart (2008) classifies teacher-student conferencing into two types which include in-class student conferencing and out-of-class conferencing. The last one is peer feedback, which was existed and recognized from their peers developed from first language (L1) process classes and it has become prominent alternative to teacher-based forms of response in English as a second language (ESL) contexts. Peer feedback can be explained as peer review, peer response or peer editing and it has been defined as the use of learners as sources of information and interaction for each other in the way that learners take part and realize in their roles and responsibilities in which it is normally operationalized by a trained teacher, tutor or editor through
the process of commenting on and critiquing each other’s drafts in both written and oral formats in the process of writing (Liu & Hansen, 2002).

Identifying the best approach of providing feedback remains an essential component of the ESL and English as a foreign language (EFL) academic writing classroom; however, there is no best approach of providing feedback (Winer, 1992). Providing many types of feedback is significant to students because the fundamental of learning philosophy lies upon the notion that the learning process, which is normally comprised with a teaching intervention or facilitating action and a student response. Giving feedback itself can also be classified under the concept of facilitating action. Therefore, integrated feedback is provided about an aspect of student’s response. It can be explained that teacher needs to include opportunities in the classroom environment for eliciting student thinking and understanding. In addition to normal steps of learning writing, questioning and discussion can give such a valuable insight into student progress and solve the misunderstanding problem about their writing (Heitink, Van der Kleij, Veldkamp, Schildkamp & Kippers, 2016). Williams (2003) and Mahmoud (2006) explain that integrated feedback can be existed in numerous forms, and this come from many methods (ways) of providing feedback, which normally with the same paper from different sources or different paper by using not the same source. The studies done by Song (1998), Gonzalez (2010) and Ongphet (2013) reveal that after the students received integrated feedback from teacher they gained higher scores in improving their writing ability. The interesting point is that when this topic is reviewed in a Thai situational context, there is only one study done by Ongphet (2013), which had the main purpose for studying English writing ability through incorporating with different types of corrective feedback and teacher-student conferencing for upper-secondary school students. So far there has been no research in Thailand that has focused on the use of integrated feedback (written feedback, teacher-student conference and indirect corrective feedback) to enhance the writing proficiency for English major students at the tertiary level of education. Consequently, this study needs to study further about integrated feedback by constructing the model of integrated feedback by adapting from the previous studies.

Methodology
This section presents the participants, research instruments, and data collection procedure of the study.

Participants
The university being studied was one private university in Bangkok where the researcher has been working. The population were 60 second-year undergraduate English major students in the Faculty of Education. Twenty students from one class were used as a sample group (intact group) to participate as the researcher was assigned by the department and faculty to teach only one group of students; therefore, the sampling technique used was convenience sampling. In this study, there were four male and sixteen female students. Their age ranges from 19 to 21 years old. All students in this group were required to take the subject entitled “Paragraph Writing”, which is considered as compulsory subject.
Research Instruments

1. Integrated Feedback Model (IF Model)

The integrated feedback model was developed by the researcher. The purpose of developing this model was to provide feedback on student writing with more effectiveness. The model was validated by three experts using the IOC index. In this study, it focuses on the teacher’s feedback on paragraph writing; the integrated feedback was implemented by teachers through both written feedback and teacher-student conferencing for the improvement of content and grammar. Drafts need to be checked during the writing process as this is part of an ongoing assessment before a final piece of writing is produced and evaluated. The first draft of each student’s written task was marked mainly on the content by the teacher. This was done by writing comments in English on each student’s written task in the forms of phrases, sentences or questions to suggest some ways to improve unclear or unrelated text. However, before asking each student to take back his/her task for revision, teacher-student conferencing would take place for each individual student after the first draft has been marked. During this process, Thai was used instead of English to facilitate student’s written task. Later on the students would produce the second draft. For the second draft, grammatical errors would be checked only through providing indirect corrective feedback using codes. Before this stage, therefore, the teacher would distribute and explain the codes that would be used for the checking of the second draft, in which it was distributed from the first period of the experimental process. The explanation was done after students have received the code manual so that they would be able to interpret and understand the coded feedback later. The code manual provides a list of possible grammatical errors with their codes or symbols followed by examples of corrections (See Appendix A). Once the students saw the grammatical errors, they had to correct them and later on they would need to submit the third draft (final draft) for evaluation. The final draft of each student would be evaluated based on both content and grammatical aspects simultaneously. Teacher-student conferencing would take place after written content-based feedback was provided on students’ first drafts. This type of feedback will enhance more understanding for students when they do not understand the texts written by teacher and if the teacher does not write the explanation clearly, the student can take this opportunity to ask for some clarification. Furthermore, according to Zamel (1985), responding in conferences is much better than providing feedback on writing only as the teacher can interact dynamically with students to understand the intent of the message.

2. Pre- and Post-Tests, and Score Rubrics

Paragraph writing tests to be used as pre- and posttests were developed by the researcher. The purpose of the tests was to measure the students’ paragraph writing ability before and after the integrated feedback instruction. The paragraph writing mode for both the pretest and posttest in this study were the same. Before the administration, both tests were checked and validated by three experts using IOC index. Subsequently, the researcher had to try out the test papers to verify the reliability of the test with a group of students who were not the main participants in the actual experiment but these students had almost the same characteristics as those in the sample group. Then the interrater reliability was calculated through the use of Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient. The inter-raters reliability that is closer to 1.0 indicates greater correlation (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). In this case, the correlation coefficient showed the value of .981 for pre-test stage of pilot and it also pointed out the value of .951 at the post-test stage of pilot. The topic for these two tests (pretest and posttest), a cause and effect paragraph was assigned to the sample group as
this topic falls under an expository paragraph and the students had to spend half of their regular semester in writing expository texts. The topic was “The effects of not getting enough sleep”. In fact, they had to study and practice writing four types of paragraphs according to the course syllabus in the course entitled “Paragraph Writing”. These four types of paragraphs included compare/contrast paragraph, cause and effect paragraph, narrative paragraph and descriptive paragraph. Analytical score rubrics by Paulus (1999) was adapted for the suitability of this study. Paulus’s rubric score was quite appropriate for this study because when evaluating a paragraph, various aspects such as grammar, the writer’s ideas, organization, and content should be taken into consideration. Although Paulus’s rubric score was initially created for the evaluation of a persuasive essay, the steps for organizing any kind of paragraph are the same in terms of organizing ideas, commencing each paragraph with a topic sentence followed by supporting sentences and a concluding sentence. There were five levels for assessing each aspect of students writing, which included organization, development, coherence, structure and mechanics. The maximum score that each student would receive for this assessment tool with adapted rubric scoring was 25 marks (See Appendix B). However, before the adapted rubric scoring was used for checking the writing achievement of the participants in this study, it was validated by three expert using IOC index.

3. Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Semi-structured interview questions were given to six students who participated in this study at the end of the implementation of integrated feedback. The semi-structure interviews were conducted with six students who really wanted to participate voluntarily. However, six students including 5 females and 1 male were decided to take part in the interview sessions because in-depth interview was a major role in this part; therefore, it was difficult to handle by conducting interview with all students in the sample group. In addition, six students were represented based on almost as real proportion of the sample group (16 females and four males). After explaining about confidential part and the importance of obtaining data in the interview process, six students who were willing to participate in the interview process read and signed the consent form. This was in line with the ethical aspect in conducting qualitative research because the participants should be made aware of their right to refuse participation and they also should be realized of where and how long their data would be stored and interpreted (Crow et al. 2006). A semi-structured interview was implemented because it promoted a discussion and further questions. This process was performed in the way of individual face-to-face in-depth interview. The reason that the interview was carried out by asking the students to participate voluntarily is because this method matches with the concept of “enabling participants” in recruiting the participants. The reason behind this is that teachers and researchers who work at the higher institutions always face with the dilemma of how to recruit research participants; therefore, a common way of recruitment strategy is advertising. In fact such method can be a proper way of recruiting the participants who may not have previously involved in qualitative research. In addition, such practice did not even force the participants to involve in this research but it depends on their willingness which is an important part of ethical issue in conducting qualitative research (Halej, 2017). The interview questions were constructed and adapted based on the study done by Covill (1996), and Leung (2008). After that they were validated by three experts using IOC index. All interview questions were conducted in Thai to help the students understand the questions; therefore, they would have more confidence in answering them. The interview session lasted around 30 minutes for each participant and all responses were tape-recorded. Subsequently, the data from interview were
analyzed by using content analysis (inductive approach). According to Thomas (2003), inductive approach of content analysis enhances researcher to find significant themes gained from raw data, without limiting oneself by structured methodologies. Such approach is comprised of the following steps: reading of text, identification text segment, labelling the text to create categories, reducing overlap and redundancy among the categories, and creating a model incorporating most important categories.

Data Collection Procedure

This study was conducted using a one-group design to compare and measure the degree of change occurring as a result of providing integrated feedback in paragraph writing class. The outcomes of this experimental design demonstrated in terms of academic writing achievement. The students were required to take a pretest by writing a paragraph of 150 words at the beginning of the semester within 30 minutes. The participants had to start their paragraph with topic sentence followed by supporting sentences and concluding sentence. During the regular classes within 14 weeks of the semester, the teacher would assign four individual tasks by asking them to write paragraphs. These four topics of paragraph were as 1) The life during high school and university, 2) Problems of buying goods online, 3) My journey on last summer, and 4) A wonderful person. Then they would receive integrated feedback, which includes content-based feedback followed by teacher-student conferencing for the first draft. However, for the second draft, they would receive only indirect coded feedback for their grammatical errors. After that, they needed to look back to their errors for both content and grammatical parts from the previous drafts and then prepare to submit their final draft (draft 3). At the end of week 14, the students took posttest on paragraph writing and then the results of their posttest were compared with pretest results on their writing achievement. During the time of writing and re-writing three drafts for each writing task within the time of experimental process, they would have opportunity to write and revise their assigned paragraph outside class for 3 days and they had to submit their draft before the time of studying for the next period (subsequent week) so that the instructor could have enough time to assess their writing and return to them upon next lesson. After that on the week 15, six students who were willing to participate in individual interview provided the information about their attitude towards the implementation of integrated feedback (in-depth interview).

Findings

Results of Research Question 1

To answer the first research question, the adapted analytical score rubrics (Paulus, 1999) were used to assess students’ tests. There were five elements to evaluate each participant’s writing achievement, including organization, development, coherence, structure, and mechanics. The maximum score of each element is five marks; therefore, the highest score of each paper that each student can obtain is 25 marks. The results would be analyzed by using non-parametric statistical analysis, which was Wilcoxon-Signed Rank Test, because the sample size was less than 30 (Newing, 2011). However, before the statistical analysis was calculated to investigate the academic writing ability during the real treatment process and in order to prevent any subjective issues incurring during the marking all writing papers, the solution to solve this problem was done by inviting another rater apart from the researcher and let him assessed the students’ papers from analytical rubric score. This was done by selecting 4 papers from both pretest and posttest randomly (20% of all papers in each session of the test) and then they were calculated the inter-
raters reliability by using Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient or Spearman’s rho. At pretest stage, Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient (Spearman’s rho) was 1.000 and it also revealed the value as .949 at the post-test phase. This could be explained that the two raters were in good agreement with each other. In addition, even though during at the post-test stage the result of correlation dropped down to .949, it still signified that two raters agreed with each other on most points when evaluating the test papers based on analytical rubric scores. This again really confirms that the reliability level is significant and the scores obtained by two raters are reliable (Weir, 2005). The result of students’ academic writing achievement is showed in Table 1.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Test and Post-Test Result of Writing Achievement by Using Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test</th>
<th>Number of students</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Sum of Ranks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Post-Test</td>
<td>Pre-Test</td>
<td>Negative Ranks</td>
<td>0a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Ranks</td>
<td>19b</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>190.00</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. post-test < pre-test
b. post-test > pre-test
c. post-test  = pre-test

Test Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Post-Test – Pre-Test</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-3.832</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p < .01
a. Based on negative ranks
b. Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test

According to Table 1, it shows the comparison of writing achievement between pretest and posttest through the treatment of integrated feedback. The test was done through the use of Nonparametric test (Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test). The Z value is -3.832 and P value (2-tailed) is .000 which is less than .01. This indicates that after the experimental treatment through Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test, the writing achievement was different in statistical significance at .01 level. From the results, when looking in more details of scores between pretest and posttest of each participant, it can be explained that all of them improved their content as observed through rubric scoring in three aspects, which include organization, development, and coherence. The mean score of pretest was 11.20; whereas it increased to 17.05 for posttest. However, when looking at the structure and mechanic parts, the results of posttest slightly improved as compared with pretest (See Appendix C).

Results of Research Question 2
There were seven questions that each of the participants had to respond for the interview session. Subsequently, the interviews were later transcribed in a light of salient themes and patterns based on inductive analysis (Gibbs, 2007).

1) Do you think that integrated feedback (IF) is beneficial for your improvement of English writing? If yes or no how does it affect your English writing?

All the student interviewees agree that integrated feedback is really helpful for developing their writing skills. The reason is that they had many chances to write more than one time. In fact, they are happy with writing and it is a new approach of learning to write English; for example student 1 stated: *I think that this is the first time for me in learning to write since you have to write many drafts and it acts as a way of revision, before learning with this method I just wrote only one time, and I was not able to understand in more details.* However, there are some challenging parts of this model in terms of interpretation of written feedback from both content and form (grammar); for example student 4 expressed: *Giving integrated feedback is sometimes difficult for instructor to handle and it also requires a lot of effort for students to understand what the messages being written from instructor.*

2) How do you feel with the amount of written feedback provided by your teacher for the organization and development part?

All of the students do not mind about the amount of written feedback, and they do not even care about the length of sentences written by their teacher. They feel that it is reasonable for providing written feedback in more detail so that they can understand better, for example student 5 mentioned: *I think that it is appropriate for me when the teacher provided feedback by writing to make me understand about organization and development part.* Nevertheless, some students still confuse especially the writing in the development part, since this is the biggest part of paragraph’s component including major and minor supporting sentences; for example student 1 said: *For me, well in fact I think when you provided feedback in both organization and content part, it was considered to be a good way to improve my writing. However, there were certain times that I encountered some difficulties when I read what you wrote because I thought that I have already written it clearly in my assignment.*

3) What is your view on teacher-student conferencing?

All of the student interviewees have positive view about teacher-student conferencing because they think that providing feedback only in the form of written feedback is not sufficient. All of them reported that they understand their errors better especially in content part. For this question, none of them have negative attitude towards the implementation of teacher-student conferencing, and they said that this practice acts as a two ways communication; for example student 5 mentioned: *I think that it is a wonderful way when teacher call on each student to discuss unclear parts of their written task because I can clarify what I want to interpret and explain. In addition, some of them added certain interesting point when they reported about language barrier during the time of communication with the teacher. This is because they were allowed to speak Thai to discuss and explain unclear points with their teacher and at the same time their teacher also did not speak English during the conference; for example student 3 said: The most important thing*
that I really love this method is because you spoke the same language as me and I could exchange my idea which is easier than speaking English.

4) Is it helpful for you in term of improving your English structure when teacher just provides only coded feedback and lets you correct your grammatical errors by yourself?

All of the student interviewees reported that it is good and beneficial when they received coded feedback from teacher. At least they have such a great opportunity to revise their grammatical errors and it is better than providing students with the right answer by correcting the errors directly; for example student 4 said: I think that it is helpful for me because I could spend my time to find the answer by comparing or learning from coded manual that you gave me at the first period in this semester. Trust me, if teacher only provides the correct grammar immediately, students will never learn anything. On the other hand, this method is very challenging for them especially in term of code interpretation as many of them consider themselves as weak in grammar. In fact, some parts of grammar are quite difficult to understand such as the complexity of tenses and types of sentences; for example student 2 said: Well even though when I looked back to the coded manual, I still encountered such a hard time to correct some grammatical errors this is because I know that my knowledge about grammar is limited. If I really do not know how to interpret the codes this will make me sometimes frustrated.

5) Among the three kinds of feedback given by your teacher (content-based feedback, teacher-student conferencing and coded indirect written feedback), which one do you prefer best and why?

All of the student interviewees answered without hesitation that the best kind of feedback is teacher-student conferencing. They mentioned that this way of giving feedback is very clear and no language barrier of communication; for example student 5 expressed: The most wonderful type of feedback that I really like is teacher-student conferencing because I am not only receiving feedback from you in one direction but it acts as two ways communication. To emphasize more details about explanation mentioned earlier, some of the students even claimed that this is such an innovative in learning English writing; for example student 4 mentioned: I think that you are the first teacher who implements this method for me. When I was in my junior and senior high school, none of my teachers practiced this with me. Even though all of them responded with positive attitude towards teacher-student conferencing, there was something that they pinpointed during the interview. One of them said that it was a challenging part due to the time constraint in class and this is one factor that teacher has to cope and plan it ahead; for example student 3 said: For me, I think that it is acceptable to sit and listen to the comment just 7-8 minutes but for some of my classmates, they want more conferencing even though you already explained in Thai.

6) Have you ever had any negative attitudes while writing or rewriting some drafts after you receive feedback from your teacher? If yes or no what are they?

All of the interviewees responded to this question as they do not reject about the way of rewrite or correct their errors in writing again. They know that they are weak in writing before taking this course but they scare when they look what the teacher wrote; for example student 2
expressed: In fact I do not mind about writing many drafts but when you assign us to write for each topic what I worry is whether I would pass all the works when they are evaluated at the end of the third draft. In addition, when I saw the red pen written by you as commenting on content part, I felt sad and shock. However, when I received many kinds of feedback from you along the semester somehow nearly the end of this course I start to like this subject. The point mentioned earlier can be supported by the comment from some students. This frustrating point can be existed when they have nothing in my mind about how to write properly before taking this subject; for example student 5 said: Initially, I was a lazy and the first thing that came into my mind was “would this be effective in teaching writing?” However, when I did my subsequent tasks, my mind has changed because I started to know that my works have been continuously improved.

7) When you do not understand the feedback from your teacher (either written feedback or teacher-student conferencing) how would you respond on it?

Most of the students are worried when they do not understand the feedback especially the part of grammar, but they are not worried much about content-based feedback. Some of them said that they need to find ways to solve this problem which can be done through reading books, asking the information from friends or teacher; for example student 3 mentioned: Well at the very beginning of the course it was quite discouraged when I did not understand feedback and I think that the best way to solve the problem is I would prefer to ask teacher. For me, the most challenging part is when I have to interpret all codes and correct my grammatical errors. Apart from that, some of them respond that when they could correct their errors through revision and study more especially in grammatical part they would be happy. Therefore, their demotivation would finally be alleviated; for example student 6 expressed: You know when I was able to correct it and got it right after study the codes, this would make me proud and my tension would be diminished.

Discussion

The outcome of writing improvement through the use of integrated feedback in this study is in line with Zamel (1985), Song (1998) and Baghzou (2014). This can be due to the reason that pointing out grammatical errors and commenting on content and organization in the same draft can be harmful to students because it can lead them to be confused. This point can be explained further that the students in this study would have gone to the process of planning, revising their error in content with the supporting from teacher-student conferencing and then the next draft would be checked their grammatical errors separately. In addition, the findings of this study regarding teacher-student conferencing enhances students’ writing performance in content part are in line with with the study of Leung (2008), Ongphet (2013) and Perez-Amurao (2014) because conferencing enhances the students to be participated and this allows teacher to realize exactly what the student understands, and he/she does not understand. The second reason is teacher-student conferencing acts as “a positive, encouraging, and collaborative” pattern of communication between a teacher and student in facilitating students on revising, editing, and enjoying in writing their tasks. For the part of grammatical accuracy, though Truscott (1996) argues that grammar correction or providing feedback in forms is harmful, the findings of this study contradict his statement. This is because the outcome of students’ posttest in this study confirms that the corrective feedback is beneficial to students, and it also leads to slightly improvement of the students’ writing accuracy.
Turning to the findings of interview questions through content analysis, the outcomes point out that the participants had motivation to write paragraphs along the course, in spite of facing many times of writing and correcting drafts. All of the participants expressed their idea that providing integrated feedback is really helpful for developing their writing skill. The interviewees did not mind about the length of feedback being written in term of content and they felt that it is reasonable for teachers to write clearly so that they could be able to understand better and they realize the process of writing even better. This aligns with Currier (2008) who explains that writing can be inferred as the expression of thoughts, desires and emotions which requires skills, practices rather than knowledge. Their expression also is in line with Raimes (1983) in the point that grammar is not the only thing that needs to be assessed in writing. For teacher-student conferencing, all of them were satisfied with it since they realized that it is not sufficient for them to fully understand feedback by reading comment only and no language barrier existed during conferencing since Thai was the primary element for communication. Their ideas corroborate Sommers (1982), Knoblauch and Brannon (1981), and Leung (2008) as teacher-student conferencing is considered not one way communication but in fact two ways communication so that both parties (teacher and students) can clarify unclear written text and it enhances negotiation of meaning. For the part of grammatical errors, all of them stated that it is beneficial when they received written corrective feedback with code because they could use this chance to revise their errors and it allowed them to gain more cognitive engagement because they had to correct their errors by themselves. The finding also aligns with Gramai (2005), who indicates that most students in ESL and EFL context still expect proper feedback from their English teachers. The findings also confirm that students do believe that they are satisfied with feedback and they also appreciate error-feedback. Their attitude about benefit of indirect feedback with code is congruent with Sheen’s idea (2010) that metalinguistic feedback enhances noticing and understanding simultaneously. On the other hand, they reported also that code feedback is challenging especially in term of interpretation as Zamel (1985), Sommers (1992), and Conners and Lunsford (1993) stress that some types of corrective feedback could be confusing and it is ineffective because students could not understand. Williams and Burden (1997) point out interesting part as students’ motivation or demotivation can be arisen from the nature and amount of feedback.

Conclusion

The results obtained above show that it is really worth providing integrated feedback which the students perceive positively because they have realized about writing process and the steps of IF model still enhance their metacognitive ability too. According to them, they believe that it is the innovation in learning about writing for second language that is why they perceived it to be beneficial. Therefore, the integrated feedback is considered to be one of the useful methods in developing their writing skills. However, there are some drawbacks that need to be mindful about this study. First of all, the study context was performed in one-group pretest-posttest design to low or intermediate English proficiency levels. Moreover, the choice of selection for all the participants was due to practical reason since the researcher was assigned to teach this course only one group. Secondly, the duration of conducting this research was only 15 weeks thus such duration of conducting might not be enough because the participants had to enroll in other subjects in the subsequent semester. Therefore, the finding about writing achievement could not be explored in long run.
Recommendations for Further Study

The points mentioned earlier about some limitations should be taken into consideration carefully. First of all, the control group should be involved so that the effectiveness of integrated feedback model could be compared with the traditional method of providing feedback in writing. Secondly, the integrated feedback model should be conducted with a bigger size of sample so that generalizability can be achieved. Lastly, some qualitative approaches such as observation might be implemented in investigating certain behaviours towards the attitude of the participants during the time of teacher-student conferencing; therefore, this may add value in exploring about students’ attitude.

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Effects of Integrated Feedback on Academic Writing Achievement

Yamalee & Tangkiengsirisin

Boynton/Cook, Heineman.


**APPENDIX A**

**Code Manual**

**Descriptions:** This manual is comprised of common symbols that the English lecturer will use to indicate errors in your writing so that you will use these symbols as a guideline and improve your grammatical errors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Incorrect</th>
<th>Correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Punctuation</td>
<td>I live work, and go to school in Bangkok.</td>
<td>I live, work, and go to school in Bangkok.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>=</td>
<td>Capitalization Needed</td>
<td>The chao phraya river is the river in Thailand.</td>
<td>The Chao Phraya river is the river in Thailand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VT</td>
<td>Verb Tense</td>
<td>I never work as a cashier unit I got a job there.</td>
<td>I never worked as a cashier until I got a job there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SV</td>
<td>Subject-verb Agreement</td>
<td>The manager work hard.</td>
<td>The manager works hard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TS</td>
<td>Tense Shift</td>
<td>After I went to the restaurant, I eat the pancake over there.</td>
<td>After I went to the restaurant, I ate the pancake over there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Close Space</td>
<td>Everybody enjoys the party.</td>
<td>Everybody enjoys the party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Space Needed</td>
<td>Going to watch movie is really interesting.</td>
<td>Going to watch movie is really interesting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>The manager is going to the airport right now.</td>
<td>The manager is going to the airport right now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbol</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>Incorrect</td>
<td>Correct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PL</td>
<td>Plural</td>
<td>PL Apple are the most nutritious fruit.</td>
<td>Apples are the most nutritious fruit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>Unnecessary Word</td>
<td>The student she studies all night for her mid-term examination.</td>
<td>The student studies all night for her mid-term examination.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ø</td>
<td>Missing Word</td>
<td>Please do not me that question anymore.</td>
<td>Please do not ask me that question anymore.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WF</td>
<td>Wrong Word Form</td>
<td>She is really interesting in learning Mathematics.</td>
<td>She is really interested in learning Mathematics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WW</td>
<td>Wrong Word</td>
<td>The food is delicious. Besides, the restaurant is always crowded.</td>
<td>The food is delicious. Therefore, the restaurant is always crowded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wrong Word Order</td>
<td>Saturday always is our busiest day.</td>
<td>Saturday is always our busiest day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PN</td>
<td>Pronoun Reference Error</td>
<td>I saw a white dog on last Friday. They are beautiful.</td>
<td>I saw a white dog on last Friday. It is beautiful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RO</td>
<td>Run-on (Fused Sentence)</td>
<td>We got some gas then we headed off to Minnesota.</td>
<td>We got some gas and then we headed off to Minnesota.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CS</td>
<td>Comma Splice</td>
<td>Sarah is a hard worker, she is employee of the year.</td>
<td>Sarah is a hard worker, she is employee of the year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frag</td>
<td>Fragment (Sentence Fragment)</td>
<td>If I left an hour earlier than usual, I would be able to avoid rush hour.</td>
<td>If I left an hour earlier than usual, I would be able to avoid rush hour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Transitional Needed</td>
<td>The university library has many great services. The Writing Center helps students improve their writing.</td>
<td>The university library has many great services. For example, the Writing Center helps students improve their writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>Subject Needed</td>
<td>Is open from 7 p.m. until the last customer leaves.</td>
<td>The shop is open from 7 p.m. until the last customer leaves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Verb Needed</td>
<td>The employees on time and work hard.</td>
<td>The employees are on time and work hard.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep.</td>
<td>Preposition Needed</td>
<td>The game will be started 7 p.m.</td>
<td>The game will be started at 7 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conj.</td>
<td>Conjunction Needed</td>
<td>The garlic shrimp, fried clams, broiled lobster are the most popular dishes.</td>
<td>The garlic shrimp, fried clams and broiled lobster are the most popular dishes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbol</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
<td>Incorrect</td>
<td>Correct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art.</td>
<td>Article Needed</td>
<td>Art: Dinners expect a glass of water when they first sit down at the Art table.</td>
<td>Dinners expect a glass of water when they first sit down at the table.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ /</td>
<td>Faulty Parallelism</td>
<td>He enjoys reading books, riding his bicycle and to go to Florida.</td>
<td>He enjoys reading books, riding his bicycle and going to Florida.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coll.</td>
<td>Slang/Colloquialism</td>
<td>Coll: I am going to the restaurant right now.</td>
<td>I am going to the restaurant right now.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syn.</td>
<td>Syntax</td>
<td>Syn: I went to the stadium with Matthew.</td>
<td>I went to the stadium with Matthew.</td>
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### APPENDIX B

**Paragraph Rubric Score (Adapted from Paulus, 1999)**

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Development</th>
<th>Cohesion</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Mechanics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>No organization; no ideas of topic and no unity of writing.</td>
<td>Written texts do not support with any details or related to the assigned topic or writing.</td>
<td>Ideas disorganized or unconnected. Not coherent ideas.</td>
<td>No attempt or use only simple sentences with serious errors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A lot of errors in spellings, punctuation, and capitalization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Some forms of organization might exist in writing, but the ideas still confused and lack of focus.</td>
<td>Insufficient details to support the topic. Lack of related examples and may be inappropriate evidence.</td>
<td>Shows some consistency of ideas, but still have limit use of transitional words. Still uses some parts of personal pronouns and demonstrative pronouns with errors along the written task.</td>
<td>Emphasis on using simple structure with certain problems in sentence construction, tense, number, word order, prepositions, fragment and run-ons. Paragraph format still exist but present with frequent errors in spelling, capitalization, and certain punctuations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Present clear introduction, supporting sentences and conclusion of the paragraph but it still loosely.</td>
<td>Some examples are related to the topic; while there are still some points of the written task are</td>
<td>Some relating ideas exist between/within groups of ideas in which it belongs to the paragraph.</td>
<td>Attempt to use some complex structures but still have some causes and sentences in Occasional errors still exist in punctuation, spelling, and capitalization. Sometime</td>
</tr>
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APPENDIX C
Results of Pre-Test and Post-Test

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### Effects of Integrated Feedback on Academic Writing Achievement

Yamalee & Tangkiengsirisin

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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Means: Pre-Test = 11.20, Post-Test = 17.05
The Use of Information Tones in Obama’s Speech: A Phono-Pragmatic Analysis

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Abstract
Intonation plays an important role in understanding the intended meaning of speech since neglecting the study of intonation in the discourse leads to a misunderstanding of some pragmatic meaning. This study attempts to answer these two questions: what is the pragmatic function of the information tone types that are employed in Obama’s speech concerning the termination component? and what are the pragmatic function of the proclaiming and referring tones that are employed in Obama’s speech concerning the dominance and non-dominance factor?. It aims to investigate the types of information tones in Obama’s speech concerning the termination component and dominance/non-dominance factor based on Brazil’s model (1997) of discourse intonation. This study confines itself to the American political interview and it is a qualitative study. The findings show that all the information tone types (proclaiming, referring, and level) are used in Obama’s speech and the high termination is most common level, which is used by Obama in his speech in order to emphasize the information and capture the attention of the interviewer. Generally, it was found that the dominance factor was higher than the non-dominance factor, which reflects that Obama took his status as the controller of the discourse during his speech with the interviewer and most of his speech carries contrastive information, which contradicts the interview’s expectation. This study is beneficial for foreign learners and those who are specialists in phonology and pragmatics since it can clarify the function of intonation through the interaction of participants in context.

Keywords: discourse intonation, dominance/non-dominance, pitch level, proclaiming tone, praat program, referring tone

Introduction

Intonation can support the meaning of the context since it can convey several aspects of the context, particularly the pragmatic sense of discourse. Traditionally, there is no much interest in intonational meaning like the intonational form. On the other hand, little attention has been given to the pragmatic uses of intonation concerning the fields of semantics and pragmatics fields (Prieto, 2015). As a result, there is no agreement among linguists on how to integrate and analyze the intonational meaning across languages into a unified prosodic, semantic, and pragmatic approach (Prieto, 2015). The study of the form, meaning, and function of the intonation, which concerns the investigation of the more extensive stretches within the level of the sentence is called discourse intonation (Vilches, 2015). This approach began in the British Isles, then it was developed by Brazil (1975, 1978, 1985, 1997), who worked with others (Brazil, 1980) in connecting the discourse analysis with intonation, where the discourse intonation involves studying intonation in terms of user, its function in context, and its communicative value (Vilches, 2015). From Brazil’s perspective “the communicative value of intonation is related to the purpose that a particular piece of language is serving in some ongoing, interactive event.” (Brazil, 1995, p.240). Brazil’s discourse intonation model (1997) is mainly concerned with the relationship between the intonational features of an utterance and the context of interaction. The importance of this study stems from the significance of showing how the components in Brazil’s discourse intonation model are used to investigate the intended meaning and its function in Barack Obama’s speech. This study adopts Brazil’s model of discourse intonation in investigating the referring and proclaiming tones, which are employed in Obama’s speech and how they convey the meaning of taking the role of the speaker whether he is dominant or non-dominant in the discourse. This study aims to provide a more profound and comprehensive picture of the intended meaning behind Obama’s speech.

Theoretical Background

Previous Research

On the one hand, very few studies were conducted to investigate linguistic issues since many studies adopted Brazil’s discourse intonation model into the pedagogical aspects. On the other hand, it is essential to mention that there are no previous studies, which applied discourse intonation in investigating political interviews except for a prior study by Herczeg-Deli (2012). This study focuses on elicitation of BBC radio interviews, and the results showed that prominence and tone are essential in the communicative role of an utterance. Selting (1987) presents a descriptive study of the intonation in natural conversations based on discourse intonation, which is purely additive criteria and the results reveal that the role of intonation can only be analyzed by regarding its location with a variety of phenomena of utterance and conversational organization.

Germani and Rivas (2011) compare between Brazil’s discourse intonation model and Halliday’s systematic functional phonology to show the differences and similarities between the two approaches. The study shows that both approaches are based on the intended meaning in the utterance, but they differ in the types of the tones used in both approaches as well as the systematic functional approach is based on the combination of lecixo-grammatical and phonological systems. Odeyemi investigates the use of intonation in an advertisement in radio and television medium in Nigeria. His findings reveal that the prominence is used according to the context of advertisement and the function of the referring tones, which are used in advertisements, can attract the listener’s attention (Odeyemi, 2017).
Moreover, most studies that are concerned with pedagogical aspects share the same aim, which involves the role of discourse intonation in teaching intonation for English as a foreign language (EFL) learners and discover the communicative value of intonational characteristics. In this respect, Goh (2005) examines speeches of four different educational and social Singaporean speakers in Singapore to describe the intonation features (prominence and tone) and survey the communicative value of intonational features. The results showed that intonation features of these four speakers are affected by the linguistic environment in which English is acquired. Another study by Kumaki (2003), who explored the intonational features, which are largely taught and how they are treated in the context of EFL learners at a high school in Japan. It was found that most of the intonation treatment in the authorized English textbooks is based on the grammatical approach rather than attitudinal or discourse. In his study, Hitotuzi (2007) argues for the importance of long-term experiments on the applicability of Brazil’s discourse intonation model with beginners and his results indicated that teaching intonation of the key, termination, prominence is not an easy task to non-native teachers because of the limitations of the target language linguistic experience. Likewise, Rui (2007) investigated the Chinese EFL learner’s intonation features in an interactive context. The findings showed that Chinese EFL learners are different from British native speakers in their application of tone units, prominence selection, and tone choice. This difference might be due to the low English proficiency level of Chinese learners and their lack of awareness of the communicative and discourse function of intonation. In the same line, Mat Nayan and Setter (2016) investigated prosodic features and the cooperative tone of Malay English. Their findings indicate that the collaborative tone has a different function, which is different from the function of rising and fall-rise tones as it places extra emphasis on the important information in the context. Nikolić (2018) applies discourse intonation in discovering the overall coverage of intonation activities across the series and the quality of these activities in five EFL student’s books series. The major finding is that the intonation activities are underrepresented in the EFL student’s books, and the discourse intonation should be focused on the activities. Sadoune (2018) applies discourse intonation on second-year undergraduate students in acquiring intonation. The findings reveal that most students misuse the falling tone as they use a broader pitch range than that of English, and they have problems in identifying the placement of prominence. Besides, discourse intonation can be taught in EFL classes as a theory of description, and it needs more training in teaching. Vilches (2015) conducts a study on teaching English intonation by Spanish speakers within the discourse mode of second language L2 oral presentation. The findings reveal that most of the subjects acquired a more extensive choice of the four prosodic parameters and most of them fail to connect the forms to their appropriate pragmatic functions to express dominance and control in an L2 oral presentation.

**Brazil’s Model of Discourse Intonation**

Brazil’s model of discourse intonation has been refined from Halliday’s theory of intonation (Coulthard, 2014). In this regard, Malmkjaer (2009) states that Brazil tries to combine the intonation with pragmatic functions through his theory of discourse intonation in the context in which the utterance or discourse occurs. It is worth to mention that Brazil (1975) adapted Halliday's (1963) five tones and the meaning, which is based on phonological typology. His model was in opposition to the American school (Chomsky & Halle, 1968; Liberman & Prince, 1977; Pierrehumbert, 1980), which constituted the generative phonology.
There are five categories in Brazil’s model of discourse intonation: tone unit, prominence, tones, key, and termination. In Brazil’s (1997) words, the tone unit is “the minimal stretch of speech for assembly plans are made.” In terms of intonation, the full stop is a natural tone boundary (pitch sequence) (Roach, 2010). In this regard, Brazil (1997) argues that pause marks the boundaries of the tone unit. A tone unit may contain either one or two prominent syllables, whereby one of them refers to the prominent syllable, which is called the onset (key); the other one refers to the tonic syllable, which is called the tonic syllable (termination) (Ibid.). The tonic syllable commonly occurs at the end of the boundary tone. However, it depends on whether the word is selective or not in a specific circumstance of the utterance (Hitotuzi, 2007). Besides, the tonic syllable is different from the prominent syllable, where the first is characterized by a change in pitch while the non-tonic syllable is not. As far as the key and termination are concerned, the first means the relative pitch level of the first prominent syllable within a tone unit and the second one indicates the relative pitch level of the last prominent syllable within a tone unit (Garcia Romero, 2013). The pitch level of key and termination can be high, mid, and termination; each one gives different information. The meanings of the key and termination with their symbols are summarized in the table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pitch level of key</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Pitch level of termination</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High key ↑</td>
<td>Contrast</td>
<td>High termination↑</td>
<td>Invitation to adjudicate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-key →</td>
<td>Agreement</td>
<td>Mid-termination→</td>
<td>Pressure to agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low key ↓</td>
<td>Equivalence</td>
<td>Low termination↓</td>
<td>Equivalence</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Brazil, 1997)

The example below shows how the speaker uses the high termination expecting a (yes/no) contrastive answer and the hearer uses the high key, which sounds like a plea or threat (pairs of slashes will signal tone unit boundaries):

A: // ✔ will you ↑come //  B: // ☑ ↑yes//

Moreover, discourse intonation can determine the function of the tone units in two ways: proclaiming and referring tones. The proclaiming tone refers to additional or new information of the common ground, which indicate by a pitch ends with a falling tone, while the referring tone refers to already given or known information, which is shared or as part of the common ground that is indicated by a pitch ends with a rising tone (Sadoune, 2018). Also, there is the third function, which rarely occurs, and it is neither a proclaiming nor referring tone; it is used for routine and formulaic situations, i.e., wording the utterances more than expressing interpersonal interactivity (Kumaki, 2003). Another important contribution to the discourse intonation model is the speaker’s assertion of dominance and control within specific discourse modes. Hence, the dominant speaker means the speaker, who controls the discourse and s/he can use either proclaiming plus tone (rise-fall) or referring plus tone (rise) to be the controller of the discourse. By contrast, the non-dominant speaker means the speaker, who does not take the controlling role and s/he can use either proclaiming tone (fall) or referring tone (fall-rise) (Vilches, 2015). Furthermore, Brazil (1985)
states that some tone choices can be “participant-specific” in specialized discourse types in which the speaker is dominant and s/he has a greater responsibility and freedom for the discourse in making linguistic choices like the teacher in the classroom, the interviewer in the interview, a speaker giving a speech in front of an audience, etc., which is different from the conversation in which speakers have equal speaking rights. The table 2 shows the types of tones with their symbols and their meanings.

**Table 2. Types of tones with their symbols and their meanings**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Type of Tone</th>
<th>Symbol</th>
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<td>Proclaiming (p)</td>
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<td>Proclaiming plus tone (p+)</td>
<td>rise-fall</td>
<td>Unshared information (divergence between participants) and dominance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referring (r)</td>
<td>fall-rise</td>
<td>Shared information (convergence between participants)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referring plus tone (r+)</td>
<td>rise</td>
<td>Shared information (convergence between participants) and dominance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level tone (o)</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>Formulaic (routine)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (Brazil, 1997)
Brazil (1994) gives examples in which the first one refers to a speaker, who speaks in a public announcement with a rising tone, and the second one refers to a speaker, who speaks in a more casual situation with using a fall-rise tone.

1. // r+ our SPEAker for this EVening // p is doctor Agnes THOMson // r+ she TOOK her MASter’s degree // r+ and her DOctorate // p at HARvard //
2. // r toNIGHT’S SPEAker’s // p AGnes THOMson // r she GOT her MASter’s // r and DOctorate // p in the STATES //

Other examples show that the non-dominant form with the fall-rise tone, which is used by the speaker when s/he is making sure of their benefit including occasions, i.e., the speaker uses ‘making sure’ to ask for help (Ibid.):
// r+ can i HELP you //
// r CAN you HELP me //

In this study and according to Brazil’s discourse intonation, the prominent syllables are capitalized, and tonic syllables are capitalized and underlined. Arrows indicate the tones (proclaiming, referring, and level) immediately after the initial boundary sign. As to the pitch level of the key and the termination, the arrows are placed before the prominent syllables of the key and termination. Below is an example that shows a tag question that carries referring tones with mid or low termination (Brazil, 1997:149-150):
// p she’s a CLEVer GIRL // r+ is ↓MARy //
Or // p she’s a CLEVer GIRL // r is ↓MARy //
In the first example, ‘She’s a clever girl’ is proclaimed as a truth that the speaker regards it to be necessary to recognize, ‘is Mary’ with referring tone projects an assumption of mutuality, where the speaker expects the hearer to agree with him (i.e., the speaker) or his recognition of Mary’s cleverness. When referring tone with mid key or termination is used in the tone unit, the utterance will invite concurrence (‘She is, indeed’). With low key or termination, it implies finality, and it tends to end the exchange.

**Methodology**

**Data Collection**

Data collection was carried out on the 1st of December 2018 by using qualitative methodology. Authentic and spoken data of political news interviews were employed. Data were collected via online YouTube videos. The data included a political news interview with Barack Obama, who was interviewed by the interviewer Charles Rose on CBS News channel. The interview took place on the 16th of June 2013 and lasted for approximately 47 minutes. The interview covered topics on the Islamic State of Iraq (ISIS), Syria, China, the National Security Agency (NSA) leaks, and Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) Court. To ensure the validity and objectivity of the selection of the speech excerpts from Obama’s speech, the researcher requested four independent raters to assess the suitability of the selected speech excerpts and to determine whether they meet the four criteria that are chosen for the study. The four raters have doctoral degrees in the areas of linguistics, particularly pragmatics and phonology, and they have extensive teaching and research experience. The researcher prepared a table that lists the entire 46 tone units in Obama’s speech against the four criteria to identify which excerpt contains and meet all four criteria. A summary of the criteria and the ten excerpts are presented in Tables 3. These were separately submitted to the four selected evaluators, who confirmed that all the listed criteria are present in the selected speech excerpts.

**Criteria for Data Selection**

The selected data in this study is issue-driven. The table 3 shows the criteria for data selection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Criterion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The data contain challenging issues: government policies, administration, and political party’s support. In fact, the challenging issues might include conflict and war, which might put the politicians in a position of being responsible toward each question that he responds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The selected excerpts show Obama’s reactions towards interviewer’s questions which reflect the types of information tones with their meanings as well as their functions, particularly the role dominance/non-dominance in his conversation with the interviewer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>The selected excerpts contain variations in pitch movement, i.e., high, mid, low level to determine the prominent syllable of the key and termination by which we can determine the type of information in the discourse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The selected excerpts contain different kinds of utterances. They contain short (single word or short clauses) and long utterances to obtain variations in the results.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Analysis
The researcher employed a mixed-method approach to analyze the ten collected excerpts of Obama’s speech. This study is mainly qualitative because it focuses on analyzing Obama’s speech in terms of Brazil’s discourse intonation model, including the type and the function of information (proclaiming, referring, level) concerning the termination. Besides, it shows the role of the speaker, whether he is dominant or non-dominant in an interview. Although this study is qualitative, the researcher finds it useful and helpful to add simple quantitative data to show the frequencies of the most important components of Brazil’s model used in this study. It is very essential for a better understanding of the whole interview to validate the qualitative discussion and support the findings of this study. The selected excerpt is analyzed as follows:

1) The tone units of each selected excerpt are analyzed acoustically using the praat software computer program (version 5.3.59). It is one of the widely known speech analysis software developed by Boersma and Weenink (2004) from the Institute of Phonetic Sciences of the University of Amsterdam, and it can be downloaded free at http://www.praat.org (Boersma, 2014). The primary function of using the praat program is to show the pitch values of the prominent syllables of the key and termination and to identify the pauses of the tone units in each excerpt of Obama’s speech. Tone height can be defined as the pitch height of the vowel in a prominent syllable (measured in Hz) (Ladefoged & Johnson, 2014; Roach, 2010). In addition, the praat program is used automatically to align the transcriptions and create praat text grids with separate word and phoneme tiers. However, the researcher check the prominent stressed syllable in words in the tone units with the assistance of two raters, who are lecturers and specialists with more than 20 years’ experience in phonetics and phonology. 10% of the data were selected to establish confidence in rater reliability and the percent of agreement obtained between the two judges was 82% of the items (Macky & Gass, 2005). The researcher joined the Praat group to receive feedback as she can provide answers to questions concerning this study (http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/praat-users/).

2) This study focuses on identifying the termination rather than the key since the termination has an essential role in defining the whole nature of the tone used in the tone unit by which the type and the function of the used tone as well as the role of the speaker are determined in the discourse. Besides, the termination is explicitly concerned with the speaker’s expectation concerning the key of the hearer’s response, i.e., it shows the relationship between the speaker and the hearer in regard with the key (Burgess, 2012). It is important to note that termination is considered as the most important component in TU since it represents the tonic syllable, and it is the only obligatory component in TU (Roach, 2010). Moreover, the key was commonly investigated in several studies on daily conversations as they include reactions to the short questions with short answers or straight question with a straight answer, rather than an interview, as it is the case in this study, which gives the interviewee freedom to choose any key in the response (Brazil, 1997) In this regard, Norrick (2001) writes:

Brazil has argued that the three different onset levels or keys have a distinctive function in discourse. Yet this statement is based more on introspection and carefully chosen (often-constructed) examples than on the analysis of large quantities of naturally occurring data. (p.126)
It is important to mention that the pitch value of the key since the pitch level of the termination is identified in comparison with the pitch level of the key within the tone unit. Below is an example of the selected excerpt in Obama’s speech:

**Barak Obama**: “No, I think that my general view is we are open to discussion both through the P5 plus one and through potential bilateral channels, and we recognize that you’re not going to solve problems all upfront as a precondition for talks”. Figure 1 shows the six tone unit boundaries in the selected excerpt of Obama’s speech.

![Figure 1 The selected sample of praat analysis of the tone unit boundaries in Obama’s speech](image)

Accordingly, the table 4 of analysis of excerpt of Obama's speech shows the six tone units of Obama’s speech, which are analyzed in terms of Brazil’s model discourse intonation.

**Table 4. Analysis of six tone units in the selected excerpt from Obama’s speech**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tone Unit</th>
<th>DI Analysis</th>
<th>Key (Onset) &amp; its Pitch Value</th>
<th>Termination (Tonic Syllable) &amp; its Pitch Value</th>
<th>Pitch Level of Termination</th>
<th>Function &amp; Type of Tone</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Role of the Speaker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TU1</td>
<td>// △ NO ↑ I think that //</td>
<td>No (172.69) Hz</td>
<td>I (138.97) Hz</td>
<td>high termination</td>
<td>P (fall)</td>
<td>shared information</td>
<td>Non-dominant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TU2</td>
<td>// □ MY general view ↑ IS //</td>
<td>My (115.06) Hz</td>
<td>Is (494.19) Hz</td>
<td>high termination</td>
<td>r+ (rise)</td>
<td>Unshared information</td>
<td>Dominant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in the table, the six tone units of the excerpt start with ‘NO’ in TU1 and end with ‘TALKS’ in TU6. As mentioned previously, PRAAT program is used to indicate the pitch values of the most two prominent stressed syllables, which are selected to be the key (onset) and termination (tonic syllable) in each tone unit. All the tone units have a high termination (high level) except for tone units (3 and 5), where there is a low termination (low level). The high termination belongs to that prominent syllable in termination words (I, is, channels, talks) has a higher pitch value than the prominent syllable in keywords (no, my, and, upfront), while the low termination belongs to that prominent syllable in termination words (one, problems) has a lower pitch value than the prominent syllable in keywords (five, recognize).

In this discourse, Rose asked Obama if there is someone from his administration or others that suggested to stop Iran from pursuing a military nuclear program. As a result, in TU1, Obama’s negative response (no) shows that this information is new, which is not known by the interviewer because he did not agree with the interviewer. Then, Obama used a referring plus high tone in TU2 to emphasize his view about the military nuclear program of Iran. A proclaiming tone is used in both TU3 and TU4 as Obama used a rise-fall tone to offer new information that there will be negotiations that should be done through the p5 plus one (the members of The United States Security Council plus Germany) and bilateral talks. The rising tone is used by Obama to emphasize that all these problems cannot be solved. It depends on bilateral talks between the United States and Iran. The United States and Iran are conducting prior bilateral negotiations through official or semiofficial emissaries — a departure from the previous procedure of multilateral talks. Therefore, Obama has used a referring plus tone with a very high tone in TU6 to take this matter seriously because Iran has expanded its military weapon program. The use of high termination in most of
the tone units suggests that Obama is trying to control the situation, particularly as he started with a prominent ‘no’ to show a contrast to interviewer’s idea.

Therefore, Obama took a dominant role in the discourse to provide valuable information, particularly about the negotiations with Iran, which should be done through P5 plus one and all these are dependent on the talks between the United States and Iran. Besides, the high termination in the discourse that is used by Obama reflects that he wants to emphasize and to capture the attention of the interviewer as most information did not agree with the interviewer’s expectation. Figure 2 shows two of the tone units in the excerpt, which are analyzed in terms of Brazil’s discourse intonation model, where (K) refers to the key and (T) refers to the termination.

The praat analysis of two selected tone units is shown in Figure 2. The curvy blue line indicates the measurements of the pitch height in Hz (hertz) of the two prominent syllables in the words (no, I) and (my, is) in TU1 “no, I think that” and TU2 “my general view is” respectively. There are two tiers in which the first one indicates the phonetic transcription of the words to show the stressed syllable in words in each tone unit, while the second tier shows the words of each tone unit.

Results and Discussion
Table 5 shows the percentages and frequencies of the information tone types (proclaiming, referring, and level) concerning the termination component. Based on Table 5, all the information tone types (proclaiming, referring, and level) are used in Obama’s speech. Regarding the proclaiming information, the results showed that the high termination is higher than the mid and low termination since the percentage in the former is (27.74%), while in the latter it is (8.88%, 12.63%), respectively. The high termination with a proclaiming tone reflects many meanings such as adding new and vital information, non-finality, informing the interviewer with surprised and unexpected results, i.e., offering contradictory information, and continuation. One important point
that should be mentioned here is that the main purpose of using high termination is to emphasize information when talking with the interviewer. The table 5 shows the meanings of the proclaiming tone that are used in Obama’s speech.

Table 5. Percentages and frequencies of information tone types concerning the termination component

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Excerpts</th>
<th>No. of Tone Units</th>
<th>Types of Information Tone %</th>
<th>Proclaiming</th>
<th>Referring</th>
<th>Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Mid</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exc.1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>14.28</td>
<td>57.14</td>
<td>28.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exc.2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>16.66</td>
<td>16.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exc.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exc.4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>66.66</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exc.5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.75</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exc.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.75</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exc.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exc.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exc.9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.11</td>
<td>22.22</td>
<td>44.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exc.10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
<td>27.74</td>
<td>12.63</td>
<td>37.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As for the referring information, the incidence of high termination is higher than the mid and low termination since the percentage in the former is (37.24%), while in the latter it is (11.11%, 2.29%), respectively. The high termination with a referring tone reflects many meanings like continuation in Obama’s speech in order to show the significant information in the next utterance, to sincerely express responsibility to solve the problems, to remind the interviewer with previous mistakes, i.e., to react for something, which is part of a common ground, to capture the attention of the interviewer for a necessary information, and sometimes to switch to another aspect of the same topic.

In brief, on one hand, the major meanings of the proclaiming tone that are used in Obama’s speech are non-finality (to add more, emphasis, contradiction, insistence), continuation (insistence), refrain to do something, contradiction/implication. On the other hand, the major meanings of the proclaiming tone that are used in Obama’s speech are to capture attention to an important information (add new information/ reacts information in new aspect/continuity), remind something/contradiction, indication to the public information/offer undesirable and unexpected information, Contradiction/insist/offer important information. In addition, the level tone includes only the low level in Obama’s speech, which is (28.57%). The major meaning of level tone is used
for Formulaic routine. The table 6 shows the percentages and frequencies of the proclaiming and referring tones concerning dominance and non-dominance components.

Table 6. Percentages and frequencies of the proclaiming and referring tones concerning dominance and non-dominance components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Tone Unit</th>
<th>No. of Tone Unit</th>
<th>Dominance%</th>
<th>Non-dominance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Proclaiming Tone (rise-fall)</td>
<td>Referring Tone (rise)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Termination</td>
<td>Termination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Mid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exc.1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.28</td>
<td>28.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exc.2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16.66</td>
<td>33.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exc.3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33.33</td>
<td>33.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exc.4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12.5</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exc.5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exc.6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exc.7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exc.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exc.9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>44.44</td>
<td>11.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exc.10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>27.67</td>
<td>24.38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding the dominance factor, the results showed that the high termination in both the proclaiming and referring tone (rise-fall & rise) are higher than the mid and low termination since the percentage in the former is (27.67%, 24.38%), respectively, and in the latter, it is (0%, 2.29%, 1.11%, 0.62%), respectively. Regarding the non-dominance factor, the results showed that the mid termination in proclaiming tone (fall) is higher than the high and low termination since the percentage in the former is (13.33%), and in the latter, it is (6.73%, 4.23%), respectively. However, the incidence of high termination in the referring tone (rise-fall) is higher than the mid and low termination since the percentage in the former is (12.85%), while in the latter, it is (0%, 1.66%), respectively. Generally, the results showed that dominance is higher than non-dominance since the percentage in the former is (9.34%) and in the latter, it is (6.46%). The high termination with dominance factor reflects that Obama took his status as the controller of the discourse through talking with the interviewer and most of his speech carries contrastive information, which was contrary to interview’s expectation. The example below shows how Obama tries to convince the interviewer about his opinion by imposing unreal and frightening events, which may not occur in the future.
In this excerpt, the interviewer asked Obama’s opinion towards the Iranian elections as 75% of them are voting. In Obama’s response, a referring tone is used as he starts from fall to rise in his speech to attract the attention of the interviewer to an important event to highlight significant information in the next utterance in (TU2). A high termination with rising tone is used by Obama to reflect that he does not agree with the interviewer’s opinion, which considers this huge number of Iranian people, who participated in the election as a negative indication against the United States. Obama uses high termination to show that he is sure that Iranian people want to change the rigid and traditional framework that they used to have for a long period. They want to step in another direction, and this direction gives the United States a different relationship with Iran. Obama takes a dominant role in the discourse in all the tone units except for TU1 and TU4, where he takes the non-dominant role in the discourse. Furthermore, low termination is used as follows:

1) Either by adding some reasons to justify the same topic, information, or asking the interviewer to compare two experiences as a strategy to convince the interviewer as shown in the following example:

   //p now on the OTHER side there are ↑FOLKS who say// (Obama adds another reason to the same information about the withdrawal of the American forces from Iraq)
   //p then WHAT ↓ENDS up happening is //
   // o↓ AND // /r you know If you CONtrast this ↑WITH//
   (Obama justifies his information about Iranian elections by adding another reason to the same previous topic or information in which he asks the interviewer to compare between the previous election and the current election).

2) In interrogative question to reduce the constraints on the hearer to give answer freely such as: //↑RIGHT? //

   Mid-termination is used as follows:
   1) Enumeration as Obama begins to count the reasons for turning down some requests by FISA Court as shown in the following example:
      // p FIRST → OF all //
      //p NUMBer → ONE
   2) Adding new and important information by Obama to attract the interviewer’s attention:
      //τ+ with a QUERy unless they’ve →GOT//
      (Obama informs the interviewer about important information related the work of FSA Court and NSA program)

Conclusion
Based on the previous discussion, the following major findings were concluded:

1) The findings substantiated the important role of Brazil’s model of discourse intonation in investigating the information tones pragmatically in Obama’s speech concerning the termination and dominance/non-dominance factor.
2) The results showed that all the information tones types are used in Obama’s speech, including proclaiming, referring, and level tones. However, the most common level, which was used by Obama in his speech is the high termination to emphasize the provided information and capture the attention of the interviewer. On the one hand, the high termination with a proclaiming tone reflects many meanings like adding new and important information, non-finality, informing the interviewer with surprised and unexpected results, i.e., offering contradictory information, and continuation. On the other hand, the high termination with a referring tone reflects many meanings like the continuation in Obama’s speech to show significant information in the next utterance, to seriously express responsibility to solve the problems, to remind the interviewer with previous mistake, i.e., to react to something, which is part of a common ground, to capture the attention of the interviewer to important information and sometimes to switch to another aspect of the same topic.

3) Generally, it was found that the dominance factor is higher than non-dominance, which reflects that Obama was the controller of the discourse through talking with the interviewer and most of his speech carried contrastive information, which was contrary to interview’s expectation. Besides, taking the leading role is part of his character since he is a president. This control of discourse was observed in his speech by imposing his information sometimes on the interviewer when he talked about events, which may not occur.

Implications of the Study
The results of this study are of practical benefit for teachers of phonology and those who are interested in acoustic phonetics. They can get benefit from the acoustic analysis of the selected excerpts from Obama’s speech using the praat program, which is beneficial for analyzing any phonetic or suprasegmental features such as stress, pauses, rhythm, etc. Theoretically, this study shows the pragmatic function of intonation in political televised discourse and, therefore, it is valuable for those, who are specialized in pragmatic and phonology to get benefit from the interpretation of the political discourse by applying Brazil’s model of discourse intonation, particularly the connection between the phonology and pragmatics.

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References


The Use of Images for Teaching Abstract Words Versus Concrete Words: A Semiotic Study

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Abstract
Semiotics has been investigated in the literature to enhance second language vocabulary acquisition. The previous studies have examined how semiotics could aid second language (L2) learner to learn concrete words. This study aims at investigating the effect of semiotics on learning abstract words. Fifty-five Arab learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) participated in the study and assigned into three groups. The first group was taught abstract words using semiotics. The second group was taught concrete words using semiotics. The third group was taught the same words using a traditional way, i.e., without semiotics. Results of the post-test indicated that participants in semiotics groups (either concrete or abstract) outscored the participants who did not use semiotics to learn new words. The study concluded that semiotics is a useful tool to enhance learning new words. Also, semiotics can be more helpful in learning concrete words than abstract words.

Keywords: abstract words, concrete words, semiotics, vocabulary learning

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Introduction
In recent years, semiotics, as an independent discipline, has started gaining increasing importance in the field of research. Many researchers began writing about this significant area of study from different angles and perspectives. In terms of Jacobson (1974, p. 32), there is an inevitable relationship between semiotics and linguistics. In this relationship, Jacobson argues that semiotics provides the communication of any message whatever or the exchange of any message whatever and the system of signs, which underlies them. According to Zamani (2016) concerning the role of semiotics in language teaching, it helps the learners develop their cognitive facilities at all levels of perception.

Semiotics can play a very vital role in the field of language learning and teaching. According to Senel (2007), semiotics provides a practical teaching/learning process by using body language, pictures, visuals, film-strips, video, photography, etc. With the help of semiotics, language learning becomes more productive and exciting. Semiotics can enhance the performance of the students in all the four skills and aspects of language learning. In the literature, some studies have been conducted to examine the effect of semiotics on vocabulary (Mahdi & Gubeily, 2018; Hismanoglu, 2006) and pronunciation (Cimenli, 2015). Based on the knowledge of the authors, no study has been conducted to examine the effect of semiotics on learning L2 vocabulary, primarily abstract words. Therefore, this study explores the potential of using semiotics to help English Foreign Language (EFL) learners learn new L2 words.

Review of literature
Theoretical background
Semiotics is an extensive area, which is used in many fields, including education. Semiotics, according to Eco, (1979) is concerned with everything that can be used as a sign. A sign is everything which can be taken as significantly substituting for something else. Thus, it can be argued that semiotics is associated with anything that can be considered or interpreted as a sign. There are two models of semiotics, the dyadic model of Saussure, and the triadic model of Charles Sanders Peirce. In terms of De Saussure (1983), a sign must have both a signifier and a signified. The signifier refers to the form which a sign takes, whereas the signified indicates the concept which it represents. The relationship between the signifier and signified is known as signification. Saussure points out that the two concepts cannot be separated from each other and cannot work individually.

Opposing Saussure's model, Peirce (1965) formulates his triadic model of semiotics, consisting of three elements: i) sign or representatum or ground, ii) purpose which has been referred to as referent, and iii) interpretant. Peirce's representatum is equal to Saussure's signifier, whereas the concept of signified is divided into two parts, object, and interpretant. The object is a representation of sign, whereas the interpretant refers to the meaning conveyed by sign or representatum about the object (Zoest, 1991; Leedz- Hurwitz, 1993; Masinambow, 2001, and Chandler, 2002). In terms of Peirce, a sign must be able to represent something according to the person's perception and interpretation.
The basic difference between the views of Saussure and Peirce is that Saussure's semiotics focuses on the linguistic aspects that primarily focus on establishing a relationship between the vocal part of the sign, that is the signifier, and the actual part of it, that is the signified. On the other hand, we find that Peirce deals with semiotics from a philosophical perspective that is concerned with creating a kind of association between reality and nature (Massinbow & Rahayu, 2001). Semiotics has been utilized in many fields and areas, such as marketing, media, movie industry, education, etc. With respect to education, semiotics has been used in most of the field of education, particularly language learning and teaching.

**Semiotics and language learning and teaching**

Semiotics can play a very vital role in the field of language learning and teaching. Sert (2006) suggests that the implementation of semiotic theories to learning has recently gained noteworthy importance and led to the advent of a new field of study called educational semiotics. The semiotic approach, it can be argued, helps a great deal in making students learn a language in a very effective and interesting way. This issue has been dealt by Senel (2007) who points out that the Semiotic Approach helps a great deal in offering a useful teaching and learning process through using body language, pictures, visuals, film-strips, video, photography, etc. With the help of semiotic materials such as visual aids, pictures, flashcards, realia, body language, language learning, and teaching become more effective and exciting. The semiotic approach can enhance the performance of the students in all the four skills of language learning.

There are some significant studies done in the field of semiotics and education. For example, Lier (2004) attempted to give a clear idea about the principles of a semiotic and ecological approach to language learning, and the practical consequences for classroom teaching and learning that follow from taking such an approach. In his work, Lier stressed that a semiotic and ecological view of language and of learning entails that the context– physical, social and symbolic– is a central element in teaching and learning. Similarly, Erton (2006) highly supported the use of semiotics in the language teaching/learning process. Erton (2006) stated that both the teacher and students could utilize the semiotic techniques in the classroom because semiotics is the mixture of signs and symbols to communicate the information. The students and the teacher make use of a number of signs. It is clear that Erton prefers Peirce's model of semiotics, given the fact that the icon, index, and symbol are three concepts presented by Peirce in his theory of semiotics. Senel (2007) did another crucial contribution in this field. He investigated the relation of foreign language teaching with the semiotic approach. He also tried to shed light on the strong and weak sides of the semiotic approach in teaching the second language. With reference to the strong sides, Senel (2007) claimed that the semiotic approach plays a dominant role in the teaching-learning process through the use of verbal, non-verbal, and visual communication in the target language. He further stressed that vocabulary, intonation patterns, or functions of the second language could be more successfully taught by using body language. In addition, Senel (2007) highlighted the strong side of the semiotic approach in the second language (L2) teaching. Senel (2007) emphasized that by gestures, mimes, eye contact or tactile communication, teachers of English provide students with not only useful learning but also cultural aspects of the second language. Senel went further in his argument, comparing the semiotic approach with the communicative approach of language teaching:
In short, the Semiotic Approach facilitates the English learning by providing the second language learners with verbal, non-verbal, and visual communication, while the Communicative Approach motivates them to use the target language by emphasizing independence learning and encourages them to communicate in the target language fluently and accurately as much as possible in pair/group works. The Semiotic Approach provides with an effective teaching/learning process through using body language, pictures, visuals, film-strips, video, photography, etc. (p. 125).

This comparison between the semiotic approach and the very well-known and widely used approach such as the communicative approach proves that the former has started occupying a very prominent place in the field of language teaching and learning. As for the weak sides of the approach, Senel argues that avoiding linguistic correction in English language classes remains the weak side of the semiotic approach. However, he tried to justify this weakness, claiming that students, listening to live radio or TV broadcast focus primarily on what massage a native speaker aims to convey rather than how he utters the words. Thus, in terms of Senel, avoiding linguistic correction should not prevent teachers from using the semiotic approach, given the fact that students can gain many benefits from using it, which is more significant and useful than linguistic correction.

One more vital contribution in this area was conducted by Cimenli (2015). His study was about the effect of using semiotics on pronunciation teaching. He emphasized the importance of using semiotic elements in language teaching and learning, as he clearly stated that using signs, visuals, and body language in a language class has a number of invaluable effects that cannot be underestimated. Cimenli concluded that applying semiotics to teaching pronunciation depends on the mutual relationship between semiotics, culture and language teaching. Thus, it has been seen that the issue of using semiotics in language teaching and learning is not new. Even if it is not used as a full approach, it is inevitable to be used as a teaching aid in a language class. One of the most critical aspects of language learning is vocabulary learning. It is an aspect where semiotics can provide great help and play a significant role in its teaching/learning process.

**Semiotics and vocabulary learning/teaching**

Learning vocabulary is one of the most essential components of learning a second/foreign language. Vocabulary helps us to communicate with others, expressing our thoughts, ideas, feelings, emotions, etc. during communication. Semiotics is concerned with all types of communication, which entails that the relationship between vocabulary and semiotics is inevitable. The role of vocabulary in language learning is essential. Therefore, language teachers should make maximum efforts in teaching this crucial part of a language and select the most appropriate approaches and methodologies in their vocabulary teaching.

In fact, there have been several approaches and methodologies used by teachers in teaching vocabulary. The grammar-translation method, which is the most traditional method of foreign language teaching, has been used in teaching vocabulary. The teacher, using this method, provides his students with lists of literary vocabulary and asks them to learn them through translation, using a bilingual dictionary. The direct method, which does not allow the use of the students' native language in the classroom, has also been used in teaching vocabulary through teaching aids, such
as mime, drawings, realia, pictures, etc., (Rivers, 1981). The situational language teaching method has also contributed to vocabulary teaching. In this method, the meaning of a word is not directly given to the students; instead, it is induced from the situation in which the word is used (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, pp. 36-38). The cognitive approach, on the other hand, has also been utilized in teaching vocabulary. The proponents of this approach stress that no successful communication in the second language can take place without acquiring adequate vocabulary. The audio-lingual method was also used in teaching vocabulary. In this method, vocabulary is kept to a minimum (Thornbury, 2002). Ironically, this method emphasizes that having too much vocabulary makes students feel unsecured in communication (Zimmerman, 1997).

Besides, there have been some significant studies conducted on vocabulary learning. For example, Segers and Forhoeven (2003) conducted a study in which they studied the impact of using a computer on preschoolers’ vocabulary learning. The study concluded that vocabulary training through computer had positive effects on preschool children's vocabulary learning. In addition, Silverman and Hines (2009) conducted a study in which they tried to make a comparison between the classical and multimedia-enhanced read-aloud vocabulary instructions concerning their effects on vocabulary gain of English language learners (ELLs) and non-English language learners (non-ELLs). The study came up with results showing that there was a positive effect for ELLs on a researcher-designed measure and a measure of general vocabulary knowledge. The results also showed that the ELLs did not get considerable benefits from the multimedia-enhanced instructions. Collins (2010) attempted to explore the influences of detailed description and elucidation; elementary level vocabulary gain and home reading practices on preschoolers to find out whether storybook reading is beneficial in their sophisticated learning. The study concluded that well-explained texts and initial L2 vocabulary, with the help of repetitive home reading activities, contribute a great deal to advanced-word-learning through stories. Gonzal et al. (2011) conducted a study in which they trained preschool teachers how to teach vocabulary through pictures, definitions, and discussions of target words. The results showed that children in the experimental group performed better than the children in the control group. The difference was not only on measures of expressive and receptive vocabulary but also on a standardized measure of receptive vocabulary. Another study was carried out by Coyne et al. (2009) to compare teaching target words within the read-aloud experience to teaching them through read aloud with children having an opportunity to interact with target words outside the context of the story. They called the former embedded instruction and the latter extended instruction. The study concluded that learning words through extended instruction were more effective than learning them through embedded instruction. Aghlara and Tamjid (2011) examined the effect of using a digital computer game on preschoolers’ vocabulary gain, it was noticed that children in the experimental group did better than in the control group. The study discussed the positive effects of using digital computer games on vocabulary gain at the preschool level.

With respect to the semiotic approach, it can be claimed that it is one of the most significant and effective approaches that can be used in teaching vocabulary. Senel (2007) stressed this issue, stating that the Semiotic Approach helps teachers of English in teaching vocabulary and grammar in English language teaching (ELT). The students easily get the meaning of vocabulary items or grammar rules with the help of visuals and body language. Not only vocabulary that can be taught through the semiotic approach, but all the four skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing in
ELT. In fact, semiotics is no longer counted as an unfamiliarized approach in the field of education; instead, it has recently achieved some significance as a theoretical foundation for foreign language learning/teaching (Basoz & Can, 2016). There are a few studies done on the effect of semiotics on vocabulary learning and teaching. Hismanoglu (2006) emphasized the importance of the semiotic elements and difficulties in teaching vocabulary items. He particularly focused on teaching color names, idioms, onomatopoeic words, and compound words. The study concluded with stressing that Semiotic elements provide students with a better understanding of the vocabulary items and help them develop sociopragmatic and socio-semiotic competence in the target language. Also, Basoz and Can (2016) conducted a study on the effectiveness of computers on vocabulary learning among preschool children from a semiotic perspective. The study illustrated the effect of using a semiotic-based electronic technique in teaching vocabulary for preschool children. It showed that the use of this technique in vocabulary teaching makes the learning environment more motivating and interesting. The study also proved that this type of teaching had a promoting effect on preschoolers' vocabulary knowledge.

**Learning Concrete vs. Abstract Vocabulary**

Abstract vocabulary is more difficult to learn and remember than concrete vocabulary for foreign or second language learners (de Groot & Keijzer, 2000; Ellis & Beaton, 1993). The reason is that concrete words can be easily created and coded in the learner’s mind. This can be explained using Paivio’s dual-coding theory which provides a reasonable interpretation of this issue based on learners’ self-reported strategies for encoding these two types of words. The theory attributes the superiority of concrete words to their easiness of arousing mental images. That is, while concrete words (e.g., car) have relatively direct relations with their referents in the observed world, abstract words (e.g., knowledge) do not—their meanings have to be inferred from the group of words that they are closely associated with (Noppeney & Price, 2004). Thus, studying concrete words involves using both verbal and imagery subsystems and, as a result, creating dual retrieval routes (word-word and word-image) in long-term memory.

On the other hand, studying abstract words is assumed to depend more on the verbal processing channel and hence result in the creation of verbal memory traces. The supplementary image-based memory codes for concrete words are considered extremely useful to vocabulary retrieval because image information is believed to be more memorable than verbal information (Paivio, 1971, 1986). Some brain-imaging studies show that distinct regions of the brain are engaged in the processing of concrete versus abstract words. Specifically, processing abstract concepts involve higher activations in the left hemispheric areas known for language-based, semantic processing. By contrast, processing concrete concepts are associated with stronger activations in a bilateral network of multimodal association areas (Paivio, 2007, 2010). Previous studies examined the effect of semiotics in vocabulary learning using “concrete” words. For example, Bosoz and Can (2016) introduced 20 concrete words including animals, fruit and action verbs. As far as the authors know, there is no study that has examined the use of semiotics in learning “abstract” words. Therefore, this study is an attempt to fill in this gap and examine the effect of integrating semiotics in learning abstract words.

**Research questions**

What is the effect of semiotics on learning L2 words in comparison to the traditional way of learning vocabulary?
What is the effect of semiotics on learning abstract words in comparison to concrete words?

Method
In this study, the pre- and post-test results of the three groups were compared to find out if there are any significant differences between groups. The present study was conducted with the participation of 55 EFL university students in the academic year 2018-2019.

Participants and Design

Fifty-five students participated in this study. All of the students were Saudi students enrolled in a first-semester advanced English class in the Department of English Language at University of Bisha in Saudi Arabia. They were enrolled in the BA English program. The students’ ages ranged from 19-23. All of the students were males due to cultural values that support segregation of males and females in classes. The students were randomly assigned to either semiotics groups (two experimental groups) or traditional vocabulary instruction group (control group). There were no significant differences in the mean scores of the participants in these groups in the pre-test. All participants in the three groups used the same material.

Tests
One week prior to the treatment, the participants took a paper-based vocabulary pretest in which they reported their existing knowledge of 40 potentially new words. They were asked to translate 40 words from English into Arabic. The pretest also contained five nonsense (nonexistent) words made up by the researchers, which were used as a simple measure of test validity. That is if a test taker claimed to know a nonsense word, the validity of his knowledge would be questionable. The words used in the pre- and post-tests were selected from the Academic Word List of Coxhead (1998). Each correct response received one point, with a maximum test score of 40.

Procedures
The study was conducted in regular classrooms in the Department of English Language at the University of Bisha. The study was carried out for 4 weeks. Before the experiment, the participants were given a pre-test. They were randomly assigned to one of three groups: two experimental groups and a control group. The data were obtained from a vocabulary test based on Coxead’s (1988) Academic Word List. The vocabulary test included 40 target words plus five nonsense words. Following the pre-test, the three groups were taught the target words by the researcher. In every session, students studied 20 words, which were followed by a vocabulary test. In the control group, the instructor presented the words with their translations into Arabic. In the experimental groups, the instructor presented the words with images (semiotics). In the first experimental group, the participants were taught abstract words presented with images. The second experimental group was taught concrete words presented with images. The experiment was conducted in two weeks for all groups. At the end of the treatment, all participants in the three groups were given the post-test immediately. The procedures are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Procedures

| Step | Pres-test | 1st session | A pre-test was administered to all groups at the same time. The test consisted of 40 target words. The |
participants were asked to translate these words into Arabic.

The three groups were taught the target words by the researcher. In the control group, the instructor presented the words with their translations into Arabic. In the two experimental groups, the instructor presented the words with images (semiotics).

Post-test was administered to all groups at the same time. The test consisted of 40 target words. The participants were asked to translate these words into Arabic.

Data Analysis
The data were analyzed descriptively using the SPSS 20 Software. Means and standard deviations of students’ overall scores on the vocabulary test were computed. A paired-sample t-test was used to analyze the test scores of students in the experimental groups versus those in the control group. Tukey HSD post hoc test was conducted to compare any differences among the different groups.

Results
To answer the first research question, the means and standard deviation of the pre- and post-tests were shown in Table 2. Results showed that a significant main effect of semiotics existed from the pre- and post-test designs. Results from ANOVA revealed that a significant main effect existed among the three groups. The use of semiotics for abstract words and concrete words groups significantly outscored the control group in the post-test ($M = 29.15, 30.05, SD = 5.49, 5.13$ respectively). The performance of the concrete words group over time was slightly higher than that of semiotics for abstract words group but the difference was not significant ($MD = -.89, p = .85$) as shown in Table 4.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the students' performance of L2 pronunciation tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Abstract (N = 19)</th>
<th>Concrete (N=18)</th>
<th>Control (N = 18)</th>
<th>All Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
<td>$M$</td>
<td>$SD$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>10.10</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>10.66</td>
<td>3.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>post test</td>
<td>29.15</td>
<td>5.94</td>
<td>30.05</td>
<td>5.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26.87</td>
<td>6.39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. ANOVA results for L2 pronunciation tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>$Df$</th>
<th>$MS$</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>$P$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between groups</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>422.51</td>
<td>16.09</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within groups</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>26.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The level of sig. = .05

Post-hoc pairwise comparisons using Tukey HSD yielded significant differences among the three groups over time (Table 4).
The Use of Images for Abstract Words Versus Concrete Words

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Table 4. Tukey HSD post hoc test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent variables</th>
<th>(I) Semiotics</th>
<th>(J) Semiotics</th>
<th>Mean Differences (I-J)</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semiotics post-test</td>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>Concrete</td>
<td>-.89</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concrete</td>
<td>Control group</td>
<td>7.88</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Control group</td>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Control group</td>
<td>8.77</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control group</td>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>-7.88</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concrete</td>
<td>-8.77</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean difference is significant at the.05 level

Discussion

Research Question 1: What is the effect of semiotics on learning L2 words in comparison to the traditional way of learning vocabulary?

This study sought to examine the effects of semiotics on vocabulary learning. Three groups were engaged in this study to find out the potential effect of semiotics on vocabulary learning. The results revealed that there is a positive impact of using semiotics on vocabulary learning, either for abstract or concrete words. Both groups that used semiotics as a technique to aid learning vocabulary outperformed the students in the control group where no semiotic materials were used. The study results are in line with Paivio’s (1971, 1986) dual coding theory, which assumes that information is coded dually in the human mind either verbally (i.e., text and sounds) or non-verbally (i.e., picture and objects). These two systems are interconnected when words are represented by one system and can be activated by the other system or vice-versa (e.g., verbal activated by non-verbal).

The findings of this study are in line with the findings of Hismanoglu (2006) who concluded that semiotic elements provide students with a better understanding of the vocabulary items and help them develop sociopragmatic and socio-semiotic competence in the target language. They also in line with the findings of Gonzale et al., (2011) who found that students in the experimental group scored higher than the students in the control group in the standardized measure of receptive vocabulary. In addition, the study supports the findings of Basoz and Can (2016) who stated that the use of this technique in vocabulary teaching makes the learning environment more motivating and interesting.

Research Question 2: What is the effect of semiotics on learning abstract words in comparison to concrete words?

This study also attempted to examine the effects of semiotics on learning L2 abstract words in comparison to concrete words. Although no significant difference between the scores of the two
groups was observed, the scores of the students in the concrete words group were slightly higher than the abstract words group. This indicates that semiotics can be more useful and effective in learning concrete words. The study showed that students’ scores in concrete words group were slightly higher than the scores in the abstract words. This is because visual information (image) was coded with verbal information (word). However, the students learning vocabulary with no semiotic materials performed worse on the post-tests, as information was only presented traditionally. This study’s findings demonstrate the significant benefits of using semiotics to assist in learning English vocabulary. The findings of this study are in line with Bosoz and Can (2016) who examined the effect of semiotics in learning concrete words. The study found that using semiotics was more effective in learning concrete words than abstract words. However, the study clearly showed that using semiotic materials could be well utilized in teaching vocabulary, either abstract or concrete.

Conclusion

This study explored the effectiveness of semiotics on vocabulary learning. In general, semiotics had been found an effective tool to aid learning L2 words either abstract or concrete. However, using semiotics for concrete words was found slightly superior to using semiotics for abstract words. The participants remembered L2 words better when they used semiotics than when they used the traditional way of learning. This study has generated several pedagogical implications for foreign language teachers. Second language instructors might benefit from the results of this study to present new L2 words in a way that enhances learning new words and increases retention of new words. There were several limitations to the current study. First, the small number of participants may threaten the validity of the study findings. Thus, a study with a large sample size would yield stronger evidence to generalize the findings. In this study, only one mode for presenting semiotics was used (i.e., images). Therefore, the study recommends that further studies investigate the impact of different modes (e.g., video) on learning new words. The study suggests that further research explore the effect of semiotics on learning new words among young learners because age is a crucial factor for learning vocabulary.

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References


The Use of Images for Abstract Words Versus Concrete Words

Qadha & Mahdi
Teaching Tamazight in Mostaganem: Challenges and Perspectives

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Abstract
Teachers are crucial agents of any language education planning as they can make it succeed or fail. In this article, we intend to provide state of the art, concerning teaching Tamazight in Algeria through a case study. We conducted research in Mostaganem city where Tamazight is introduced in 9 primary schools. This investigation aims to study the role of Tamazight teachers’ entry-profiles and the challenges they are facing. We collect data by employing questionnaires and interviews. These research methods help to give insightful information about the reality, needs, and challenges of Tamazight’s instructors. The findings reveal that educators need training, and involvement of specialists to arrange the contexts where Tamazight is being introduced (attitudes). So, more efforts should be spent to improve the situation for achieving the objectives behind the formulation of the Tamazight policy.

Keywords: Education planning, language planning, teachers’ training, Tamazight teachers’ profiles, challenges

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Introduction:
Algeria is a multilingual country par excellence. This linguistic diversity is due to the connections that the country had with different civilizations, and its geographical composition as it covers 2,381,741 square kilometers. The contacts were in forms of conquests, expansions and colonization that lasted from decades to centuries. To understand the origins of this mosaic composition, we should go back to history to describe the complexity of the language situation.

The country witnessed metamorphosis after independence in the education and schooling domain. The post-independence (1962) period urged the policymakers to resolve critical situations they faced in different areas as economy, health, illiteracy, to state but a few. Among the challenges that were prominent in that era was identity reconstruction because Algerians necessitated to identify themselves as a sovereign nation. One needs to emphasize the fact that the French colonizer attempted to eradicate the Algerians from their roots at all levels, including religion, culture, and language. Afraid from division, and following the premise of “one language one nation”, the Algerian government opted for Arabic as the language of the nation due to socio-political and religious matters. Hence, postcolonial children in Algeria witnessed a transition from a colonial education where French was the sole medium of instruction, to a monolingual education in Arabic at primary schools (Benrabah, 2007). The situation in Algeria is not similar to any other context. One is to admit the complexity of the language situation in Algeria as Ephraim & Tabory describe it as: "The Algerian situation is complex, as it is at a crossroad of tensions between French, the colonial language, and Arabic, the new national language; Classical Arabic versus colloquial Algerian Arabic; and the various Berber dialects versus Arabic" (cited in Benrabeh, 2005, p. 380).

The language policy and planning, that the decisions makers followed, attributed a status of one language, Classical Arabic as the national and official, to the detriment of all the used varieties. Eventually, all the subjects were taught in Arabic, and French was a foreign language at primary schools (Grandguillaume, 2004). This language policy created many tensions as it does not reflect the segments of the populace. It resulted in many events and riots that took place in Kabylia in 1980s. It was until 1995 that Tamazight has been acknowledged as a language and not a dialect. Some regions started to teach the language in Kabilya (the cities of Bejaya and Tizi Ouzou).

Due to many elements as globalization, economic reforms and other rebellious events in 2001, the country opens up to plurilingualism (Benrabah, 2005). In 2002, Tamazight became a national language and started to be introduced in some middle schools. However, many schools stopped importing it because of many issues. Among the factors, that hindered the process of teaching Tamazight, was that it was not a mandatory language but optional. Besides, the management of the language has raised other tensions in inserting it at schools as the alphabetical system. This problem was due to the need for an official body that takes the responsibility of managing the linguistic system. Additionally, the lack of trained teachers, who are specialized in Tamazigh, was also an influential cause. In 2016, Tamazight became an official language by a constitutional decree (Algerian Constitution, 2016). Subsequently, the school profile, ipso facto, has changed. Howbeit, despite its official status Tamazight is still optionally taught only in some primary schools of the national territory.

In this paper, we intend to provide state of the art, concerning teaching Tamazight in Algeria. Therefore, we opted for a case study in Mostaganem, a non-speaking Tamazight city. The teaching
of Tamazight in Mostaganem has started in 2017, 4 primary schools, and later in 2018, the ministry of education has added 5 other institutions.

The primary objectives for this inquiry are:

- To examine the teaching situation so that we can present data that help for future reforms.
- To shed light on the reality that might cause jeopardy to the entailed education policy.

In this vein, our main research questions are:

- What is the Tamazight teachers’ entry-profile?
- What are the challenges and difficulties the Tamazight teachers are experiencing in reality?

In an attempt to answer the research questions mentioned before we hypothesize:

- The ministry of education aware of the context’s requirement as Tamazight is taught in many schools since 1995 (Kabylia).
- After twenty years of teaching Tamazight, the problems may still be similar though the change of its status.

**Theoretical Review**

Multilingualism can be a resource for some communities, yet a problem triggering for many. For instance, conflicts may result and cause harm to nations leading to dangerous consequences. To avoid such calamities, governments opt for remedial solutions to meet the needs of their populations. In this vein, Fishman defines language planning as “the organized pursuit of solutions to language problems, typically at the national level”, (cited in Ferguson, 2006, p.1). However, there is no single formula or model that can operate for all language problems. This factor was the main critical point for traditional language planning where the policy adopted should function without taking into account a set of variables such as attitudes, and constant evaluation. Rubin (1971) emphasizes the role of evaluation in improving languages panning by gathering facts that help in readjusting decisions.

The term language planning was coined by Haugen (1959) who defines it as “the activity of preparing a normative orthography, grammar, and dictionary for the guidance of writers and speakers in a non-homogeneous speech community” (p.8). Though its existence before, the discipline of language planning flourished after the Second World War because different nations started to emerge (Baldauf Jr, 2012). The majority if not all of these countries are not monolingual. Therefore, they needed to find solutions to get rid of the colonizers’ languages and select a language that reflects the country to bring in unity. The principal obstacle in language planning was the selection of the code that gathers the citizens at the domestic level.

The simplest definition that Kaplan & Baldauf Jr (1997) offer is that any intentional acts in changing language use or function in a speech community are language planning. The doers of these efforts vary from governments and ministries until members of families (Spolsky, 2009). In this regard, the governments can assign the bodies to do the activities of the planning and the policy, while we can also find NGOs or groups of individuals.

The process by which language planning and policy functions goes through two main levels: status and corpus planning (Heine, 1967; Kloss, 1969). Status planning refers to the role that a
language acquires by defining its function within society (John, 1996). In the Algerian situation, the national and official languages are examples of status planning that the constitution allocates to Arabic and Tamazight. This level of planning is societal as it deals with the role of the language within society. Corpus planning happens at the linguistic level (Ferguson, 2006). It helps to promote the language by working on its grammar, lexicon and orthography to facilitate the process of standardization. In the case of Tamazight, corpus planning is still struggling as no consensus is reached so far about the alphabetical system by which the language should be written. For instance, Tamazight textbooks are written in three scripts; Arabic, Latin and Tifinagh, hence, it is up to the teacher to choose the alphabetical system to teach the content.

Tamazight in the Algerian Schools
Before addressing the issue of Teaching Tamazight language, we felt a need to sketch the Algerian linguistic landscape. The constitution defines the linguistic structure by naming Arabic, followed by Tamazight the official languages. Arabic is a dubious term as it encompasses Classical Arabic (CA) or Modern Standard Arabic (MSA). The sociolinguistic reality is quite contrasting. Arabic is not the mother tongue of Algerians but rather learn it at schools. The first language of an Algerian may be Dialectal Arabic (colloquial), Tamazight (one of its varieties) or French and in some cases, two languages are acquired simultaneously.

The shortcomings of language planning and policy in Algeria are still tangible. The aftermath of Arabization cannot be neglected as Mostari (2003) “Arabization of education was the outcome of an authoritarian decision taken with no consultation, no plan and method” (p.34). We may compare this process to the situation of teaching Tamazight. The language that is taught at schools is intricate to define. This language is an amalgam of the Berber varieties such as Cahouia, Tamazight, Taznatit, Kabyle, Mozabite, and Tamahaq. The speakers of those varieties locate different regions in Algeria.

The language, that Algerian pupils learn at schools, is an amalgam of all these beside other new words and forms that were created since the beginning of its teaching. Dourari (2017) defines Tamazight taught at schools as an artificial language that was created. He believes that the process of initiating Tamazight teaching is similar to the process of Arabization. The challenges and difficulties that Tamazight teaching is witnessing are various and at different levels. The problems are jeopardizing the whole process and led to its regression as Sabri (2014) lists:

- The limited number of jobs offers for Tamazight teachers though hundreds of students graduate each year and are available to be instructors.
- The optional aspect of learning Tamazight at schools.
- The quality of pedagogical supports that do not promote the language adequately as they are not practical and written in different scripts. They reflect the lack of a unified and standard variety.
- Teachers are facing difficulties as they are not well prepared to use the approach applied by the ministry of education (Competency-Based Approach)
- Mixed classrooms where Tamazighophones and Arabophones with different levels in language mastery.
Among the instruments used in both language planning and policy is to teach the language that specialists attempt to find a solution through schooling as Ferguson (2006) suggests “education is probably the most crucial, sometimes indeed bearing the entire burden of LP implementation” (p.33). The applied models in the domain of teaching languages have faced different obstacles because the decision-makers took the problems for granted and isolated from their context. This situation has urged planners and linguists to consider other parameters for sound language policy. The evaluation of any process is presumed to view all the elements that are part of the decisions, whether they are the policymakers or the receivers. In this regard, Ingram (1989) posts:

The language policy should identify the nature of the society whose needs it is to meet, the nature of those needs and hence the goals and objectives (both societal and personal) that are to be sought, and subsequently the policy proposals, their implementation, and the way in which the policy and its outcomes are to be evaluated and adjusted in the light of the evaluation. (p.54)

So, any evaluation is deemed to be undertaken in a dialectic interaction i.e., top down and bottom-up approaches. Otherwise, problems would occur, and the whole process of language policy or language planning in education fails. Kennedy (1982) demonstrates the levelling of the agents involved in language. The decisions about planning languages may be initiated at a high level by national authorities (in the situation of Algeria: the president) reaching its implementation in the classroom. This process proved its ineffectiveness when it does not acknowledge the interaction among all the constituents concerned with the policy.

Figure 1 Levels of language planning (Kennedy, 1982, p. 6)

The literature in the fields of language policy and planning in education has given little interest in classroom practices and realities. Teachers’ role can neither be restricted to imparting knowledge
nor to the classroom. The instructors’ role is significant in influencing language policy in education positively or negatively. Diallo & Liddicoat (2015) indicate that language policy and language teaching (the implementation) are connected intricately. Teachers’ profiles, training, attitudes are entangled in shaping their practices. These elements can ultimately determine the success or the failure of a whole process.

**Research Methodology**

Since it is a case study, the target population of this survey is teachers of Tamazight at nine primary schools of Mostaganem city (the whole number of schools that teach Tamazight). The city is not a Tamazighthophone area where Tamazight has been taught since 2017.

**Sample**

The sample consists of nine educators: four males and five females. Only seven educators accepted to participate in the study. The survey covers both quantitative and qualitative aspects; hence two research instruments were used to reinforce the data collection. We opted for two research tools, questionnaires and interviews respectively. The questionnaire was semi-structured comprising open and close-ended questions that allow for statistical and qualitative data as well. Interviews were the following step for collecting insightful data that needed more clarifications that have not been provided by questionnaires. The interviews were semi-structured for qualitative data that allowed us to delve deeper into the content of the subjects that the teachers had at the university, the content of training they had the inspectors, and the challenges they are meeting and their needs as well.

**Results and Discussion**

In this section, we summarize the obtained data after conducting the research. The results were elucidated from questionnaires and interviews with Tamazight teachers in Mostaganem. We endeavored to achieve the objectives of this survey by analyzing the gathered information.

**Table.1 Tamazight teachers’ Ethnographic profile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Specialty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Tamazight language and culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Linguistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Literature</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table demonstrates general information about the primary school teachers of Tamazight in the city of Mostaganem. Their level varies between Bachelor and Master degree in the studies of Tamazight language. The aim behind emphasizing the specialty of their tertiary course is to see whether they intended to be future teachers from the university. Knowing that each specialty focuses on particular subjects related to the fields, these teachers were not trained to be educators, which means they had a little knowledge about the world of learning-teaching.

**Table2: Tamazight teachers’ career choice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>06</td>
<td>01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researchers asked Tamazight teachers if they embraced the world of teaching by choice. The answers of 6 teachers show that they opted for careers in the domain of education. On the other hand, only one practitioner admits that it is not his/her choice. It is noticeable that, though the different backgrounds that the teachers come from, the majority of the population has chosen to be teachers.

**Table3: Tamazight teachers’ training**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>High Commission for Tamazight Affair</th>
<th>Department of National Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A significant constituent shaping teachers’ profiles is the training they receive, as they are the basis that has them acquainted with the educational context. In this respect, we asked the educators about the types of training they did since they have started their careers. All the teachers did training at university as part of their course. In their training, they attend classes where they observe how teachers make their lessons, and a few occasions, the trainees are invited to present a section or a whole lecture. Six teachers out of seven benefited from training with the inspector throughout different periods. The duration of these training (pre-service and in-service) does not exceed two weeks. The entry or pre-service training are mandatory where they learn some basic notions of teaching methods and official documents.
Table 03: Necessity of continuous training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Needed Elements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Teaching methods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Classroom and time management</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All teachers believe that there is a necessity for other training as they lack mastery of teaching methods and classroom management. These elements are crucial for any rewarding teaching. If the teachers continue to struggle with these issues, reaching the objectives of the education policy would be challenging.

Interviews:
To have more insights and clarifications about the data gathered from questionnaires, we opted for interviews. The researchers asked the interviewees about the modules they had at university. The purpose of this query is to discerning their entry-profile i.e. if they are aware of the basic notions of teaching. All the teachers had as subject modules teaching and learning theories and educational psychology in the BA degree. The specialties of those, who continued to Master degree, have no relation to teaching and learning. As far as the training are concerned, we divided the teachers in the sample into two categories: 4 teachers who started in 2017 and 5 in 2018. The educators had a pre-service training of 2 weeks that covers how to teach, some basics on classroom management, and official documents. However, in 2018, a designed syllabus was elaborated for non-Tamazight speakers where some elements have been omitted or added.

Since we noticed from the questionnaire that the teachers are facing challenges to perform their job, we asked the educators about the contact frequency with the inspectors and meetings. The newly recruited (2018) did meet him only once, whereas (2017) teachers met him twice in (trainings). Even though, teachers contact him frequently for the obstacles or problems they face for instance: neology (new terms and concepts that still emerge due to the lack of unification). Many new words are emerging as the process of Tamazight management is still taking place. This urges teachers to seek explanations from their inspectors due to the lack of dictionaries that cover all the new linguistic items.

As a concluding question, we asked the teachers about the challenges they are confronting in performing their task. They believe that there are elements that are making teaching Tamazight exhausting. Since all of the instructors are novice, they feel that some problems cannot be treated at their level but instead should already have been considered before introducing Tamazight at schools. Attitudinal issues where parents and even administrative staffs did not accept the Tamazight instruction in schools as its insertion is abruptly precipitous. Though its official status, Tamazight still struggles to position itself with the other languages taught in Algerian schools because of its optional learning.

Recommendations
Relying on the data we gathered from this research and the body of the literature that has been written in this field we suggest that:

- Tamazight teachers need in-service training frequently to learn about how to remedy issues as time and classroom management.
- The ministry of education is supposed to train more inspectors to cover the needs of instructors as the number of demands and challenges is increasing. Four inspectors to cover a whole country are not enough.
- The schools, where Tamazight is to be introduced, should be prepared ahead as the success of teaching Tamazight does not depend solely on teachers but on a whole educational context.
- Parents are also influential agents in affecting the motivation of the pupils, thus their attitudes should be considered.

**Conclusion**

For any sound language planning and policy, evaluation is key for its success or decline. The previous studies dealt mainly with the macro levels and paid little attention to the microstructures such as the classroom. Thus, in this article, we address the issue of teachers’ profiles since they are fundamental agents in mediating language learning and acquisition. Their university level, trainings, the challenges, and their needs, are elements that researchers need to scrutinize as they may hinder the objectives that the planners have set. From the result we obtained in Mostaganem city which is a non-Tamazight speaking community, we can deduce that different agents (policymakers, linguists, ministry of education) need to spend more efforts such as conducting attitudinal analyses and continuous specialized training for the Tamazight teachers in non-speaking Tamazight regions. For a change that leads to progress, we need all the linkages of language planning and policy to be invested so that the context would be in favor of promoting Tamazight education planning.

**Note:** In the body of literature, there was no agreement on using the terms language policy and planning interchangeably. Some theorists assign each concept a particular definition. In this article, we used the terms of language planning and language policy synonymously.

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Foreign Language Anxiety: A Systematic Review

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Abstract  
Research in foreign language learning has notably revealed that foreign language anxiety has been a crucial area in applied linguistics. Therefore, this study tends to give a comprehensive review of literature on foreign language anxiety. This review also tries to add an additional explanation to the earlier studies of this issue. It clarifies the concept of foreign language anxiety and how it is different from other related types of anxiety. Finally, it shows the main causes and effects of foreign language anxiety that influence language learners.

Keywords: causes of foreign language anxiety, English as a foreign language (EFL) learners, effects of foreign language anxiety, foreign language anxiety

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1. Introduction

With growing concern being devoted to foreign language learning, anxiety has been ranked to be a crucial challenge to language learners. Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, (1986) believe that anxiety undermines the process of foreign language learning. Language researchers almost agree that anxiety emerged from language learning process is one of the most primary obstacles that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners encounter when learning a foreign language (Alrabai, 2014; Wu, 2010). Horwitz (2001) assures that most EFL learners suffer from language anxiety in different levels. Moreover, Horwitz and Young (1991) state the increased number of language learners who feel anxious in their language classes is alarming. Krashen (1982) explains that anxiety associated with a foreign language can be as barriers that prevent information to reach the language acquisition area in a learner’s brain. Additionally, several studies were conducted on foreign language anxiety stressed that language learners who experience anxiety in their foreign language learning might not be enjoyable, which negatively affects the learners’ performance and achievement (MacIntyre, 1999; Riasati, 2011). Language educators also stress that their students experience foreign language anxiety in language classes, which negatively influences their achievement and performance. Von Worde (2003) reports that previous research on foreign language anxiety has systematically detected that anxiety can obstruct second/ foreign language achievement and performance. Since anxiety causes crucial problems for EFL learners in which can undermine their performance and achievement, it needs more research and exploration (Elaldi, 2016). This current paper gives a comprehensive literature review on foreign language anxiety. It also discusses the theoretical models to explain the concept of language anxiety, causes of foreign language anxiety, and effects of foreign language anxiety.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Foreign Language Anxiety

In the literature, several definitions of foreign language anxiety are available. According to Ortega (2009), the two prominent definitions that have been enriching our knowledge of language anxiety were proposed by Horwitz et al. (1986) and MacIntyre (1999). Horwitz et al. (1986) define language anxiety to be “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of the language learning process” (p. 128). Similarly, MacIntyre (1999) describes that language anxiety as a feeling of stress, nervousness, emotional reaction, and worry that linked to second/ foreign language learning.

To understand foreign language anxiety in a broader scope, the aspects of anxiety, in general, should be discussed. Psychologically, anxiety has been categorized into three aspects: 1) trait anxiety, 2) state anxiety, and 3) situation-specific anxiety (Speilberger, 1983). The trait perspective occurs when a person has a permanent intent to be anxious (Scovel, 1978). It is a general personality trait, which does not change across several situations. Sieber, O’Neil & Tobias (1977) claim that trait anxiety indicates to “stable personality differences in anxiety proneness” (p. 99). This aspect of anxiety remains stable over time because it is a feature in the personality of an individual. According to Eysenck (1979), trait anxiety can damage cognitive functioning and interrupt memory.
The state perspective is defined as an emotional state. Spielberger (1972) explains the state anxiety to be “the emotional reaction or pattern of response that occurs in an individual who perceives a particular situation as personally dangerous or threatening, irrespective of the presence or absence of objective danger” (p. 489). The state anxiety can also be defined as a feeling of nervousness that can change over time and fluctuate in rigor (Young, 1998). Test anxiety distinctly exemplifies the state anxiety whereby students experience anxiety from a particular test, but this feeling can change over time. The state anxiety affects the emotions, cognition, and behaviors of a person.

The situation-specific perspective occurs at a particular point of time as a result to a specific situation (Spielberger, 1983). MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) state that the situation-specific anxiety is a unique anxiety form that happens invariably over time within a given situation. It is closely related to specific situations in which one situation differs from another, but it is consistent over time. Language anxiety and math anxiety are examples of situation-specific anxieties. Language researchers believe that learning a foreign language is related to situation-specific anxiety rather than trait anxiety because trait anxiety is a stable trait wherein all situations provoke anxiety feeling while a situation-specific anxiety is associated with specific situations (Oxford and Ehrman, 1992). Similarly, MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) claim that a situation-specific perspective is the best research approach for foreign language anxiety because language learners experience anxiety in different aspects of the situation in a language class. In sum, a situation-specific anxiety focuses on the particular forms of anxiety that occur systematically over time.

Language anxiety is also classified into two distinct types: debilitating (harmful) anxiety and facilitating (helpful) anxiety (Alpert & Haber, 1960). A consensus of studies concentrates on debilitating anxiety, which harms learners and impacts their performance negatively (Brown, 2007; MacIntyre, 1999; Kim, 2000, Horwitz et al, 1986; Jones, 2004; Oxford, 1999). The effects could be direct such as reducing class participation or indirect such as fear, frustration, and worry (Oxford, 1999). On the other hand, facilitating anxiety helps learners in a particular way to truly perform well in the language. A few researchers have adapted facilitating anxiety, which can be a trait to help the learners in overcoming their anxiety (Bailey, 1983; Ellis, 1994; Kleinmann, 1977).

2.2 Theories/ Models to Explain Foreign Language Anxiety

To recognize language anxiety, models or theories of second/ foreign language acquisition provide beneficial insights into this phenomenon. The following theories of second language acquisition are discussed: Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis (1982), Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope’s Theory of Foreign Language Anxiety.

2.2.1 Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis

Krashen’s Affective Filter Hypothesis (1982) is a fundamental theory in the field of second language acquisition. This theory stresses how affective factors associate with the second language acquisition process. Krashen (1982) states that the affective factors are emotional variables, which can be categorized into: 1) motivation, 2) self-confidence, 3) anxiety. These factors can indirectly influence learning by preventing input from reaching the language acquisition device in the brain. To be more precise, this theory explains the relationship between emotional variables and success or failure of second language acquisition. For example, when the affective filter increases, learners...
may experience anxiety, tension, and lack of self-confidence that prevent success. On the other hand, low filters do not lead to anxiety, which help language learners to understand the input easily. The importance of this hypothesis in pedagogy is that the idea of affective filter presents a language instructor in a new way, in which the language instructors who can effectively facilitate input and make it understandable in a low anxiety situation where an appropriate classroom environment can be created. In other words, a language teacher can minimize the students’ anxiety by following certain strategies such as focusing on the message, neglecting the form, and not insisting on the early production unless the teacher feels that the students are ready. By utilizing this theory, English is expected to be improved because input will be gained, the filter will be low, and the learners will not be afraid to take apart in class exercises.

2.2.2 Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope’s Theory of Foreign Language Anxiety

Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) in their popular research define foreign language anxiety as “a distinct complex construct of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours related to classroom language learning arising from the uniqueness of language learning process” (p. 128). They state that anxiety associated with a foreign language is a situation-specific form emerging from the uniqueness of foreign language learning, not as a general anxiety moved to learning a foreign language. They prove their theory by observing language learners during the process of teaching in language classes and feedback from thirty language learners attending a language class as well. This theory proposes that other academic fields of study do not have the same degree of self-concepts and self-expression like foreign language learning, which makes this type of anxiety different from other academic anxieties. Learners who perform well at other subjects experienced anxiety when learning a foreign language. Numerous studies adopted this theory and provided a piece of evidence to validate it. For example, nine anxiety scales were used by MacIntyre and Gardner (1989) to test anxiety dimensions in relation with various measures of learning. They found that foreign language anxiety is notably associated with foreign language proficiency while the general anxiety does not relate to foreign language proficiency. Similarly, Chen and Chang (2004) believe that foreign language anxiety is a perspective of situation-specific anxiety. In their article, neither test characteristics nor academic learning history were found to be variables of foreign language anxiety, which means that foreign language anxiety is a unique type of anxiety. Those findings supported this theory that anxiety associated with foreign language learning is a specific type of anxiety stemmed from the uniqueness of learning a foreign language.

Another major contribution of this theory was the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) to measure the levels of anxiety as evidenced by negative attitudes, subjective perceptions, beliefs, and feelings toward foreign language classes. The FLCAS is a self-report instrument that consists of 33 items aiming to assess a learner’s level of foreign language anxiety and to measure whether language anxiety is a specific form to language learning or not. The FLCAS items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale numbered from 1 to 5, which ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. This scale has been widely accepted from language researchers such as Horwitz (1991); Kim (2000); Liu (2006); MacIntyre (1988); MacIntyre & Gardner (1989).

2.3 Causes of Foreign Language Anxiety

Studies have discussed various variables concerning foreign language anxiety. Those studies have found factors like foreign language aptitude and language skills in relation to foreign
Foreign Language Anxiety: Systematic Review

language anxiety (Ganschow & Sparks, 1996), teachers’ belief (Cheng, Horwitz, and Schallert, 1999), students’ perceptions about foreign language proficiency (Dewaele et al., 2008), and self-esteem (Yamini and Tahriri, 2006). Additionally, a synthesis of previous studies reveals that various factors lead to the feeling of anxiety in learning a foreign language. Howitz et al. (1986) stress that foreign language anxiety is caused by three factors related to performance: 1) fear of negative evaluation, 2) communication apprehension, and 3) test anxiety. Fear of negative evaluation is the feeling of “apprehension about others’ evaluations, avoidance of evaluative situations, and expectation that others would evaluate oneself negatively” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p.127). Communication apprehension can be associated with foreign language anxiety because it is a form of situational anxieties related to interpersonal communication and oral expression (Argaman & Abu-Rabia, 2002; McIntyre & Gardner 1989). To be more precise, people who fear from oral communication may feel anxious when asked to talk a foreign language as well. Foreign language anxiety can be linked to test anxiety, which is defined as “a type of performance anxiety stemming from a fear of failure” (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 127).

Other causes are significant in provoking foreign language anxiety. Those causes are related to interpersonal issues and personal characteristics, such as fear of speaking a foreign language, low self-perceived foreign language proficiency, and low self-esteem. (Mahmoodzadeh, 2013; Young, 1991). Liu and Jackson (2008) stress fear of making mistakes, teachers’ correction of learners’ errors, and speaking in front of their teachers or peers are crucial causes of foreign language anxiety as well. Dewaele, Petrides, and Furnham (2008) suggest that learner’s perception is an essential cause of foreign language anxiety. Other researchers such as Bailey et al. (1999) and Yamini and Tahriri (2006) and Young (1992) have explained that learner’s degree of self-esteem negatively associates with foreign language anxiety. People with low self-esteem will be worried about the way that other people think toward them, which highly increase the level of anxiety.

Besides that, teachers’ role and the learning atmosphere can also be causes of foreign language anxiety. For example, calling on students by the teachers in language classes could provoke the feeling of anxiety for the students. Aydin (2008) also states that the manner of correcting the mistakes of students by teachers is another source of anxiety. Argaman and Abu-Rabia (2002) reveal that attitudes and personalities of teachers can be indicators of foreign language anxiety. All those causes have been supported by recent studies like Aydin (2016), Kurk (2018), Sammephet and Wanphet (2013), and Yoon (2012).

The literature on foreign language anxiety can generally be summarized into six major causes stemmed from three primary sources: the learner, the educator, and instructional practice. These causes are 1) interpersonal and personal anxiety, 2) learners’ beliefs about learning a foreign language, 3) classroom procedures, 4) employing teacher-centered method, 5) teachers’ beliefs about language teaching, and 6) language examination (Young, 1991). More recently, Luo (2012) believes the main sources that lead to experiencing foreign language anxiety are the classroom atmosphere, attributes of learners, the target language, and the process of foreign language learning itself.

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The literature on foreign language anxiety can generally be summarized into six major causes stemmed from three primary sources: the learner, the educator, and instructional practice. These causes are 1) interpersonal and personal anxiety, 2) learners’ beliefs about learning a foreign language, 3) classroom procedures, 4) employing teacher-centered method, 5) teachers’ beliefs about language teaching, and 6) language examination (Young, 1991). More recently, Luo (2012) believes the main sources that lead to experiencing foreign language anxiety are the classroom atmosphere, attributes of learners, the target language, and the process of foreign language learning itself.
2.4 Effects of Foreign Language Anxiety

Research done on foreign language anxiety has shown that anxiety associated with foreign language has negative effects on foreign language learning (Horwitz, Tallon and Luo, 2010; Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre, 1999; Marwan, 2016). Those effects can be classified into five main effects. First, academically, foreign language anxiety indicates to the level of language proficiency in which experiencing high levels of foreign language anxiety lead to a poor academic achievement. Studies have reported that a negative relationship has been found between foreign language anxiety and academic achievement as well (Horwitz, 2001). Another academic effect is students’ drop out. So, Bailey, Onwnegbuzie, and Daley (2003) show that high anxious students are more probable to drop out their courses than low anxious students. Second, socially, high-level anxious students are not interested in communicating with others (Price, 1991). Horwitz et al. (2010) claim that language anxiety leads students to be unwilling to communicate in English. Third, cognitively, foreign language anxiety can be as an affective filter that denies information from reaching a learner’s cognitive processing system (Krashen, 1982; MacIntyre and Gardner, 1989). Fourth, affectively, since anxiety is one of the affective factors in language acquisition, it may negatively influence the other affective factors such as motivation and attitude. Horwitz et al. (2010) report that foreign language anxiety likely influences a student’s feeling about the study. Liu and Huang (2011) state that anxiety is negatively associated with students’ English learning motivation. Finally, personally, students who experience anxiety in learning a foreign language could become miserable, worried, forgetful, sweaty, and such other symptoms.

3. Conclusion

A review of related literature on foreign language anxiety shows that foreign language anxiety is a challenging issue in foreign language learning. However, researchers should treat this issue systematically and offer fully understanding. A thorough understanding of causes of foreign language anxiety would help to find ways to reduce this problem. Based on this comprehensive review, more studies in this field are still needed to confirm previous studies on foreign language anxiety. This study suggests research timeline was conducted up to this time. It is also noticed that foreign language anxiety has negative effects on foreign language learning. Finally, it shows the well-known instrument (FLCAS) that measure the level of foreign language anxiety among language learners.

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Authorship Attribution Revisited: The Problem of Flash Fiction
A morphological-based Linguistic Stylometry Approach

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Abstract
This study is concerned with addressing the limitations with the authorship attribution of flash or micro-fiction. The shortness of linguistic data in texts of the kind makes it challenging for conventional stylometric authorship methods to assign disputed texts to their real authors. As thus, this study proposes a new stylometric authorship system based on morphological patterns and letter mapping properties. The assumption is that these carry unique and distinctive stylistic features that can be usefully used to recognize possible authors of disputed texts. The study is based on a corpus of 259 flash fiction stories written in Arabic. Cluster analysis was for grouping documents that have shared linguistic features together. Results indicate that all texts were successfully matched with their real authors. It can be concluded that morphological information can be usefully used for improving the performance of authorship attribution and detection in Arabic texts due to the unique stylistic features of the affixation processes in Arabic. Controversial texts in Arabic can thus be assigned to their authors based on detecting stable morphological patterns with reliable authorship performance.

Keywords: authorship attribution, flash fiction, letter mapping, morphological patterns, stylometry

1. Introduction

The recent years have witnessed an increasing use of linguistic stylometric approaches in addressing different authorship problems. These have been mainly based on the investigation of the lexical (e.g. frequency of distinctive words, discourse markers, and modal verbs) and structural (e.g. use of chunks, type of sentence, and sentence length) properties of the texts as a clue for identifying authors of controversial texts. In spite of the success of these approaches in solving different authorship problems of various historical documents and literary texts, so far they are ineffective and thus unreliable in addressing authorship problems with the very short texts including what came to be known in the literature as flash fiction.

Flash fiction, Galef (2016) argues, is currently used as an umbrella or catchall term for any minuscule narrative. Initially, narratives of the kind were described as ‘short-shorts’, then, it came to be known as ‘sudden fiction’ or ‘micro-fiction’ with the publication of Robert Shapard and James Thomas’ Sudden Fiction in 1986 where narratives used to range between 250-500 words. The growing popularity of this new kind of fiction has recently encouraged many authors to become more interested in producing even smaller texts, so they are read by more people (Botha, 2016). It is no surprise then that these days, some narratives are written in just two sentences described as ‘Twitter fiction’ or ‘Twiction’ (Crum, 2017). The brevity of this type of fiction has made it more accessible through social media platforms, and consequently, more authorship issues are emerging. The unique stylistic nature of these narratives makes it difficult for standard linguistic stylometry approaches to address such problems.

Technically speaking, the shortness of linguistic data in such texts provides no sufficient clues and creates problems of sparsity or data sparseness which make it challenging for conventional stylometric approaches to identify the authors of disputed texts. In the face of the limitations of existing linguistic stylometry methods, this study proposes the use of morphemes instead of lexicons and sentence structures as inputs for the linguistic stylometry of the texts. The assumption then is that the way words are combined can be useful for recognizing possible authors of disputed texts. By way of illustration, this study is based on a corpus of 259 flash fiction stories written in Arabic. The rationale is that very few studies have been done to Arabic usually applying standard stylometry approaches with no regard to the different linguistic system of Arabic. Unlike English and different Western languages, the way words are formed and built or what can be described as the morphological structure of words represents one of the unique stylistic features in Arabic. Many nouns, for instance, have more than one plural form. The word ‘أخ’ [ax] meaning brother, for example, has four plural forms. All of them are morphologically valid and customarily used. An investigation of the morphological properties of words can be used thus as a clue for attributing disputed texts to their authors.

The research questions of this study are thus asked about the effectiveness of the use of the morphological structures and patterns as well as the way words are built in Arabic as variables in authorship tasks. The hypothesis is that the use of derivational and inflectional morphemes represents one of the unique stylistic features for Arab writers. The use of inflectional and derivational morphemes in Arabic can be considered a stylistic potential and powerful expressive means that can distinguish authors. Unfortunately, morphological structures have been ignored in the stylometric authorship applications in Arabic. These have always been based on standard authorship processes with no regard of the peculiar nature of Arabic morphology. In such methods, affixes, which carry rich stylistic features in Arabic, are usually removed using stemming in
standard classification applications as natural language processing (NLP) systems are designed to reduce the number of forms of words to be stored. In so doing, NLP systems often do not include any morphological processes. In light of this argument, this study asks the following research questions. First, are morphological structures and patterns useful in improving the authorship detection of Arabic texts? Second, is it possible to suggest an alternative authorship system that considers the peculiar nature of Arabic morphology?

2. Literature review: authorship attribution

Authorship attribution, also called authorship recognition, is the process of looking for salient features in a piece of writing that relates the work to its author. Craig (2004) points out that “authorship studies aim at ‘yes or no’ resolutions to existing problems, and avoid perceptible features if possible, working at the base strata of language where imitation or deliberate variation can be ruled out” (2004, p. 273). The idea of authorship attribution is very old. Love (2002) says that it “reaches back as far as the great library of Alexandria and embraces the formation of the Jewish and Christian biblical canons”. (p. 1). The motive behind authorship attribution studies is that many works were written anonymously and many others raise suspicion about their real author, and historical evidence is sparse or lacking. Traditionally, work on authorship attribution was conceived as an organized scholarly enterprise where it was not “the work of a specialist in authorship but of a scholar for whom the determination of authorship has repeatedly been a crucial element in other kinds of investigation” (Love, 2002, p. 1). There are many examples where the task of identifying the author of a particular document was the job of politicians, journalists, and lawyers (Juola, 2008; Juola, Sofko, & Brennan, 2006). Studies in this tradition often used criteria for relating works to authors on chronological and epistemological bases. One problem with such methods is that it is often difficult to find reliable historical facts or knowledge-based evidence that will help in the identification of authors. Furthermore, studies based on what can be considered philological did not use replicable methods, and therefore, the results were not objective and thus unreliable.

In the face of these limitations, empirically-driven approaches for authorship attribution problems were developed. The claim was that authorship attribution applications should be algorithmically processed without any reference to existing analytical results or personal knowledge of authors (Moisl, 2009). The mainstream of these approaches is described in the literature as stylometry. Stylometry is a quantitative investigation into the characteristics of an author’s style. Laan (1995) defines the term as a technique “to grasp the often elusive character of an author's style, or at least part of it, by quantifying some of its features” (p. 271). Similarly, Merriam and Matthews (1994) indicate that “stylometry attempts to capture quantitatively the essence of an individual’s use of language.” (p. 203). Stylometric studies have been mainly based on computational and quantitative methods to reach solid conclusions regarding the authorship of a given text (Tambouratzis & Vassiliou, 2007). Accordingly, numerous studies have come to provide empirical solutions to different controversial authorship issues using quantitative methods for investigating the stylistic and linguistic properties of authors.

One of the pioneering examples of the use of stylometric analysis in authorship problems is Mosteller and Wallace (1964) attempt to give internal evidence for the authors of the disputed Federalist Papers based on linguistic and stylistic properties of the authors. These are 77 Federalist Papers written during 1787-1788 to Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison. These papers were published in newspapers under the pseudonym of Publius until they were collected
with eight more articles to form a volume. There was a consensus about the authorship of these Papers that John Jay had authored five papers in the volume; while Hamilton authored fifty-one papers; Madison wrote 14 and both Madison and Hamilton co-authored three. The authorship of 12 papers in the volume was somewhat disputed since it was challenging to find out which of the two, Madison or Hamilton had authored those Papers (Rudman, 2012; Savoy, 2013). On their part, Mosteller and Wallace (1964), employed tools of statistical analysis to investigate the mystery of authorship of the Federalist papers in the early 1960s, using function words as discriminators. The objectivity and replicability of the proposed approach opened the way to the digital age of authorship attribution. In literature, different studies have come to adopt stylometric methods for resolving some of the controversial authorship issues that have long been considered unanswerable. One of the typical examples of authorship attribution is the investigation of Shakespeare’s plays. The main question they addressed was: Did Shakespeare write all of his plays? These studies tended to investigate whether Shakespeare’s plays were written by Shakespeare himself, collaboratively with other authors, or entirely with other authors (Craig & Kinney, 2009; Erne, 2008; Hoover, 2002). The majority of these studies focused on the Marlowe-Shakespeare debate and this can be attributed to the similarity between the two authors.

The underlying assumption behind stylometric testing of authorship attribution is that, Holmes (1998) contends, “authors have an unconscious aspect of their style, a style which cannot consciously be manipulated but which possesses features which are quantifiable and which may be distinctive” (p. 111) and the identification of such personal distinctive linguistic and stylistic features makes it possible to detect an author’s signature and distinguish the writing of one author from another or others. In this way, researchers and particularly statisticians, Knaap and Grootjen (2007) argue, have tended to investigate the lexical features of texts to make predictions about possible authors. According to (Burrows, 2003, 2007), the search for the most frequent words has been one of the most widely used methods for determining the author of a given work. Garcia and Martin (2007) explain that statisticians attempted over the last decade to solve some controversial authorship problems by finding a formula grounded on the computation of tokens, word-types, and most frequently-used words. They contend that computational statisticians have tended to investigate what they call the ‘Lexical Richness’ of authors to propose a reliable approach to authorship attribution. In turn, Morton (1986) argues that the use of rare words is a good indication for determining the author of a given text as this enables one writer to be distinguished from another. He explains:

The once occurring words convey many of the elements thought to show excellence in writing, the range of a writer's interests, the precision of his observation, the imaginative power of his comparisons, they demonstrate his command of rhythm and of alternations”.(p.1)

Similarly, Blatt (2017) asserts that rare words are quite noticeable and can be considered writer’s favorite words which makes it easier and accurate to use them as an indicator for determining authors.

The ineffectiveness of the lexical representation of texts in resolving different authorship problems, however, has led to the development of new methods. The lexical representation of texts has come to be known today as the traditional way of doing authorship attribution. It has been criticized for its ineffectiveness in providing solutions for the practical applications of authorship
 attribution (Stamatatos, 2009; Tamboli & Prasad, 2013). The claim is that isolated or single words are not enough for assigning disputed texts to their possible writers. The idea is simply that single words are not enough to capture the structure of documents. Different studies, therefore, have been more concerned with the morphological, syntactic, and structural features of texts (e.g. morphologically complex words, use of function words, sentence length, compounding, and punctuation). In spite of the reasonable success of the newly developed methodologies in providing answers for many authorship problems, verifying the authorship of very short texts as in the case of very short stories still represents a real challenge for the practical applications of author identification. Additionally, very few studies have been concerned with authorship attribution in Arabic, where differences in language systems represent further challenges. This study tends to address this gap in the literature by proposing more reliable methods for the authorship problems concerning short stories and Arabic.

3. Methodology

To test the proposed system, this study is based on a corpus of 259 flash fiction stories written by four authors: Gamal AL-Gezery, Essam Al-Sherif, Huda Kafarnah, and Haifa Hammouda. The selected stories are published in four collections of short fiction stories entitled “فكر بنفسكك” /fakkir binafsik/ (Think of Yourself), “علم أسكك” /alam ?aswad/ (A Black Flag), “تشكرة” /taðkarah lilmäsäfat/ (A Ticket For Far Destinations), and “شاهد حنين” /jahid hanin/ (A Witness of Yearning). Documents were represented using the vector space model (VSM). The reason is that it is conceptually simple as well as it is convenient for computing semantic similarity within documents. A data Matrix $M_{ij}$ was built in which rows $H_i$ represent the documents and columns $M_j$ the morphological type variables, and the value at the $M_{ij}$ is the frequency of lexical type $j$ in document $i$. The data matrix $M_{ij}$ was built representing the selected 259 flash fiction stories. The texts were given name codes (serialized from M001 to M259) for identification. Each matrix row, therefore, represents a lexical frequency profile for the corresponding text.

For identifying the groups with common linguistic features, cluster analysis methods are used. Cluster analysis is widely acknowledged as a successful technique for organizing any unorganized set of documents (Moisl, 2015). It is an exploratory multivariate technique for systematically finding relatively homogeneous clusters of cases based on proximity measures without prior assumptions about differences within sets of data investigated (Fielding, 2007; Kaufman & Rousseeuw, 1990; Manning, Raghavan, & Schütze, 2008). It is a deterministic process that identifies discrete categories under any inherent structure in the data (Anderberg, 1973; Everitt, 1993; Everitt, Landau, & Leese, 2001; Hair, 2006; Milligan, 1996; Punj & Stewart, 1983). It is thus an inductive technique that explicitly attempts to group data sets into discrete classes (Adams, 2003; Mirkin, 2005). The aim of cluster analysis can be summarized as grouping a collection of objects into subsets where members of each subgroup are more closely related to one another than members assigned to the other group/s. Groups are technically called clusters. Given a corpus of 259 documents, these can be clustered where members of each cluster share specific characteristics. In authorship recognition applications, the assumption is that texts grouped together are more likely to be written by the same author. To perform cluster analysis, Euclidian distance, being a straightforward measure, is used. Euclidian distance is the most widely used and is reported to provide reliable results in general. As for the clustering method, Ward linkage is used. The rationale is that the Ward linkage clustering (or what is usually referred to as increase
in sum of squares) with Euclidean measure seems to be the most convenient for the present case because it makes the clearest partitioning of the matrix rows.

4. Results

In order for the proposed system in assigning texts to their real authors to be evaluated, two processes were carried out. First, similar texts were grouped together, assuming that texts grouped together are more likely to be written by the same author. Second, clustering structures were compared to the bibliographic information of each author. To compute the similarity between texts and group similar texts together, the Ward linkage clustering method with Euclidean distance measure was used. As a result, the matrix rows are assigned to four groups. One advantage of this clustering is that it offers a solution for a traditional problem in cluster analysis—the decision of the optimal number of clusters that fits a dataset. The strong tendency towards left-branching that is associated with other clustering methods is avoided with Ward clustering. The matrix rows are assigned into four main groups, as shown in Figure 1.

![Cluster Dendrogram](image)

**Figure 1** Cluster analysis of the selected flash fiction stories

For clustering validity purposes, two approaches were used. These are cross-validation and relative comparison. The objective is to validate the previous analysis by seeing whether the same analytical methods applied to an alternative representation of the data gives identical or at least similar results. In a cross-validation approach, the texts were randomly divided into two subsets, say A and B, and the cluster analysis is carried out separately on each of A and B. Similarity of the results is the indication of validity (Rencher, 2002). The comparison shows a close fit between the results as there is a complete correspondence between the structures based on the data matrix composed of all the 259 rows and the structures based on the random distribution of these 259 rows into two groups.

For relative comparison analysis, a comparable approach was based on comparing the clustering structure, generated by the same algorithms but using an alternative representation of the data; this was done by cluster analyzing a principal component reduction of the data matrix. The analysis showed that there is a close fit between the two clustering structures despite the minor differences. Consequently, it can be claimed that an agreement between the two clustering...
structures supports the validity of hierarchical cluster analysis results. As a final step, the clustering structure obtained here, as shown in Figure 1 was compared to the bibliographic information of each author. Members of each class or cluster were compared to the stories of each author. Results indicate that all texts were successfully matched with their real authors. Members in Class A correspond to the stories written by Gamal AL-Gezery, Class B to Essam Al-Sherif, Class C to Huda Kafarnah, and finally Class D to Haifa Hammouda.

5. Analysis and Discussions

Given that the texts were clustered based on morphological similarity, this implies that each cluster has a characteristic morphological frequency profile which distinguishes it from the others. Based on this assumption, it should be possible to identify the most important and distinct variables for each group, and, based on the morphological patterns of these items, to infer the morphological characteristics of the respective groups.

Group A

In Group 1, texts have a multitude use of verbs as one of the main lexical tools used to build up the flash fictions. Al-Gezery, for instance, uses verbs recursively to indicate action and flow of events as well as to show the dramatic anxiety. In his flash fiction “قلة حيلة” /qillat hiIlah/ (Helplessness), he uses verbs such as “سمعت – أعطت – غضب – أشنع” /sami3at - ?a3tat - ?uʃage3/ (she heard – she gave – he got angry – I encourage). All of these verbs are tense homogeneous, i.e. used in the past. He uses inflectional suffixes to denote gender, e.g. /sami3at/ (she heard) and /?a3tat/ (she gave). Besides, he uses negation tools such as “ليس” /laysa/ (not) to affirm his argument and establish a logical homogeneity. It is worth noting that all these verbs are not augmented, i.e. they do not have auxiliary consonants. The root verb is used only with the feminizing ‘ta’ to denote that the speaker/addresssee is a female.

This use of verbs is repeatedly used in Al-Gezery’s texts. In his “فكّر بنفسك” /fakkir binafsik/ (Think of Yourself), the author uses homogeneous verbs, such as “عست – ستع – كتم – فكر” /istadäna – sä3ada – katama – fakkara/ (he borrowed – he helped – he muted – he thought). Also, he uses auxiliary consonants to form augmented verbs as in “عستان” /istadäna/ (he borrowed) from the root “دان” /däna/ to indicate exaggeration in action. The use of such augmented verbs is repeated more than once in his works. For instance, in his “فراغ” /faräγ/ (emptiness), he says “اسبككفر” /astaγfiru/ (he thought) which is derived from the root verb “غفر” /γafara/ (seek forgiveness———forgive, respectively). The use of the augmented form here denotes the request of forgiveness on the part of the speaker or the subject of the verb. Al-Gezery, also, uses internal gemination in his “عستان” /fakkir/ (he thought) which is formed of two letters uttered as one. This is repeated in his “عستان” /3aṣr/ (Afternoon), where he uses the verbs “عستان” /ta3ammadtu/, /șallaytuhu/ (I intended – I prayed it). The use of augmented verbs of that form, i.e. doubled or geminated, is to denote either multitude or exaggeration. He may use both, i.e. auxiliary consonants and gemination, as in his “عستان” /nabdū taṣfīq/ (the beat of a clap) in the verb “عستان” /sayuṣaffiq/ (he will clap). Also, the particle ‘sa’ before the verb ‘عستان’ /yusaffiq/ is to express the future tense. The use of inflectional suffixes is quite observable in Al-Gezery’s works. For instance, in his “عستان” /sa3y/ (pursuit), he uses the verbs “عستان” /ramat – taʃa3at – baha3at/ (she saw – she inspected – she searched), where all of them are suffixed with feminizing ta (ت). It makes a kind of sound homogeneity, both in sound and tense, among them.
It can be also observed that Al-Gezeiry uses a particular verb more than once, either in the same story or in different ones. For instance, he uses the verb “صارع”/ṣāra3a/ (he wrestled) more than once in his “شكككر”/ṣukuk/ (Thankfulness). He repeats the verb as in “حذ ت حل”/yuṣāri3unil-wamīdu wa ?uṣāri3uḥu/ (the flash wrestles me and I struggle it back) which indicates a lexical and sound homogeneity. The same verb is repeated in his “ندية – أتساماتان ٌذانيية”/nadiyyah - ٌابنتماتن ٌذانيية/ (dewiness, side smile). However, he uses the verb in different tenses, i.e. once in the past and others in the present. However, in some cases, he resorts to nouns. He starts some of his fictions either with nouns or pronouns. He may use nouns to indicate confirmation, statement or description of a specific case or event. This is obvious is his “نهر حت ر”/lawḥatun qazzhiyyah/ (Deflection) for the same purpose, i.e. description. He says “ة قزان”/inḥirāfū masār/ (Deflection) for the same purpose, i.e. description. He says “نهر حت ر”/lawḥatun qazzhiyyah – nahun hadir/ (a rainbow painting, a babbling river). It is repeated in a number of his other works.

In some instances, Al-Gezeiry resorts to the use of vernacular or slang words. For example, in his fiction “نهر حت ر”/lawḥatun qazzhiyyah, he says “نهر حت ر”/lawḥatun qazzhiyyah – nahun hadir/ (a rainbow painting, a babbling river). He, also, makes use of formal connecting words such as relatives. For instance, in his “نهر حت ر”/lawḥatun qazzhiyyah, he says “نهر حت ر”/lawḥatun qazzhiyyah – nahun hadir/ (a rainbow painting, a babbling river). He, also, makes use of formal connecting words such as relatives and demonstratives. For instance, in his “نهر حت ر”/lawḥatun qazzhiyyah, he says “نهر حت ر”/lawḥatun qazzhiyyah – nahun hadir/ (a rainbow painting, a babbling river). He, also, makes use of suffixes such as feminizing ta as in his “نهر حت ر”/lawḥatun qazzhiyyah – nahun hadir/ (a rainbow painting, a babbling river). He, also, makes use of suffixes such as feminizing ta as in his “نهر حت ر”/lawḥatun qazzhiyyah – nahun hadir/ (a rainbow painting, a babbling river). He, also, makes use of suffixes such as feminizing ta as in his “نهر حت ر”/lawḥatun qazzhiyyah – nahun hadir/ (a rainbow painting, a babbling river). He, also, makes use of suffixes such as feminizing ta as in his “نهر حت ر”/lawḥatun qazzhiyyah – nahun hadir/ (a rainbow painting, a babbling river).

Group B

Texts in this group are characterized by the frequent use of verbs. Al-Sherif uses verb structures very often where nominal phrases could express the same meaning. For instance, in his “نهر حت ر”/lawḥatun qazzhiyyah, he uses the verbs “نهر حت ر”/lawḥatun qazzhiyyah – nahun hadir/ (a rainbow painting, a babbling river). He, also, makes use of suffixes such as feminizing ta as in his “نهر حت ر”/lawḥatun qazzhiyyah – nahun hadir/ (a rainbow painting, a babbling river). He, also, makes use of suffixes such as feminizing ta as in his “نهر حت ر”/lawḥatun qazzhiyyah – nahun hadir/ (a rainbow painting, a babbling river). He, also, makes use of suffixes such as feminizing ta as in his “نهر حت ر”/lawḥatun qazzhiyyah – nahun hadir/ (a rainbow painting, a babbling river). He, also, makes use of suffixes such as feminizing ta as in his “نهر حت ر”/lawḥatun qazzhiyyah – nahun hadir/ (a rainbow painting, a babbling river). He, also, makes use of suffixes such as feminizing ta as in his “نهر حت ر”/lawḥatun qazzhiyyah – nahun hadir/ (a rainbow painting, a babbling river). He, also, makes use of suffixes such as feminizing ta as in his “نهر حت ر”/lawḥatun qazzhiyyah – nahun hadir/ (a rainbow painting, a babbling river). He, also, makes use of suffixes such as feminizing ta as in his “نهر حت ر”/lawḥatun qazzhiyyah – nahun hadir/ (a rainbow painting, a babbling river).

The use of Arabized words is observable in some of Al-Sherif’s works. For instance, in his “نهر حت ر”/lawḥatun qazzhiyyah, he says “نهر حت ر”/lawḥatun qazzhiyyah – nahun hadir/ (a rainbow painting, a babbling river). Al-Sherif borrows the English word (Facebook), then Arabizes it and finally derive an adjective of it (فيسبوكية) /fisbokiyyah/. This is
repeated in his “فيس بوك” (Facebook) where he reuses the borrowed Arabicized word Facebook as well as other Arabicized words such as “بروفايل – بويست – لايك” (profile, post, like). He, also, uses interrogation to serve confirmation or maybe denial and exclamation from the addressee as in his “عندما قلت: متى انتهيت؟” /tas?alunī matä tanäm qultu mata-stayqadžtu/ (she asked me: when do you sleep? I said: when did I wake up?). This is repeatedly used in a number of his fictions such as “سؤال – دعوى” /su?āl – da3wa/ (a question, a claim).

**Group C**

On her part, Kafarnah resorts to the use of an adverbial phrase or noun phrase to start a number of her flash fictions. For instance, in her “ابتسامة” /ibtisāmah/ (smile), she says “بهرحت حيث انتظر...” /birawḥin tawwäqatin lil-farah/ (with a spirit eager to be happy). The same is true in her “انتظر...” /?intidžär/ (waiting), she says “ما زال يضل انسي....” /min rimālin-tidžārik/ (from the sands of waiting for you). Also, in her “تتعب – ضياع” /ta3ab – dayā3/ (fatigue, loss) and others, she follows in the same style. However, sometimes, she uses uncommon passive participle. For instance, in her “انتظر...” /?intidžär/ (waiting), she says “كسكككك خلفتني بسككككtokens” /wa Xallafatnī bayna sa3ätī kasīrah/ (and she left me broken with my clocks) where the passive participle “كسكككك” /kasīrah/ (broken) is used instead of the commonly used one; “كسكككك مكسورة” /maksūrah/ on the meter “فاعل” /maf3ūl/. She, also, may use foreign or borrowed words. In her “متمت” /mäma/ which is not Arabic, Arabicized to mean “أمي” /?ummi/ (my mother).

**Group D**

A common feature of the texts in this group is that Hammouda begins with nouns when she describes or makes a statement. For instance, in her “إياها” /ya?s/ (despair), she says “نفسي التي “يأس” /nafsī ?allati džanantu/ (I myself who thought), and her “بارق آمل” /bäriqu ?amal/ (glimmer of hope) she uses no verbs at all. Yet, the use of verbs dominates most of her works. For instance, in her “لوحة” /lawa3ah/ (grief), she uses the verbs “أخبر حكت...” /aXbirūha – saya3ūd – Xālafat – ta3attarāt – halla – ya3id/ (tell her, he will come back, she breached, she wore a perfume, he settled, he promises). She, also, uses interrogative style as in her “هل نحن “على قيد الحياة؟” /wa hal nahnu 3alā qaydil-hayāh/ (are we alive?).

The morphological analysis of each group indicates clearly that each author has a unique way of forming and building up and forming the words. The letter information/mapping and morphological structures/patterns of each author can thus serve as distinctive linguistic stylometric features that can be usefully used for determining the authors of very short texts in Arabic, as seen in the case of the selected flash fiction stories chosen for this study. Furthermore, given the accuracy of the proposed system, we can argue that linguistic stylometric studies (including authorship systems) should consider the peculiar nature of Arabic morphology.

6. **Conclusion**

To address the problems with authorship attribution in very short texts in Arabic and more specifically flash fiction, this study proposed a linguistic stylometric approach that considers the morphological patterns and word combinations. Results indicate clearly that morphological
information can be usefully used for improving the performance of authorship attribution and detection in Arabic texts due to the unique stylistic features of the affixation processes in Arabic. Controversial texts in Arabic can thus be assigned to their authors based on detecting stable morphological patterns with reliable authorship performance. Although the proposed system was tested only on literary texts written in Standard Arabic, the implications of the study can be usefully used for the authorship problems in other text genres including emails, newsgroup messages, Facebook posts, and tweets as well as different Arabic varieties which still represent a real challenge for the practical applications of author identification.

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Effects of Learning Culture on English-Language Learning for Saudi EFL Students

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Abstract
This quantitative study aimed to investigate the influence of incorporating English-culture learning into English-language learning by observing the perspectives of Saudi EFL learners. It illustrated if there is an effect of learning culture on English language competence to the students of Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University. The study’s methodology included a questionnaire administered to 70 undergraduate female students in the English department at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia. Results show that Saudi students recognized that culture and language are related to each other and the learning process cannot be fully realized without consideration of both aspects. Moreover, the study found that learning the English language with its corresponding cultural elements will enhance the speed and enjoyment of Saudi students’ learning process. Furthermore, the study demonstrates that learning a foreign language not only involves studying syntactic structures or learning new vocabularies, but also should incorporate some cultural elements. From Saudi students' point of view, the only difficulty that might face them is the differences between Arabic and English cultures. Finally, this study recommends that further research can investigate the effect of culture on learning from the teachers’ point of view.

Keywords: English foreign language (EFL), Language integrating, incorporation, intercultural communication, Saudi students

1. Introduction

The study of foreign languages globally and particularly in Saudi Arabia seldom incorporates cultural aspects of the target (i.e., international) language. Although many researchers argue that culture cannot be separated from language, most such second-language learning programs are concerned more with teaching the language rather than the culture. Because of this deficiency, learners are prevented from fully understanding the foreign language as a native speaker. In sum, foreign language learning not only means learning the language but also learning its cultural background (Atkinson, 1999; Diaz & Boynton, 1995).

Cultural aspects of a language include knowledge, clothing, and habits of people living in a particular society in which the language is spoken. Culture has a significant effect on the language and how people use it. Therefore, it is crucial for students to understand the target culture in order to learn the foreign language (Zhan, 2016). It has been found that teachers should encourage their students to relate their language with the real-life situations in order to use the target language adequately.

Since one aim of teaching a foreign language is to develop cultural knowledge and to understand the latter’s effect on communication, learners who are learning English as a foreign language need to have cultural awareness in order to build proficiency in intercultural communication of the target language. Jokikokko (2005) argues that having an appropriate intercultural competence helps learners to identify even the non-verbal signs of the target language, such as gestures and codes. Thus, understanding the culture underpinning the English language allows English as a foreign language (EFL) learners to communicate appropriately with native speakers.

Many previous studies have explained the importance of incorporating the culture with the foreign language in language-learning classrooms (e.g., Cunico, 2005; LaBelle, 2000; Torii-Williams, 2004). Because English-language teaching is an essential element in Saudi higher education, and learning the culture is significant in facilitating the language-learning process, there is a demand for research in the area of integrating culture with learning English language in the university level.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The current study sought to investigate the perspectives of Saudi students as EFL learners in English department on the effect of incorporating cultural learning with their English language learning. The results provide essential information about integrating the culture with learning English in Saudi universities. In particular, the results support the aim of the study to transfer the data to university instructors so they may become aware of the importance of teaching the target culture along with teaching the English language.

1.2 Research Questions

The present study aimed to investigate the influence of incorporating English-language culture learning into English language learning. Moreover, the study used a questionnaire for its in-depth analysis of Saudi EFL students’ perception about culture and language learning in a Saudi context. Thus, this study aimed to
identify EFL learners’ views about learning the English culture in addition to the English language and sought to do so by addressing the following research questions:

1. Is there any effect of learning culture on English language competence to the students of Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University?
2. How do Saudi EFL learners in Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University perceive the importance of integrating English-language culture into English-language learning?
3. What are the SAU Saudi EFL students’ difficulties when incorporating English-language culture into English-language learning?
4. What pedagogical implications can be drawn from the results?

2. Literature Review
2.1 Culture

Culture can be defined as a set of norms, traditions, art, ethics, beliefs, knowledge, laws, and other habits (Tylor, 1958). Tylor (1958) explains it is essential that persons acquire culture in the same society. This includes visible features, such as food and clothes, as well as invisible ones such as thoughts, attitudes, and knowledge (Williams, 1985).

Culture involves both cognitive and affective behavior. It has a pronounced effect on people’s attitudes and in turn it has a significant influence on practical aspects of people’s lives, such as their hobbies. In short, it is a kind of habit that people practice as their traditions (Kuo & Lai, 2006).

Kuo and Lai (2006) argued that without understanding the culture, you couldn’t understand the life around you. Culture is essential in developing our society and building relationships with other people. If we do not appreciate it, we will lose it directly.

2.2 The Relationship between Culture and English-Language Learning

Culture cannot be separated from language. They are intertwined, and they affect each other (Kuo & Lai, 2006). Kuo and Lai (2006) affirm that cultural learning and linguistic knowledge are essential elements in achieving success, whether inside or outside the classroom.

The National Standards for Foreign Language Education Project (1996) found that students cannot learn a new language accurately until they have mastered the culture of that language. This explains that cultural understanding is needed to achieve a high level of foreign language proficiency. Singhal (1997) similarly indicated that foreign language learning couldn’t be completed if cultural learning is neglected; she argued that teaching culture to students is vital and it furnishes a sophisticated context for learners to use the language.

Kramsch (1993) stress the significance of context in foreign cultural instruction. Teachers should not only provide explanations of the linguistic aspects but should also illustrate language usage with various examples. It is important that learners of foreign languages must become foreign culture learners as well. Thus, in the foreign language classroom, we cannot split learning activities and cultural influence from what is learned (Scovel, 1991).
Gobel’s (2010) study showed that Japanese EFL students were more concerned to learn the relationships between English language and culture. Gobel states that EFL Japanese classes must include information about the culture of the foreign language and suggested that EFL Japanese teachers should have good knowledge about the culture of English language to use it ideally in their classes.

It has been postulated that EFL learners have difficulty in using the foreign-language knowledge appropriately in different situations, even if they have acquired an adequate amount of cultural awareness. This is because of their lack of foreign culture realization. Alsamani’s study (2014) investigated the cultural features that needed to be incorporated in Saudi EFL classrooms. Alsamani used a Culture-Awareness Diagnostic Test and a Culture-Awareness Needs Assessment Questionnaire to examine students’ attitudes. The study's findings revealed that there is a strong need for the students to learn about the target culture, and the students showed a great interest in learning about English culture and its people. Eventually, it is recommended that EFL education programs should include culture in their classrooms.

Moreover, Brdarić (2016) confirms that teaching culture is necessary to be included in EFL classrooms due to the goal of teaching a foreign language is intercultural communicative competence (ICC). The study investigated the incorporation of culture into the Croatian National Curriculum at the secondary school level and the EFL classroom. It analyzed the textbooks and determined the views of teachers of English on ICC in language teaching and clarified whether their educating is in consistence with the Croatian National Curriculum. The results illustrate that EFL teachers perceive the importance of foreign language teaching; however, there is still no complete coherence of the results given in the Croatian National Curriculum and what instructors promote in their school practice.

2.3 Difficulties Integrating English Culture in English Learning

The more you use the culture in teaching and learning, the more difficult it becomes. One challenge is that there is no single national culture. We can see people belong to any number of cultural groupings (e.g., gender, social class, work status) and there is a failure to identify this to a stable group of stereotypes (Choudhury 2013).

Choudhury (2013) claims that the difficulty facing teachers is how they can protect their students from being influenced by the target culture and losing their own identity. To avoid such a problem, students should be encouraged to learn the similarities between their culture and the target culture to reach a common comprehension.

2.4 Strategies for Teaching the Target Language Culture

Language learning strategies are the techniques and approaches that language learners use to learn the second language. The effective use of strategy leads to higher achievement of language fluency (Ellis, 1997).

Different strategies have been used for teaching cultures—such as drama, social media, and games. Krashen (1999) promoted observations through movies and other authentic materials that are used to teach culture. Similarly, Kovacs (2017) argues that more concentration must be placed
on the activities dealing with culture inside the classroom such as TV shows, films, news broadcasts and other authentic materials that are useful to introduce culture. To combine culture and language learning, teachers can use skills-oriented and learner-centered approach. Presentations and role-play activities also are used to teach culture if they are about traditions and customs of the second-language culture. These kinds of strategies change the learning situation from one in which students learn grammar and vocabulary to one that reflects the natural use of language by its native speakers (Dema & Möller, 2012).

In addition to its visible effect in changing our social life, the use of technology has a significant influence on the ways of teaching and learning. Technology allows teachers the opportunity to create more effective teaching materials for learning the language and language culture. One of the alluring benefits of technology is that it provides authentic communication in an interactive environment that facilitates the teaching of culture (Lee, 2009).

3 Methodology

The primary aim of this study was to investigate the effect of incorporating English-culture learning into English-language learning by observing the perspectives of Saudi EFL learners. This is a quantitative study for which a questionnaire was used as an instrument for collecting data. It was designed in a paper-based format. This study is descriptive, and the method of analysis is statistical analysis where the SPSS version 22.0 is employed. The participants are selected carefully based on their English proficiency. That is why the students of sixth, seventh and eighth levels are suitable for this study.

3.1 Participants

This study was conducted in Fall semester 2018-2019 at Prince Sattam University’s College of Science and Human Studies in Hotat Bani Tamim, Saudi Arabia. The participants in the study comprised 70 undergraduate female students. The age of the participants ranged between 20 and 22 years. They are at sixth, seventh, and eighth levels in third and fourth year.

3.2 Instrument

3.2.1 questionnaire

The questionnaire was distributed to the participants and was treated anonymously to provide the opportunity for them to express their attitudes toward the effects of learning culture on learning the foreign language for EFL Saudi students. The questionnaire was designed with a 5-point scale (strongly agree/agree/neutral/disagree/strongly disagree). It was divided into two sections: the first section included demographic factors to provide further insights of students’ profiles (each student’s name was optional) and level. The second section included 10 statements related to the main dimensions of the study, and was divided into four further subsections: (a) the effect of learning culture on English language competence, included two statements; (b) the importance of integrating English language culture into English learning, which included four items; (c) the difficulties of incorporating English language culture into English learning, that consisted of two statements; and (d) teaching culture for EFL students, included two items.
3.2.2 reliability
Reliability reflects the degree to which an evaluation procedure gives consistent results each time it is analyzed. The reliability of the questionnaire was established by using Cronbach’s alpha as a measure of consistency coefficient. The Cronbach’s alpha of all the questionnaire’s dimensions was 0.768. Accordingly, it was adequately designed for the participants and reliable overall.

3.2.3 validity
To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, it was piloted, and some minor changes were made based on the suggestions of the reviewers. However, the two professors agreed that the questionnaire was valid and well-planned for measuring what it was designed for.

4. Results and Discussion
4.1 Results Related to the Sample of the Study

Table 1. Level of the Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Participants</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Valid 8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
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<td>28</td>
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<td>40.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows that 28 of the students, representing 40% of the sample, are from level 6, while 20 of the students, representing 28.6% of the sample, are from level 7. The other 22 students, representing 31.4% of the sample, are from level 8. Sargeant (2012) noted that the subject sampled must be varied to have the ability to deliver critical facts about the topic being studied.

4.2 Results Related to the Questions of the Study
To identify the influence of integrating English language culture learning into English language instruction, the researchers have calculated percentages and frequencies for the respondents of the sample. The results are illustrated in the following tables.

Question 1: Is there any effect of learning culture on English language competence to the students of Prince Sattam University?

Table 2. I Prefer to Learn English Culture While Learning English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid Neutral</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>78.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 shows that most of the respondents preferred to learn English culture while learning the English language. It illustrates that 57.1% agree and 21.4% strongly agree, while 15.7% disagree and 5.7% are neutral. It presents that most students who answered this statement started to realize that it is necessary to learn culture to achieve successful foreign language learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>62.9</td>
<td>84.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Understanding the nature of the relationship between language and culture is central to the process of learning a foreign language. Kuo and Lai (2006) argue that knowing the forms of language are not only the way for conveying the meaning; so is the cultural context that creates the sense. The relationship between culture and learning foreign language should be taught in the classroom and merged into EFL teaching. Therefore, Table 3 shows that 78.6% have learned the English culture while learning English language, and they confirmed the idea that they cannot determine the language without learning its culture. On the other hand, 8.5% haven’t learned the culture with language.

Overall, the main finding of the previous discussion is that the respondents recognized that there is a noticeable effect of learning the culture on their English language competence. This confirms that learners of foreign language can’t communicate thoroughly with native speakers unless they master the cultural context. Thus, cultural instruction enhances learners’ communicative competence and motivates them to be familiar with international society from English-language culture instruction (Sung & Chen 2009).

**Question 2: How Saudi EFL learners perceive the importance of integrating English-language culture into English learning?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>75.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Language is not only sending or receiving linguistic items but also has a social function in a cultural context. Therefore, Table 4 shows that 24.3% agree and 64.3% strongly agree, while
8.6% disagree with the importance of learning the culture besides learning the language. Scovel (1991) noted that students couldn’t master the language entirely unless they master the cultural context in which it operates; therefore, teaching culture is necessary for foreign language learning.

Table 5. Learning English Culture Makes the Learning Process More Enjoyable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid Neutral</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>61.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the importance of integrating culture with the language learning process, as shown in Table 5, 47.1% agree, and 38.6% strongly agree with the idea that learning culture reinforces the enjoyment of the learning process. However, 7.1% of the respondents disagree, and 7.1% are neutral with this issue. This proves that English-language cultural learning broadens the students’ international perspectives. Moreover, students will be interested incorporating the words of the language with the costumes of people using that language (Sung & Chen, 2009).

Table 6. Learning English Culture Helps Me to Learn English Quickly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Today, students’ English proficiency is becoming more critical in our universities. One thing that facilitates the quickness of English leaning is to learn more about English-language cultures. Therefore, Table 6 above shows that 78.6% of the students agree and strongly agree, whereas 7.1% disagree, 2.9% strongly disagree, and 11.4% are neutral. Tsou (2005) says that learning culture inside the classroom may help increase the level of students’ motivation toward learning the English language quickly.
Table 7. Learning English Culture Helps Me to Learn the English Language Effectively

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid Neutral</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>74.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 shows that 25.7% of the respondents strongly agree and 51.4% agree with the statement, but 8.6% disagree, 2.9% strongly disagree, and 11.4% are neutral with this idea. Results clearly show that cultural knowledge is a pivotal in attaining linguistic proficiency. Learning English culture is beneficial for the learners to learn English language and practice that language in confidence with native speakers inside or outside their countries.

After all, culture and language are intertwined, and one effects the other. The more cultural concepts the learners learn, the more language abilities they gain. Effectiveness, quickness, and enjoyment are essential aspects in integrating learning culture with learning the English language for EFL Saudi learners.

**Question3: What are the Saudi EFL students’ difficulties in incorporating English language culture into English learning?**

Table 8. Learning English Culture Is Difficult for Me

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid Neutral</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>64.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>25.7</td>
<td>90.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 8 shows that 44.3% disagree and 5.7% strongly disagree with the difficulty of learning English culture. On the other hand, 25.7% and 10% of participants agree and strongly agree with the statement, respectively. This result illustrates that students mostly don't find difficulty in learning English culture. Sung and Chen (2009) argue that merging language with its culture will facilitate the learning process and enable the learners to communicate easily with native speakers.
Table 9. The Differences Between Arabic and English Culture Make It Difficult to Learn

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid Neutral</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>34.3</td>
<td>84.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The differences between Arabic and English culture always create difficulty in learning English culture. Table 9 illustrates that 34.3% agree and 15.7% strongly agree with this statement. However, 27.1% disagree, and 8.6% strongly disagree. This proves that the differences between English and Arabic culture make it difficult for students to learn.

Overall, the results show that students mostly don't find difficulty in learning English culture. However, it shows that the differences between English and Arabic culture make it difficult for students to learn the language. Choudhury (2013) claims that the difficulty facing teachers is how they can protect their students from being influenced by the target culture and losing their own identity. Thus, the challenge lies in how to handle both languages with their cultures without losing the native one. Both students and teachers must follow a correct way in integrating the culture with the language to avoid such difficult.

Question 4: What pedagogical implications can be drawn from the results?

In relation to the pedagogical implications that can be drawn from the study, the researchers have calculated percentages for participants responses of the statements “Using cultural items such as films, websites, and magazines are good ways for learning culture” and “Teaching culture should become an integral part of foreign language instruction.” The results are illustrated in the following tables:

Table 10. Using Cultural Items Such as Films, Websites, and Magazines Are Good Ways for Learning Culture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid Neutral</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>47.1</td>
<td>58.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>41.4</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10 shows that the majority of participants agree with the statement “Using cultural items such as films, websites, and magazines are good ways for learning the culture.” Results shown in Table 10 are 47% agree, and 41% strongly agree, while just 4.3% disagree and 1.4% strongly disagree. Besides, 5.7% were neutral. This result proves that the use of media and the internet are useful in learning the culture. Students can use electronic items such as films and websites to learn from.

Table 11. Teaching Culture Should Become an Integral Part of Foreign Language Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Valid Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid Neutral</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>75.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strongly agree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the statement shown in Table 11 indicate that 54% agree and 24% strongly agree. However, 11.4% disagree and 1.4% strongly disagree with the statement, while 8.6% of the participants were neutral. This shows that teaching culture should be treated as a basic course in foreign language instruction.

We can conclude that teaching culture is an integral part of the process of foreign language instruction. Also, the use of visual media and the internet are very beneficial in teaching and learning the culture. Krashen (1999) encouraged teachers to use different strategies such as media, and drama and he emphasized that technology is useful in facilitating learning the culture with the language inside the classrooms.

5. Conclusion
5.1 Summary of Findings

Regarding the effect of learning culture on English language competence, the results show that learning culture is necessary for achieving successful foreign language learning. Saudi students recognized that culture and language are intricately entwined so that one cannot separate the two without losing the significance of either language or culture. If any either one of them is separated, the other remains incomplete. Thus, in EFL classrooms, students should be taught English with the cultural competence so that the students can acquire the target language with cultural background and correspond in real-life situations (Sung & Chen, 2009).

The results of the current study also confirm that effectiveness, quickness, and enjoyment are significant features in integrating learning culture with learning the English language for Saudi EFL learners. This emphasizes that if Saudi learners relate the English words with the costumes of the English language, they will learn the words quickly with an enjoyable mood.
Moreover, the findings of this study suggest that the majority of Saudi students don’t have any difficulty in learning English culture. However, they confirm that the differences between Arabic and English culture might cause some problems to them in mastering the target culture. Therefore, culture in teaching and learning English as a foreign language must be involved perfectly. Technology and media are useful strategies in learning English culture with the English language.

5.2 Pedagogical and Research Recommendations

Based on the main results, the following pedagogical recommendations can be made:

1. In addition to the verbal aspects of communication, non-verbal clues of communication should be incorporated into EFL classrooms. Teachers should train students to be alert to the cultural context in both verbal and non-verbal communication. Some practical introduction of varieties of non-verbal clues would be beneficial.

2. Since students will need contact with a variety of cultures with English as the primary medium, it is very imperative for them to develop an awareness of the other cultures and, at the same time, develop a cognitive knowledge of their own culture. To do so, materials need to be included as many cultural perspectives as possible rather than only introducing American or British perspectives as a model.

3. Learning the second language depends not only on students, but also on teachers, their knowledge about the culture of the second language, and the way that they use it in teaching the second language. It is essential that while giving the cultural background knowledge, teachers should learn enough before teaching, and they should know politics, economics, geography, history, art, religion, literature, and other aspects of social life.

4. Also, teachers should learn the everyday language, idiom, and proverbs because they reflect the culture behind the language. They can get this knowledge by reading books, movies, literature, communicating with foreign friends, and so on. Moreover, teachers should not only introduce cultural knowledge but also compare the difference between the two languages. Thus, students can learn the foreign culture clearer.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the review of the literature and the findings of the present study, the following recommendations can be made:

1. In this current study, a questionnaire was used to collect data. Further research can use different instruments to measure the effect of learning the culture on learning the foreign language. Interview and case study can be used to instigate the result of the questions more effectively.

2. This study was conducted on a small number of EFL students; further studies need to be done on a larger number of students with different language proficiencies and from different academic levels.

3. This study aimed to investigate the effect of learning culture on learning a foreign language from students' points of view; further studies can investigate the impact of learning culture on learning foreign language from teachers' points of view.
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The Important Role of Teachers’ Feedback during Speaking Activities in Moroccan Classes

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Abstract
Throughout the teaching/learning process of speaking, a teacher’s role is believed to hold great importance. Teachers initiate learners to the whole learning process, and their feedback constitutes the significant step forward that triggers learners towards enunciating a language. As an illustration, Swain (1985, 2000) uses empirical evidence to show the importance of teacher’s feedback during the production of speaking. Relatable to feedback during oral activity are issues that highlight teachers’ pronunciation, fluency, body language, facial expressions, and error correction during the production phase. To identify these areas, the current article used students’ questionnaires. The general aim is to gauge learners’ perceptions, practices and problems. Results highlight the pivotal teachers’ role in the whole process. Therefore, the specific aim of this study is to investigate the role of teachers’ feedback during speaking activities in Moroccan classes. Results show that interaction enhancement and negotiation density do indeed establish the interconnection between accuracy and fluency. Some speech strategists and specialists have already demonstrated how instruction and the way teachers provide feedback do play a major role in learners’ speaking skills including the need for a contrary evidence.

Key words: feedback, learners’ perceptions, Moroccan classes, speaking activity, teachers’ role

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1. Empirical studies on teachers’ feedback

It is with the introduction of Swain’s concept of ‘comprehensible output’ that the idea of ‘being pushed up’ has paved the way for more research on the area of teacher-student feedback. Swain (2008, pp. 471-484) reports Mackey’s (2002) experiment, which showed that students’ perception of being pushed is highest when the feedback comes from the teacher. Reporting Mackey’s findings in that area, Swain registers that the fact that learners received teachers’ feedback made the students establish modifications to suit their interlocutors with varying degrees according to the setting, type of interaction and whether they interact with native speakers or non-native speakers.

Taking into account these findings, Swain, (2008) concludes that: “the students’ perception of being ‘pushed’ is ‘highest’ when the feedback comes from the teacher and that it is ‘least’ when it comes from a nonnative speaking peer”. (p. 473) These empirical findings show the importance of teachers’ feedback in the classroom in pushing students to make more repair or modification in their speaking which results in fluency and density of negotiation.

Joining this idea, Williams (2008, pp. 684-691) points out that the main virtue of negotiation is focused on both form and meaning or the establishment of the form-meaning connection. She refers to the distinction set by Lyster (1998) between the mediation of purpose and the negotiation of form. The latter is usually initiated by the teacher and in this case message comprehensibility is not the problem, instead it is the different forms of feedback on an error in message form. However, this implies that the negotiation of style is a problematic process. Practically, teachers’ input on message form is of utmost significance for students who need contrary evidence to correct their errors in the form, which helps them establish the link with the meaning.

Correspondingly, an important issue concerning the validity of teachers’ rectifications of the errors learners make is at hand. Williams argues that not all errors pointed out by teachers will be rectified or at least recognized as such by learners. Lyster and Ranta (1997), as William reports, distinguish among various types of feedback. On the other hand, Murano (2000), as Williams explains, suggests a particular feedback technique to help increase accuracy. It is described as a “pedagogical technique that interconnects input and output enhancement”, Williams, (2008) explains this technique as follows:

…. in response to TL (teacher language) use, the teacher repeated learners’ output, helping to confirm learners’ hypotheses. In response to non-target like output, the teacher requested repetition, and if necessary, recast learner output. Murano found this technique effective in increasing accuracy… (p. 685)

Like Swain, Williams also holds that “modifications of learner output toward the target language by the intervention of an interlocutor/teacher” are effective as a method of providing concentrated feedback on form. She calls them ‘recasts’ and qualifies them as ‘a subset of feedback’ (p.685). According to Williams, this is true either in experimental studies (Braidi, 2002; Mackey & Philip, 1998; Long, & Robinson, 1998; Ortega, 1999), or in classroom studies (Ayoun, 2001; Doughty & Varela, 1998).
These experimental studies, according to Williams, show the efficiency of recasts and interaction enhancement used by teachers. The teachers did not just reformulate the utterance but also used “emphatic and rising intonation in their repetition of the learner error” (p.685), highlighting thus the learners’ error before providing the accurate forms, which made their feedback less ambiguous.

In an attempt to establish a compromise or a link between form and meaning and basing her argument on a FonF (Focus on Form) approach to language, Williams (2008, p. 686) adheres to the belief that learners need to recognize the gap between their production and the teachers’ language. To do that, they have to notice the teachers’ response as being corrective increasing, therefore, their need for a clearly signaled contrary evidence. Based on the above-mentioned studies, this becomes absolutely crucial to speaking situations in second language (L2) classes.

2. Research Question
Basing on above-evoked studies, the current article investigates the important role of teachers’ feedback in an attempt to answer the following research question: “What are students’ responses and perceptions about teachers’ role and feedback in Moroccan secondary school classes?”

3. Methodology
In the human sciences, in addition to pure experimental research, many adaptations of exploratory models, called quasi-experimental, non-experimental or diverse designs have been developed. The nature of the present article required the adoption of a mixed design. Thus, two hundred (200) students’ questionnaires have been issued. The students’ questionnaire was used to attempt at gauging learners’ perceptions, practices and problems. This is done through multiple assumptions that need to be tested using statistical analysis basing on SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

For quantitative data analysis, since chi-square test is a statistical test commonly used to compare observed data with expected data, it is used to test the Goodness-Of-Fit (Macfarland, 1998) for the multiple hypotheses. The Chi-Square tests do imply and are analyzed through:

- (a) Determining the chi-square value to see whether it is received by mere chance or that other factors do interfere. The chi-square value represents the degree of interference, so the higher the cost, the higher the degree of obstruction.
- (b) Determining the critical p value (the percent probability divided by 100) that a specific chi-square value was obtained by chance alone. In studies similar to the present one, the p-value means the probability that the observed results deviate from the expected results due to random variation in the sampling process.

Concerning the significance level, the present study has set a .05 p level. Therefore, all levels found less than this level < .05 are reported significant, and those beyond that level > .05 are reported insignificant.
4. Students’ sample

The students chosen as a sample for this study come from different schools in the academy of Rabat-Salé-Zemmour-Zaer area and belong to three different educational levels including common core, first year and second-year baccalaureate. Taking into account the fact that the new sub-categorization of programs includes fourteen branches, the sample has been selected from the two broadest ones, namely literary and science without specific sub-categorization of the two.

The sample included both male and female students covering age categories ranging from 15 to 21 years. The following table shows information related to the learners’ number, gender, educational level and age range in more detail.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational level/profile</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Age range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common core literary</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common core science</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First year science Bac</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First year literary Bac</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second year science Bac</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second year literary Bac</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Approximately an equal gender proportion is reported in the current research paper. The group is composed of (104) females versus (96) males. The reason behind this situation is a remarkable higher/growing rate of female presence in the secondary as has been registered. The table also shows that a right proportion of learners’ age category is fixed at sixteen to seventeen years (60.5%) totaling 33% aged 16 and 27.5% aged 17. A growing population (20.5%) of students aged just 15 is recognized while the least age category proportion is aged 20 to 21 with a percentage estimated at only (2.5%).

All three secondary educational levels have contributed to this research, as table (1) demonstrates. Since oral activity is a long process that needs to be improved through both knowledge building and skill-building, samples from all three levels have been represented. This was done to engage learners who have developed several observations throughout their learning process including all levels. Finally, on the whole, both science and literary students have been represented in this research with approximately equal student frequency proportions (science= 97; literary= 103)
5. Results on Students’ responses on teachers’ role and feedback
The following tables report results related to students’ perceptions of teachers’ role and feedback during a speaking activity in its multi-task dimension. This part includes students’ perceptions of their teachers’ characteristics, including language use, behavior towards students’ mistakes, use of praising or rewards, etc. as shown below. The following table is a compilation from the different chi-square tests run on this item of students’ questionnaire. It consists of the different values registered throughout:

Table 2. Students’ responses on teachers’ role and feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>q</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. T fluent speaker</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. T pronunciation is good.</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Teaches you how English words are pronounced</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. T makes you listen to native speakers or meet them</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. T teaches you how to pronounce new words in English</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. T facial expressions/ body gestures user</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>776</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. T prompter</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. T explainer of unfamiliar words</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. T interrupter (to correct your mistakes)</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. T uses St names and pays attention</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. T is always at the center of the activity</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. T encourages you to talk even when you make mistakes</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. T pays attention to the best students only</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. T does not give much time to spk skills</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. T laughs at St spk</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. T praises or rewards St who talk</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. T helps you spk</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>788</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Students’ perceptions of teachers’ role and feedback reveal highly significant values related to pronunciation. As items 2, 3, five show, estimations of students’ perceptions record that teachers do pronounce English well and do initiate students to how words are marked with a p high value (.000) obtained for all these items. On the other hand, the top p values obtained (p=.000) along with their corresponding high q values emphasize the pivotal role teachers play during speaking activities. This is particularly true concerning positive reinforcement (q=788), non-verbal communication (q= 776) and prompting (q=788).

Very significant results also relate to teachers’ feedback on errors. Therefore, students believe teachers do help them speak (q=780), use their names (q=788), do not interrupt them to correct their mistakes (q=780) and do encourage them to talk even when they commit mistakes (q=780).

6. Discussion and pedagogical implications

Both the quantitative and the qualitative findings pinpoint to teachers’ role as being highly significant regardless of how long they have been teaching. In sum, for teaching experience particularly, hypotheses related to waiting time instruction and thanking have registered slightly higher deviations for the less than ten years of teaching experience. Given these results, further investigation of this issue involving more extensive samples of teachers should be conducted in the Moroccan English as a foreign language (EFL) classes.

It is essential, however, to mention that results linked to the initial RQ (research question) and regardless of teaching experience have corroborated other findings showing the importance of the teachers’ role given the high significance values obtained for both quantitative and qualitative results. All items relating to the teacher’s role, particularly in the area of feedback have registered high significance repeatedly. These results match with those of previous research on this issue.

Thus, Swain’s findings concerning French immersion learners, for instance, revealed the same importance for teachers’ role. For Swain (1985, 2000, 2008), it is output that pushes learners to process language more deeply. She uses the concept of ‘comprehensible output’, which implies the underlying idea of ‘pushing up’ learners to produce more output through negotiation. A question worth raising here is: “to what extent can the present study results corroborate Swain’s notion of comprehensible output?” Answer to this question needs further research in the area of teacher-student feedback or interaction in the Moroccan EFL context.

An attempt to reply to this question through the findings in the present study will necessitate grounding argument on Swain’s investigation (2008:471-484) Swain reports Mackey’s (2002) empirical findings which retained that students’ perception of being pushed is highest when the feedback comes from the teacher. Swain, in this instance, advocates the necessity to push learners to produce messages that are not only coherent and appropriate but also linguistically correct. The
relevance of these results to the present study refer to both appropriateness and accuracy. In the same respect, the Moroccan learners included in the current research have identified form-negotiation as one of the factors impacting the speaking skill at the level of repair more particularly.

Henceforth, the pertinence to Swain’s findings is undeniable especially as she registers that learners receiving teachers’ feedback or what she identifies as being pushed up made the students bring modifications to suit their interlocutors with varying degrees according to the setting, the type of interaction and whether they interact with native or nonnative speakers. More clearly, research on this area may refer to peer correction during repair more particularly. Swain retained that “the students’ perception of being pushed is highest when the feedback comes from the teacher her/himself and that it is least when it comes from a nonnative speaking peer.”

7. Conclusion

These empirical findings emphasize the importance of teachers’ feedback in the classroom in pushing students to make more repair or modifications in their vocal performance, which results in a density of negotiation.

In conclusion, current article shows the pertinence of teachers’ feedback in the classroom particularly when pushing students to make modifications in their responses. This results in improving performance and intensifying negotiation

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References


Involve Me, and I Learn: Preparing English Language Intensive Program Students to the Demands of their Academic Programs

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Abstract
This study aims to identify Saudi English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' perspectives towards using the English language in their studies. The study explores students self-confident and its association with students' actual performance in English course in their different academic programs. A multimodal methodology was used to fulfill the research purpose and answer the research questions. A 25-item survey questionnaire and final examination grades were used to collect data. Two hundred forty-one students agreed to participate in the study. They completed the questionnaire and agreed to release their final grades to be a part of the collected data. The data were coded and analyzed by SPSS software. The findings indicated a significant difference in students' performance in English courses between participants' academic programs on the one hand. Students' self-confidence in their English language skills, on the other hand, was not significantly different between participants' academic programs. Data analysis also revealed no correlational relationship between students' self-confidence level and their language skills and their performance. The study raises more questions about other vital factors such as course instructors' views of the materials, faculty members of the target department, family belief in the usefulness of the program, protentional employers. These views and beliefs shape the student's preparation process and therefore, should be explored further.

Keywords: English language intensive program, English skills, language proficiency, performance, self-confidence

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Introduction
The government of Saudi Arabia introduced its ambitious 2030 vision to create a healthy, thriving generation within a stable country. The vision consists of three main pillars; a vibrant society; a thriving economy, and an ambitious nation. Education is a vital element to convey the country into the future as introduced in the first and second pillars, vibrant society, and a thriving economy. The vision seeks to reshape the educational system to establish and empowering health and social care systems. That will calibrate to build a vibrant society. Advancing educational system is the second component of the vision to provide university and vocational institutes graduates with the necessary academic discipline knowledge and soft skills (linguistics competence, and communication skills) to obtain rewarding opportunities. That is "the skills and competencies of our students are one of the most important and cherished assets" (Vision 2030, 2016a, p.36).

The Saudi government held focused sessions for identifying national priorities, challenges facing public developmental and economic sectors (Vision 2030, 2016a). The Saudi government developed the National Transformation Program 2020 (NTP 2020) to track the progress towards achieving its short-term goals and concurrently fulfill the 2030 vision aims at a yearly basis (Vision 2030, 2016b). The Ministry of Education identified six threats facing its work and commenced eight immediate objectives for 2020 aligned with the Vision 2030 goals. Enhancing the educational system's capability to address development requirements and labor market demands are amongst these eight strategic objectives of the Ministry of Education.

Most of Saudi universities graduates attributed their lack of employment to low English proficiency and lack of communication skills. Recent IELTS and TOEFL standardized exam results revealed the weak performance of Saudi graduates in all professions. The private sector companies reported low English Proficiency levels and limitations in their employees' abilities to exchange information, read instructions, and to resolve conflicts in the workplace context (Kermode, 2017).

Research demonstrates a growing need for graduates with higher English skills (Benzie, 2010; Burdett & Crossman, 2010; Thomas, Piquette & McMaster, 2016). This study is an exploratory in nature, aiming to prepare students to meet the demands of their academic programs. It seeks to identify the extent to which Saudi EFL first-year students are self-confident in their English skills. And how it is enhancing their actual performance in the English course in their various academic programs.

Related studies
The recent decade witnessed surge research exploring using English as a medium of instruction in Non-English instruction universities in Europe and Asia (Macaro, Curle, Pun & Dearden, 2018). Researchers examined the advantages of using English at higher education to achieve Saudi government goals in terms of globalization and internationalization. Also, they investigated students and faculty members perceptions and attitude toward the implementation of English in their institutes. Most of the existing research focused on students' and lecturers' general attitudes toward English courses (Jensen and Thøgersen, 2011); effectiveness of English courses in improving students' English proficiency (Lei & Hu, 2014; Wilkinson, 2013) and the difficulties posed to students and lecturers in learning and teaching courses in English and their respective
coping strategies (Evans & Morrison, 2011). The findings of these studies revealed inconsistency between EFL students in different geographical locations and even within the same country.

For instance, Majid et al. (2011) found that approximately 53% of Malaysian students referred to their lack of interaction with lecturers to their English Low proficiency level. The findings of Beckett and Li (2012) study also indicated no in-depth communication between students and their professors for one side and between the students from the other side in a Chinese university. Beckett and Li attribute that to students' low proficiency level. Another research conducted in the Japanese EFL context revealed the basic English proficiency level among university-level students in Japan. Cho's (2012) study disclosed that Korean students complained of minimal listening skills with some claiming to understand only 60% of their lectures. Another survey by Kang and Park's (2005) examined a large-scale Korean students' sample with heterogenous proficiency levels. The findings indicated that English language proficiency level impact on students' ability to communicate with their peers and instructors; to participate in class discussion and inevitably affects their comprehension of third lectures.

A study conducted in higher education in the Basque region of Spain indicted institutes policy to prevent some students from participating in class discussion. The researchers impute that to students' anxiety "dare" to speak up in English in classes (Doiz, Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2011). These findings congruence with the results of Dalton-Puffer, Huttner, Schindelegger & Smit, (2009) in their study of vocational engineering classes in Austria, which revealed that some students "felt intimidated by having to use English" (p.24).

At the Arabian Gulf region, few studies examined students' perception towards using English at the university level. Saudi EFL student revealed positive attitudes towards using English in the classroom (Shamim, Abdelhalim, & Hamid, 2016). However, the researchers acknowledged several challenges facing Saudi EFL students, mainly due to learners' low proficiency in English and the decent size of the sample. Qatari students also, believed they were learning considerably less well than if they had been studying through Arabic (Ellili-Cherif & Alkhatreeb, 2015).

On the other hand, some researchers have identified students' positive attitudes toward English programs, showing that courses would effectively help in improving their English proficiency (Belhiah & Elhami, 2015). Also, the findings of two studies at the Asian EFL context revealed similar results.

Most of the students in Taiwanese universities perceived an improvement in their English proficiency. This improvement was in receptive skills such as listening but less so in writing ability (Yeh, 2014). A finding similarly reported in Hong Kong (Evans & Morrison 2011) where students expressed confidence and joy via making greater use English.

The review of pertain literature disclosed controversial conclusions towards using English in a university preparatory program from the students' perspective. The findings of these studies encourage the researchers to examine the current phenomena in Saudi EFL context by targeting a large sample of students at their preparatory year in a Saudi university.
Research Questions
This article explores students' perspectives towards using the English language in their studies. The studies aim to answer the following questions:
1. How confident are Saudi EFL students in their English language skills?
2. Are there any significant differences in confidence between disciplinary fields?
3. Does Saudi EFL students' confidence in their English skills correlate with their performance?

Research Design
Study Context
The pivotal course of this study was the English Language for science and engineering. The course was available to 2017-2018 admitted students (freshman) based on their majors' study track (i.e., Engineering, Computer science, science, medicine, applied medical studies, English, and Business). Students are expected to: (a) frequently produce and use expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance; (b) Communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters; (c) Describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background, immediate environment and issues in areas of urgent need; (d) Write short comprehensive paragraphs on general topics, and (e) recognize the formation and meaning of terminology in their academic field (science, computer science, engineering, business, medicine and medical science). The courses were taught for fifteen weeks and 12 teaching hours per week. The students took two-term exams out of 20 during the seventh and eleventh week and, two quizzes out of 10 during the fifth and tenth weeks. Listening and speaking term exams out of 10 are assigned on the thirteens and fourteenth weeks. The remaining ten marks are for assignments and classroom participation. The final exam contains oral exams out of 15 and written exam out of 35. The textbooks used in teaching are presented in Table1.

Table 1. The English Language course teaching hours and textbooks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course</th>
<th>Teaching hours/week</th>
<th>Textbook</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ENG 101</td>
<td>8 hours/week</td>
<td>New Headway Plus Special Edition Student’s Book. Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENG 101</td>
<td>4 hours/week</td>
<td>New Headway Plus Special Edition Workbook. Elementary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants
The researchers contacted the students' academic advisors to encourage the students to participate — more than 3500 students registered in these three courses on the main campus and the three surrounding branches. Invitation emails to participate in the study sent to the students. They were asked to complete an online questionnaire. The students were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary. The email included a summary of the study goals, and the collected information will be confidential and used for the research purpose. Three hundred students answered the questionnaire. The participants were young adults aged between 17 and 19 from various socio-economic backgrounds and different academic programs (Table 2). All the participants had studied English as a foreign language in a public school for six years. Thirty-two students reported they had been studying English abroad, and therefore their answers were excluded from the data coding and analysis. Two hundred forty-one complete questionnaires were
included in the data coding and analysis process. Incomplete questionnaires or those in which the same answer had been chosen for every question, were excluded (54 in total).

Table 2. Participants’ gender and Academic number

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant’s Gender</th>
<th>Participant’s total number</th>
<th>Academic major</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Applied Medical studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Computer Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data collection Instruments and procedures
A multimodal methodology was used to fulfill the research purpose and answer the research questions. These data collection methods included a survey questionnaire and English course final examination.

Survey questionnaire. This research used an online survey for data collection. A 25-items questionnaire, including the Foreign Language Self-confidence Scale (FLSES) developed by Hassan (2001) was used (See the Appendix). The survey explores students’ perceptions of their English language proficiency level (linguistic competence); and communication skills (intercultural competence). The survey embraces three parts. The first parts consist of five questions aiming to solicit students' demographic information (age, gender, academic major, years of studying English in Saudi Arabia and abroad) and permission to collect their English language course final grade. The second part includes self-assessment of confidence in (a) their English skills level, and (b) their communication skills. The third part of the questionnaire was an invitation for the students to participate in a semi-structured interview. The call indicated that their participation is optional, and their identities will always be anonymous, and the collected data will be used for research purposes.

The questionnaire was piloted on a small sample similar to the target population. The analysis process revealed that the questionnaire is Cronbach's alpha coefficient scores of 0.74. The results indicated that all the scales denoted good internal consistency values about the items in the survey instrument in line with the generally accepted standards of social science; that is, above 0.60. The online survey questionnaire was conducted at the end of the 2017-2018 academic year.

English course final examination grades. The participant's results out of 100 were provided by the English program at the end of the 2017-2018 academic year.

Results
The results of the research questions are discussed below in interpreting the students' level of confidence in their English skills and instigate differences in their confidence levels according to
their academic majors. Moreover, finally, students' confidence level influence on their performance in the English course.

**Q1. How confident are students in their English skills?**

The descriptive statistics of the students' confidence revealed slightly positive level with a mean score of the participants was (3.15), and participants' standard deviation was (0.075) Table 3. The analysis reveals that more than half of the student's confidence in their English language skills (52.5%). The remaining students have either neutral confidence in their abilities (24%) or low confidence in their English language skills (22.5%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td>0.075</td>
<td>High (4-5)</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Low (1-2)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further analysis of the data is conducted to reveal the students' confidence level within their academic field (Figure 1). The findings revealed that science and business students have a high confidence level in their English language skills (59.5% and 55.2%), respectively. Applied medical, and medical students, on the contrary, have low confidence in their English skills among the other academic majors (0.48%, 0.42%) respectively. A noticeable percentage of students are neutral as in business, science, and medicine, ranging from 33% in medicine to 17.4% in business.

![Figure 1. Students' confidence level in their language skills based on their Academic majors](image)

**Q2. Are there any significant differences in students' confidence and performance between the Academic programs?**

The descriptive statistics of the students' performance in English course revealed that most of the students (191 students) passed their English courses (79.9%). More than half of the students' sample (53%) lied in the 60s and 70s range of marks (128 students). The analysis also reveals that
the remaining students (65 students) have performed very well in their courses getting As and Bs (27 and 38 students, respectively). Almost one-five of the sample failed, Table 4.

| A (90-100) | 27 | 11.2 |
| B (80-89) | 38 | 15.8 |
| C (70-79) | 50 | 20.7 |
| D (60-69) | 78 | 32.4 |
| F (below 60) | 48 | 19.9 |
| Total | 241 | 100.0 |

A further look at the students' performance data indicated that nine medicine program students' gain the highest marks in English course (37.5%). Computer science students' performance was, on the contrary, the worst (39.1%), respectively, Figure 2.

Figure 2. Students' Performance in English courses based on their Academic majors

The multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVAs) were conducted to test the differences among the academic programs in English skills confidence and performance. The Box's Test of Equality checks the assumption of homogeneity across academic programs. Box's M (18.68) was not significant, p (.539) > (.001), indicating that there are no significant differences between the covariance matrices Table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Box's Test of Equality of Covariance Matrices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Box's M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>df2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Therefore, the assumption is not violated, and Wilk's Lambda is an appropriate test to use. Wilk's $\lambda = 0.84$, $F(12, 466) = 3.58$, $p < .001$. The multivariate $\eta^2 = .084$ indicates that approximately 1% of the multivariate variance of the dependent variables is associated with the academic program's variable, Table 6.

### Table 6. Wilks' Lambda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Programs</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wilks' Lambda</td>
<td>.838</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>12.000</td>
<td>466.000</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.084</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Univariate one-way ANOVAs indicated that performance in English courses was significantly different between participants' academic programs, $F(6, 234) = 4.21$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .1$. However, Students' self-confidence in their English language skills was not significantly difference between participants' academic programs, $F(6, 234) = 3$, $p > .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .07$.

### Table 7. Univariate one-way ANOVAs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>$F$</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Model</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.830</td>
<td>2.991</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>788.873</td>
<td>4.211</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>903.842</td>
<td>705.8</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>493982.2</td>
<td>2637.005</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic programs</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.830</td>
<td>2.991</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>788.873</td>
<td>4.211</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>1.281</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>187.327</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>241</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>241</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Total</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>240</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>240</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Q3. Does Saudi EFL students' confidence in their English skills correlate with their performance?**

The findings in Table 8 show that there is no correlation between students' confidence and performance ($r = -.012$, $p = .86$ and $n = 241$). The findings show no relationship between students' confidence and performance and therefore, not a potential predictor of their performances.

### Table 8. Correlation between students' confidence and performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spearman's rho</th>
<th>Correlation Coefficient</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>-.012</td>
<td>.859</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion and conclusion
The findings of this study explored the self-confidence level of Saudi EFL students in their English Language skills. The results indicated that performance in English courses was significantly different between participants ‘academic programs on the one hand. Students’ self-confidence in their English language skills, on the other hand, was not significantly differing between participants' academic programs. Data analysis also revealed no correlation relationship between students' self-confidence level and their language skills and their performance.

The findings are controversial. On one side, barely consistent with the previous study where more than half of the sample population (128 students) expressed confidence in their English language skills (Evans & Morrison, 2011; Yeh, 2014; Belhiah & Elhami, 2015; Shamim et al., 2016). On the other side, the data revealed students' English skills low proficiency level despite the high self-confidence level that can be seen in the Business students. The findings indicated English language proficiency level impacts on students' ability and inevitably affects their comprehension and performance (Kang & Park, 2005; Dalton-Puffer et al., 2011; Doiz et al., 2011; Majid et al., 2011; Beckett & Li, 2012; Cho, 2012). The study revealed no direct influence of self-confidence on the students' performance.

The modest number of participants, the study findings contribute to our understanding of Saudi EFL self-confidence level and the influence of the academic program on language skills confidence level and their performance despite the lack of association in the current study. The study raises more questions about other vital factors such as course instructors’ views of the materials, faculty members of the target department, family belief in the usefulness of the program, potential employers. These views and beliefs shape the student’s preparation process and therefore, should be explored further.

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References


Appendix

Dear student:

Please read carefully all the statements and kindly, for each statement, choose the option that suits your opinion most using the following scale:

(Strongly Disagree – Disagree – Uncertain – Agree – Strongly disagree)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My ability to learn English is high.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I express myself freely in English.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I have a problem with some grammatical rules when writing in English.</td>
<td>(reversed item)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I participate effectively in English discussions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I can speak English very well.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. My understanding of what others say in English is limited.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I speak English with accents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I have some English reading habits.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I can write very well in English.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I feel good about myself when speaking in English</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. I feel happy when I am with my English classmates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. I can read very well in English.</td>
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<td>13. I don’t feel at ease when I talk to my English instructors</td>
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<td>14. I find difficulty talking in English in front of my classmates</td>
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<td>15. My classmates are better English learners than me</td>
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<td>16. My English instructors have high expectations of me.</td>
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<td>17. My English classmates do not like me.</td>
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<td>18. I can understand English very well.</td>
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<td>19. I am always attentive to my English instructors.</td>
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<td>20. I attend English class sessions on time.</td>
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<td>21. I volunteer myself for any English classroom activities</td>
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<td>22. I miss many English class sessions.</td>
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<td>23. I avoid any discussions in English.</td>
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<td>24. I read for pleasure in English.</td>
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<td>25. I reluctantly participate in English classroom activities.</td>
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An Analysis of the Most Common Essay Writing Errors among EFL Saudi Female Learners (Majmaah University)

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Abstract
This study was conducted to explore and analyze the most common essay writing errors among Saudi female learners at the departments of English, Majmaah University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Therefore, the aim has been to identify those difficulties from an error analysis standpoint and identify the sources underlying them. An analysis of a written corpus of forty students' written essays was thoroughly conducted. Types of errors were categorized, and the factors that contributed to them were analyzed. The participants were English majors in their third year of study enrolled in an advanced writing course during the first term pertinent to the academic year 2018-2019. Three essays were given to each participant to write about two to four pages using the narrative, descriptive, and compare/contrast organization. A writing difficulties questionnaire was further employed. The findings showed that the most frequent types of errors made by the participants were: punctuation errors forming the most troublesome area, followed by spelling errors, preposition errors, article errors, wrong verb tense, wrong word form respectively. The findings suggested that writing in English as a foreign language is quite challenging for students. Interlingual and intralingual transfer was found to be the source underlying the most common errors.

Keywords: English as a foreign language, error analysis, interlingual, intralingual, Saudi learners, writing

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Introduction

Being able to write in (EFL) has been thought of as a critical factor in FL learning and acquisition. EFL writing is a significant area of interest within the field for the following reasons: reinforcement, language development, learning style, and, most importantly, writing as a skill in its own right, just as important as speaking, listening and reading (Harmer, 1998, p.79). Coffin, Curry, Goodman, Hewings, Lillis, and Swann (2003) support the view that reasons for writing include writing as an assessment; as an aid to critical thinking; understanding and memory; extending students’ learning beyond lectures and other formal meetings; improving students’ communication skills; and training them as future professionals in particular disciplines.

Nevertheless, writing has always been difficult and challenging for EFL learners because the writing process includes many issues: the generation and organization of ideas, drafting, revising, and editing. Mozaheb, and Beigi (2012), Alsamadani (2010) as cited in Seifoori, Langan (2005) and Nunan (1989, p.35) assume that "…learning to write fluently and expressively is the most difficult of the macro skills for all language users regardless of whether the language in question is a first, second or foreign language". Furthermore, producing a coherent, cohesive, well-organized piece of writing is a challenging task which is intensified by the fact that the rhetorical conventions of English texts such as the structure, organization, lexis and grammar differ from those in other languages and particularly in Arabic (Leki, 1991 & Santos and Suleiman, 1993 as cited in Ahmed, 2011).

Consequently, errors in writing are unavoidable. Ellis (1997) stated that fossilization of learners’ grammar does not occur in second language (L2) acquisition but is unique in L2 acquisition. Furthermore, one of the headaches that the EFL/ESL teachers might face in classrooms is how to teach writing- particularly nowadays when learners are becoming more and more digital and visual learners.

Research questions

The research aimed to address the following questions: What are the most frequent types of error found in the essays written by EFL University Saudi female learners? Which factors underlie the recurrence of these errors?

The Significance of the research

This study aims to contribute to the growing area of research in error analysis by exploring the most common errors FL learners commit and investigating their sources. The results can yield fundamental insights that could contribute to more beneficial guidance for coursebook designers while developing teaching materials and suggesting teaching methodology. The results can help teachers understand what grammar or any other linguistic aspect is problematic for learners and include them in their teaching. The findings can also be essential in terms of suggesting some possible solutions for the challenges that L2 learners encounter in writing.

Objectives of the research

EFL learners’ errors should be carefully analyzed because they are normal, and they show the progress in the process of learning a language. Thus, the primary objective of this study was to
investigate and analyze the errors repeatedly happening in the participants' written compositions. The second was to identify the sources of the most common errors occurring in their writing.

Review of the literature

Errors versus mistakes

It has been argued that an error and a mistake are not the same. In Brown (2000), a mistake refers to a performance error in that it is a failure to utilize a known system correctly whereas an error is a noticeable deviation from the adult grammar of a native speaker, reflecting the interlanguage competence of the learner. Corder (1967), James (1998) and Norrish (1983) as cited in Hourani (2008) reveal the criterion that: A mistake can be self-corrected, but an error cannot. Errors are 'systematic,' i.e., likely to regularly happen while mistakes are defined as the 'inconsistent deviation.' In agreement with the same view, Brown (2000, p. 170) and Harmer (1983, p.35) as cited in Andrian (2015) explain that a mistake is less serious since it is the retrieval that is faulty, not the knowledge. Gass and Selinker (2008) define errors as 'red flags,' (i.e., warning signals that provide evidence about the knowledge of L2 learners).

Richards (1971) as cited in Andrian (2015) classifies errors as: errors of competence (the result of the application of rules by first language (L1) learner, which do not correspond to the norm of the (L2) and errors of performance (the result of a mistake in language use and manifest themselves as repetition, false starts, corrections or slips of the tongue). James (1998, p.83) defines an error as being an instance of language that is unintentionally deviant and is self-corrigeble; a mistake is either intentionally or unintentionally deviant and is self-corrigeble, however.

Significance of errors

Since making errors is a natural language developmental process, students’ errors are excellent sources for improving both teaching and learning. James (1998) strongly supports Corder's (1967), who indicated that errors are significant in three ways. First, they tell the teachers how far towards the goal the learners have advanced and what remains for them to learn. Second, they provide the researchers with evidence of how language is learned and what strategies the learners are employing. Third, they are indispensable to the learners because making errors can be regarded as a device they use to learn.

Hamada (2008) argues that the learners' errors are no longer considered sins that need to be avoided at all costs. Contrarily, they are seen as indicators that a learning process is going on; therefore, they deserve to be analyzed. Norish (1982) as cited in Hamada (2008) regards errors as positive aids to learning. Errors themselves may even be a necessary part of language learning. Furthermore, the fact that learners do make errors, and that these errors can be observed, analyzed and classified led to a flow of study of learners' errors, called error analysis (Brown, 2007 as cited in Hamada, 2008).

Error analysis

Definition of error analysis

Several researchers have already discussed error analysis from different perspectives. The first to focus attention on the importance of studying learners’ errors was Corder (1967). Corder and Brown (2000) reported that language learners’ errors are important to study because it shows
the state of the learners’ knowledge. Errors (not mistakes) made in both L2 learning and child language acquisition provide evidence that a learner uses a definite system of language at every point in his development. This "built-in syllabus" may yield a more efficient sequence than the instructor-generated sequence because it is more meaningful to the learner. Besides, more effective language instruction might occur when the learner's innate strategies dominate the language syllabus rather than predetermined notions of what ought to be learned.

In agreement with Corder's view, Alobo (2015) contends that errors are not only an inevitable but also, very importantly, a necessary feature of learner language, without which improvement cannot occur. Corder coined the term 'transitional competence' to indicate the essential dynamism of the language learner's evolving system. A learner's errors represent the difference between the transitional competence of that learner and the target language.

Brown (1987, p. 17) as cited in Mourssi (2013) and Brown (2000) define error analysis as a process through which researchers observe, analyze, and classify learner errors to elicit some information about the system operating within the learner. For Richards and Schmidt (2002) as cited in Seitova (2016), error analysis compares 'learner English' with English (L2) itself and judges how learners are 'ignorant.'

**Types of errors**

A large and growing body of literature has investigated the different types of errors as follows: Brown (1980) as cited in Hasyim (2002) classifies sources of errors into the following categories:

1. Interference transfer: the negative influence of the mother tongue,
2. Intralingual transfer: the negative transfer of items within the target language,
3. Context of learning: this overlaps both types of transfer, and
4. Communication strategies: the conscious employment of verbal mechanisms for communicating an idea when linguistic forms are not available to the learner.

James (1998) adds 'Induced errors': the result of being misled by how teachers give definitions, examples, explanations, and arrange practice opportunities. 'Unique errors' that are neither developmental nor interference is one more category highlighted by Dulay and Burt (1974) as cited in Heydari and Bagheri (2012).

Olsen (1999) as cited in Somchai and Siriluck (2013) note that errors could be due to the inadequacy of syntactic and lexical competence. Similarly, Weigle (2002, p.35) proposes that the constraints of limited L2 knowledge may hamper L2 writing due to the need to focus on language rather than on content. Jie (2008, p. 36) as cited in Somchai and Siriluck (2013) supportively explains how L2 learning is affected by L1 because "language is taken as a set of habits and learning as the establishment of new habits, a view sprung from behaviorism." James (1998) and Soetikno (1996, p.181) as cited in Muhsin (2016, p. 83) propose that different types of learners' errors can relate to omission, overinclusion, misselection, misordering, blends, addition, and misinformation.

Johansson (2008, pp. 118-119) divided errors into *lexical errors* which involve the misuse of individual words in the target language and *equivalence errors* which arise because a word in
the target language is wrongly equated with a word in the mother tongue. Dulay et al. (1982) as cited in Abushihab (2014) point out that there are four major linguistic categories of errors: orthography, lexicon and semantics, syntax and morphology and discourse.

**The sources of error in EFL writing**

A considerable amount of literature has been published on the causes of error in L2 and FL writing. Johanne (2002) argues that whether an error, mistake, or 'derailment,' awkward discourse can occur for different reasons: learners may translate from L1 or they tend to over-generalize the rules when acquiring new discourse structures. Moreover, they might lack familiarity with new rhetorical structures and the organization of ideas.

Among the factors that impact language learning are the social and cognitive ones: if learners experience success, they will have their positive attitudes, motivation, and concrete goals reinforced. Likewise, learners' negative attitudes may be nourished by a lack of success (McGroarty, 1996 as cited in Johanne, 2002).

Senders (1992) and Richards (1974) as cited in Alobo (2015) assume that sources of error include: the learners, teaching materials or methods, difficulties inherent in the language, interference from L1 and L2, and use of L2 in the community. For learners, errors result from learners' innate ability to learn language from hypotheses which are tested and manifest themselves in the formation of wrong analogies. Regarding teaching materials or methods, errors appear to be prompted by the teaching process itself. Concerning difficulties inherent in the language, there are 'myths' that some languages are difficult.

**Previous relevant studies**

The objectives of the studies reported below were to identify and classify the most common errors committed in FL learners' writing and their sources. Their findings seem to be consistent with one another in that L1 interference (interlanguage) underlies the repeatedly recurring errors in the learners' writing, as shown below:

In 2012, Alhaysony examined written samples of 100 first-year female Arabic-speaking students in the University of Ha'il, KSA. The findings showed that students made a considerable number of errors in their use of articles, especially, the omission errors, whereas substitutions were the least frequent.

In 2012, Ridha investigated the errors in English essay writing of EFL Iraqi college students. The errors were categorized into grammatical, lexical, semantic, mechanics, and word order types of errors- mostly led by Arabic interference. Grammatical and mechanical errors were the most serious and frequent ones.

Ahmed's (2016) investigated the writing errors of 20 Saudi EFL university students at King Khalid University. The study identified and analyzed the errors, determined their causes, examined the factors that contributed to their occurrence and suggested suitable solutions for the problem. The findings revealed that the writing errors were committed due to L1 interference, besides
insufficient activities and practice of basic techniques of writing in addition to the lack of follow-
up to the students’ writing performance.

Seitova's (2016) investigated common English language errors made by Kazakh and
Russian L1 speakers in a corpus of 32 compositions and 32 translations written by 32 participants.
The seven most common errors committed were: pluralization, subject-verb agreement, omission
or misuse of articles, wrong choice of words, omission or misuse of prepositions, spelling, misuse
of like+Ving form.

In 2016, Ngangbam examined the English syntactic problems persistent in the written
performance of 60 first-year English language class of Mutah University. Fifteen categories
of errors were classified. Results indicated performance problems committed were due to Arabic (L1)
interference, misuse, sentence fragment, overuse, lack of grammatical knowledge, formation, and
developmental errors.

In 2016, Naikoo, et al. investigated the most common linguistic errors which Arabic
speaking learners in Jazan University, KSA encounter. The common errors were in copula,
concord, number, tense markers, aspect, infinitival to, prepositions, articles, and conjunctions.

Concerning the studies below, there are similarities between their findings where the
sources of errors were either interlingual or intralingual or both:

Tizazu's (2014) reported the dominant linguistic errors that occurred in the written
productions of Arba Minch University students. A sample of paragraphs was collected from
students ranging from first-year to graduating level. The results showed that orthography,
morphology, syntax, mechanics, and semantics had been affected by the errors, including both
intralingual and interlingual causes.

Na Phuket and Normah's (2015) study explored the primary sources and types of errors in
the writing of EFL students. Results showed that the most frequent types of errors were translated
words from Thai, word choice, verb tense, preposition, and comma. The errors derived from an
intralingual source were found to be the dominant ones.

Sermsook et al. (2017) examined the language errors in the writing of 26 English majors in
a Thai university and explored their sources. One hundred four pieces of writing were collected
and analyzed. Results showed that the most frequently committed errors were punctuation, articles,
subject-verb agreement, spelling, capitalization, and fragment, respectively. The primary sources
of the errors were interlingual and intralingual interference, limited knowledge of grammar and
vocabulary, and students' carelessness.

Though the studies listed below were carried out in different contexts, their findings are broadly
consistent:

Chan's (2004) investigated the errors in Hong Kong Chinese student writers’ writing to
examine how syntactic transfer affected the effectiveness of students’ writing performance. Five
syntactic structures were problematic: the copula, placement of adverbs, relative clauses and, verb transitivity.

Ibnian's (2017) explored the difficulties that university students face when they write. The sample comprised 82 English majors from the World Islamic Sciences and Education University, Jordan. The results revealed that 'lack of ideas' topped the difficulties, followed by 'the incorrect use of mechanics of writing.' 'Lack of clear assessment instruments and marking schemes' occupied the third rank, while 'time restriction' ranked fourth. 'The unsuitable methods of teaching writing' and 'vocabulary restriction' occupied the fifth and sixth ranks respectively, while 'topic inappropriateness' and 'lack of materials for consulting' occupied seventh and eighth ranks. 'Grammar difficulties' and 'lack of teacher's help' ranked ninth and 10th, respectively.

In (2016), Mohammed explored the problem area of grammatical errors and their reasons among 70 learners (31 males and 39 females) EFL majors in the University of AL-Mustansirih, Iraq. The common types of grammatical errors were verb tense and form, subject-verb agreement, articles, prepositions, and pronouns, plurals, and auxiliaries, respectively.

Barzanji's (2016) investigated the most common writing errors made by 58 Saudi undergraduate students. Whether the type of prompt affects the frequency of these errors was examined. Each student wrote two timed essays. The findings revealed that missing/unnecessary word was the most frequent type of error, followed by spelling errors, wrong choice, article, wrong noun form. The type of prompt did not affect the number of errors.

Alfaki's (2015) identified 20 university students’ writing problems in English and suggested ways of solving them. The findings revealed language problems at the levels of morphology and syntax, usage errors, and mechanical mistakes, lack of several writing development skills, cognitive problems, and graphomotor problems.

Ababneh's (2017) examined specific EFL writing difficulties faced by 50 female Saudi students at the University of Tabuk. The errors were classified into four main categories: grammatical, syntactic, substance, and lexical types. The most frequent types of errors were in the categories of grammar (tenses, singular/plural, articles), syntax (subject-verb agreement), and substance (spelling).

In Zheng and Park (2013) study, errors in 168 English essays written by Chinese and Korean university students were identified. The analysis showed that the negative transfer from learners’ L1 caused 'run-on sentences, the omission of articles and plural suffix-s, and sentence misordering.' Meanwhile, learners’ creative construction caused the misformation of verbs and nouns.

Method

The research method is described in terms of participants, data gathering tools, and method of data analysis. To achieve the study objectives, a corpus of 120 English essays written by 40 female university Saudi students was used for data collection and analysis. A students' writing difficulties questionnaire -adapted from literature- was used as well. The research was administered
in the department of English, College of Education, Zulfi, Majmaah University, KSA during the first term corresponding to the academic year 2018-2019.

Participants were native Arabic speakers who learn EFL. They were English majors in their third year of study. They were all in the same age group. They have had studied English for at least six years before joining the department of English. Thus, they have developed a specific FL proficiency. They were enrolled in an advanced writing course where the study was conducted. All of them have already passed two writing courses and three grammar courses as pre-requisites for advanced writing. The participants’ exposure to English is approximately 20 hours a week. The medium of instruction is English; some instructors use Arabic, though.

The tool for data analysis is error analysis, which falls within the descriptive research method. Errors were analyzed following Corder’s (1967) model: data were collected, and the errors were identified by carefully examining all erroneous sentences. Then, the errors were described and classified into different types. Finally, findings and conclusions were drawn from the analyzed data.

To answer the study questions, the researcher reviewed the related literature in the field of TEFL in general, EFL writing and error analysis in particular. The participants were assigned three essays in three genres: narration, description, and comparison/contrast of 2-4 page each. Participants were given three prompts in each genre. The writing was done inside the classroom. The selection of genres was based on the advanced writing course specifications. The three topics were not supposed to cause participants difficulty in their L1. One hour of each day of administration was allotted for each essay. The researcher further surveyed the proposed writing difficulties encountered by the participants using a questionnaire comprising ten questions. To ensure the questionnaire validity, it was submitted to some experts in the field. Clear instructions were provided to respondents, and it was assured that the information they provide would be used only for research purposes.

Findings and discussion

The types and total numbers and percentages of the errors committed by the participants are reported in Table 1 (Appendix A). Having examined the linguistic aspects which represented the most recurrent errors, 16 types of errors were identified. The total number of errors in each aspect is shown in parenthesis. It was evident that punctuation errors (607) formed the most troublesome area, followed by spelling errors (522), preposition errors (178), article errors, (163), wrong verb tense (119), wrong word form (104), pluralization errors (69) and wrong word choice (63), concord (59), pronouns (38), translated words from Arabic (35), unnecessary copular be (28), missing copular be (26), word order (18), conjunctions (11), and infinitive and gerund (5) (the least troublesome area) respectively. Thus, the findings seem to support previous research.

Below are sample recorded errors from the different erroneous linguistic aspects explored and their sources justified.
Punctuation marks errors

Mechanics included capitalization (remarkably at the beginning of sentences), end punctuation in particular, and spelling. Punctuation was the most erroneous aspect of the writing of the research sample. Students had problems with the proper use of commas. They always confuse the full stop with the comma (e.g., It is not the same as the other jobs, [,.] People only work [,]). Also, they confused the colon and semicolon. A common problem was the use of comma splices, (i.e., joining sentences by a comma instead of using a full stop or conjunction). For example: and advanced countries, also they try different kind of transportation, cars, planes, trains and buses. [and advanced countries. They also try] Participants omitted the bound morpheme ('s) as a possessive marker as in: 'My sisters favourite food is'[sisters'].

Spelling errors

There were many spelling errors due to the many irregularities of L2 spelling besides learners’ carelessness about memorizing words. Errors involved letters which can stand for similar sounds, (e.g., outside [outside]; necessary [necessary]). The following common words were found to be confusing: The preposition of and the adverb/preposition off were confused as in: 'It was an of [off] day'. They confused the possessive determiner its and the contracted verb form it's as in: it's [its] lecture rooms. They further confused the possessive determiner their and the adverb there (e.g., there [their] language). Participants added or omitted space in a single word as in 'Everyone has; understand'. Errors also resulted from the insertion of an extra letter, the absence, or the substitution of a letter in particular words as in: 'My favorite [favorite] vacation'; achieve [achieve]; handle [handle]. anyone my [may] lose it for DNA causes ('it' = one's memory); They always but [put] lines and rules; begun [begin]; taim [time]; material [material]; impression [impression].

Preposition errors

Using the appropriate preposition is one of the special difficulties for EFL learners due to the literal translation from Arabic (L1) into English (L2). There were many errors in the appropriate use of prepositions because they are commonly used, and they are often bound to a preceding word; some nouns and adjectives require prepositions, and many verbs require a particular complementation pattern, (e.g., belief in, angry with, take care of). Instances from the research written sample are: listen [listen to] the music; The lectures are different about [from]; and have different types from [of] pasta; The employees were so angry from [with] us. I was searching [for] my friend.

The analysis of the collected data has revealed that the errors in the use of prepositions accounted for their omission, addition, and substitution. In the cases of substitution, the following represents the samples in which a wrong preposition was selected instead of the correct one: and offered the meals for [to] us for days. Don’t be afraid about [of] anything in college; colored with [in]. The following are examples of a preposition omission error: I don’t know where go. [where to go]; yelling in a loud voice to tell us stop [to stop] making noise. In the morning we were ready to go Makka [go to Makka]. What follows are examples of a preposition added where it was not required: I saw many of students. Me, my mother and my sister went to shopping.

Article errors
Articles also proved to be an erroneous aspect of the participants' written sample. For instance, in English abstract nouns are used without the definite article ' the', (e.g. beauty, confidence, courage) whereas in Arabic the same words are preceded by the definite article equivalent to 'the' (i.e., الفئة – الشجاعة - الجمال). In the example below, a definite noun phrase is used where an indefinite form is needed: and play the music. [play music]. Sometimes, an article was unnecessarily added (e.g., The travel [Travel] changes the personality of the person.). They omitted a required article, (e.g., College is [a] big place. It's [a]different building. It was [a] rough behavior. in [the] morning). They further misused an article, (e.g., get a good marks. [good marks]).

Verb tense errors

In the recoded list of erroneous verbs, a past tense verb form was used instead of a simple present tense verb form; only a few errors were recorded. Errors identified resulted from the incorrect use of tense that does not precisely indicate the time of an action. The message the participant tried to convey did not match the verb tense they used (i.e., although participants recalled past actions in their compositions, they used present tense verb forms) as in ‘On the first day at college, I wear [wore]. My first day at college is [was] very hard. Finally, we arrived and I'm [was] so excited to see New York’.

Participants made errors in the use of the correct form of the verbs as in: but it have [it has] some cafeterias. They didn't use fundamental grammatical structures, i.e., omission of the regular past tense marker (-ed) as in ‘stay [stayed] there for a week’; the use of present copular be to express past events as in ‘When I am [was] a child’. Although the inflectional suffix -(e)d, past marker is usually added to verb stems to mark the simple past tense, some verbs do not abide by such a general rule as in ‘They taught [taught] me a lot of things.’

There is no equivalent of the English primary auxiliaries (do, does and did) in Arabic. Thus, the following is an instance of a missing primary auxiliary: Other people [do] not choose to be teachers. The participants used or added one of the different conjugated forms of the verb "be" as a filler with simple present and simple past tense forms as in ‘They are give [give] me what I need. I was asked [asked] one of the students. I was searched [searched] for my friend’. Errors in this aspect are interlingual because the simple present tense in Arabic conveys the meaning of both simple and present continuous tenses in English. Moreover, English full verbs can have five forms: base, the third person singular (-s /es), past tense, past participle, and present participle -ing., e.g., We chatting [chatted] for a long time.

Word form errors

Participants made errors in the use of the correct form (s) of the words. Errors in the word form included confusion of adjectives and adverbs, nouns and adjectives, -ed and -ing adjectives. Examples are: I am afraid to lose my healthy [health]; I like to be carefully [careful]; tired [tiring].

Pluralization errors

With singular and plural markers, participants erroneously omitted the plural morpheme 's' even in the presence of plural quantifiers such as 'many' and 'all' as in ‘There are many reason [s]to love it’. ‘I have three sister[s].’ ‘There are famous brand [s] and restaurant [s].’ ‘McDonald’s serves many different kind [s] of foods’. The source of error could be intralingual because Arabic
speakers tend not to pronounce the plural 's' morpheme. Conversely, they tend to add the plural 's' morpheme to some English words where it is unnecessary especially irregular plural nouns (e.g., informations, advices, homeworks); these words take the plural form in Arabic, and they are plural both in form and signification (معلومات، واجبات، نصائح).

**Word choice errors**

The written compositions had many sentences with inaccurate vocabulary choice, which deviated the meaning of the written text from the writer's original intention: 'We sit two weeks there.' The writer means They stayed there for two weeks.' The source of the error here is the literal translation for the Arabic word يجلس, which is used to mean both 'sit' and 'stay' in English. Here, errors are due to using the wrong words, not the wrong forms as in ‘coloured in a light [bright] yellow.’

**Concord errors**

The most common grammatical error type was the lack of concord between subject and verb. Another was the deletion of the (-s) 3rd person singular pronoun marker or adding it unnecessarily (e.g., We takes [take]). FL learners usually use the present simple marker or add it unnecessarily as in ‘Memories are important because it have [has]; He understand [s] how life is different.’

**Pronoun errors**

Some pronouns were wrongly selected. The misuse of many pronouns can be attributed to interference from (L1) as in 'and the central building which we take general subjects in it.' The pronoun 'it' is unnecessarily used. In Arabic, it is possible to use a verb with its embedded pronoun as one word as in 'katabtu' =كتبت I wrote; whereas in English two separate words or more can stand for one Arabic word.

Moreover, English pronouns are usually problematic because there are no exact equivalent counterparts in L1. For instance, the pronoun 'it' as a neutral pronoun is not available in L1. Hence, learners use 'he' or 'she' for inanimate objects or concepts. Object pronouns are also confusing because the word or morpheme may represent both an object pronoun and a possessive adjective, (e.g., There are some ideas in them (their) mind).

**Interlingual errors**

First, language interference is deeply thought to impact L2 learning and acquisition: it occurs when learners transfer their own syntactic knowledge into the use of L2. One technique that Arab learners use in acquiring EFL skills, including writing, is a literal translation from Arabic into English and vice versa. For instance: 'As what we know Kuwait City is’ is a literal translation for the Arabic equivalent كما نعرف مدينة الكويت تكون. Travel makes the person more social and learns more cultures' is a literal translation for السفر يجعل الشخص اجتماعي أكثر و يتعلم ثقافات أكثر. The Arabic word اجتماعي means both 'social' and 'sociable' in English.

**Word order errors**

Errors included a noun and its adjective (s), adjective position, and adverbs describing verbs. There are significant differences in word order patterns between English and Arabic. The
most frequent word order in Arabic is (VSO). The students’ inability to recognize word order differences between English and Arabic accounts for such errors as in 'Ago two years,' [Two years ago.,]. The error source here is intralingual because the time marker precedes the period of time in Arabic ‘منذ عامان’.

**Copular 'be' errors**

Some errors can be attributed to non-existence of the copula in Arabic as in' The college system [is] different. Example errors in the use of the copular 'be' where it was missing or added unnecessarily are: You should [be] independent; She is love [loves] to help people.

One recorded error in conjunctions is: I have an old mother which [who] is so kind. An instance of an error in the use of a gerund where an infinitive was required is: to learning [learn] better. The following were errors in parallelism: I drank coffee and eat [ate] pizza. When we arrive [arrived] at the college and met my friends. An example of using a circumlocution strategy is: ‘The place of the breakfast’ [the cafeteria]. An example of a sentence fragment is: ‘Are house is usually walking distance to the ocean.’ [Our house is only a very short distance from the sea.]. ‘I felt cold so do my parents’. [I felt cold. So did my parents].

In terms of lexis, some of the participants struggled with basic vocabulary. Lexical errors involved individual words misused in the L2; either they were spelled wrongly as in socil [ social] or studens [students], or there were mistakes in the use of words as in fell [feel] or our live [life].

In terms of equivalence errors, many errors were interlingual and arose because some words in L2 are wrongly equated with others in L1 as in ‘We need to happiness.’ [We need to be/feel happy]. This is a literal translation for the Arabic equivalent ‘نحن بحاجة إلى السعادة’.

**Writing difficulties questionnaire sample comments**

The questionnaire comprised ten questions, and it required respondents to justify their answers as much as possible, and Table 2 presents an overview of the results.

In response to question four, participants commented: 'Sometimes I don't have some ideas in some subjects'; 'I can writ but I have gramar problem and spleing'; 'I need to practice writing more. Also I need to learn more vocabulary'; 'I can't faind vocabulary. I have idea but I don't know how to writte it'; 'because I don't have the enough vocabulary for any topic'; 'Because I don’t have the vocabulary in the new Topic.'

Responding to question six, 37.5% marked 'Content and ideas' commenting: 'because that is where I feel I have weakness in and I need her (i.e., the teacher) to correct me'; 'Because I have some idea but I can't write'; 'To understand what I write'; 'ideas are very important'; 'because the content and ideas is important in paragraph'; 'because I take much time when I writing with my perefect ideas, and I need focus on my ideas.' 22.5% marked 'Vocabulary and expressions' commenting: 'Because I need learning more for vocabulary'; Because i Always made mistake in vocabulary'; 'because the lexical mistakes very difficult'. Three participants marked all the options commenting: 'because I want improve my language'; 'I think all of the skills is important to have a clear written work'; 'because is important for understand the ideas'.
In response to question seven, 25% said they were given enough time in the classroom to write and commented: ‘because the time to class isn't enough'; 'time isn't enough'; 'I want give idea and write'; 'the time is not enough'; 'writing should never have enough time and the time we take is not enough'.

Commenting on question nine, the participants who chose 'Both types' commented: 'Because English international language'; 'easy for me'; 'because I use colloquial english with friends, but formal english use with my job'; 'I use both according to what I need'; 'sometimes the people speak English writing English'; 'I watching English movie and chatting with English friends. So, they use everyday English'. Those who marked 'Formal English' said: 'help me learn more English'; 'because I study formal English and I use it all the time'; 'becouse I study the formal English'. Those who marked 'Colloquial English' said: 'Because it's easy to use'; 'Because, I easy than one; 'gust in social media.'

In reply to question ten, 50% agreed and commented: 'When I write some errors in chatting correct'; 'becoues in sometime I use the language'; 'She can't error my mistakes'; 'help me in The learning writing'; 'becouse it is help me to chang my writing'; 'Can improving my language and improve my write technec'; 'improve it by chatting with my friends'; 'It helps me to improve my writing by learning vocabulary and idioms, etc. '; 'I have english speaking friends and they talk in casual English'; 'to learn new words'.

Conclusion

Teaching writing and encouraging students to write is quite challenging. Nevertheless, for most people writing is a process that requires motivation, training, and specific skills. Therefore, it requires employing teaching strategies which can assure competence in EFL writing. Students feel reluctant to write even in their L1, and they usually are not confident in their ability to write in L2.

Considering the errors caused by Arabic language interference, the errors occurred the most frequently were: prepositions, articles, word form, verb tense, pluralization, concord, and word choice, respectively. The sources of errors included the incomplete application of FL rules; ignorance of rule restrictions; lack of memorization of spelling of words; ignorance of grammatical and punctuation rules; and difficulty of English article and preposition systems. Also, writing problems arose due to the differences between Arabic and English in phonology, morphology, lexis, and grammatical structures. As a result of these problems, students’ effective writing in English is hampered.

In the study context, teaching methods and strategies might have been inadequate. Writing examinations question types were inappropriate because they mostly included multiple-choice, short answer, and matching techniques besides providing learners with guiding topic sentences so as for them to elaborate. Unfortunately, learners were asked to write topics that have previously been tackled in class. Furthermore, learners are not intrinsically motivated to write even in their own language. Lexically, participants’ lack of adequate stock of vocabulary could be one of the factors that contributed to the errors committed. Moreover, the lack of writing practice in and outside the classroom was one source of errors.
EFL learners experience difficulties in selecting proper vocabulary, producing and developing ideas about specific topics as well. Unfortunately, FL writing teachers are inclined to focus mainly on teaching students appropriate grammatical structures. Due to the gap between students’ needs and teachers’ conventional instructional methodology, students cannot express themselves freely and fluently in writing. In conclusion, learners’ errors are essential because they can indicate how far a learner is progressing in FL learning and acquisition and how much more they still need to learn.

Recommendations and pedagogical implications

One of the issues that emerged from the study findings is that being able to write effectively in EFL is highly essential for proper FL learning and acquisition to occur. Writing is a complicated process which requires time and effort until we master it. The findings have important implications for integrating writing with other skills. Teachers should help students with several useful writing strategies and techniques which could help them improve their foreign writing skills. Teachers should help students increase their stock of vocabulary by providing them with extensive reading assignments on different topics. They should give immediate oral and written feedback to the students' writing performance. Learners should practice writing more essays on different genres. The number of hours allocated to the teaching of writing per week should be increased. Learner-centered curricula to cater to the specific learners' needs should be reconsidered. Most significantly, the examinations of writing should involve questions which focus on developing the writing sub/skills and foster critical and creative thinking.

A better grasp of FL error occurrence and source(s) will help teachers identify learners’ difficulties in learning. Hence, there will be a clear picture of the most effective and efficient course books to be adopted. Thus, future studies on error analysis are recommended since exploring errors is believed to provide invaluable information that could be used to develop better FL learning and teaching.

About the author

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The author would like to acknowledge the support from the Deanship of Scientific Research at Majmaah University for funding this project #38/52.

References


Appendix (A)

**Table 1. Error classifications and frequency**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Error classifications</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Punctuation marks</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>29.69 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>522</td>
<td>25.53 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Prepositions</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>8.70 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Articles</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>7.97 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Verb Tense</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>5.82 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Word Form</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>5.08 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Pluralization</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>3.37 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Word Choice</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>3.08 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Concord</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>2.88 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Pronouns</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1.85 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Interlingual errors</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1.71 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Copular Be (Unnecessary)</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1.36 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Copular Be (Missing)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>1.27 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Word Order</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0.88 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Constructions</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.53 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Infinitive and gerund</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.24 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Appendix (B)

**Table 2. Results of the students’ writing difficulties questionnaire**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ser.</th>
<th>#</th>
<th>% of the participants</th>
<th>Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>62.5%</td>
<td>are motivated to improve their foreign language writing skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>like the way in which they are taught writing in EFL.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>feel confident in their ability to express their ideas in EFL writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>can easily write on any relevant topic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>are given enough time in the classroom to write.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>use prewriting techniques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>think that internet networking and SMS chatting affect their English writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>find difficulties in grammar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>find difficulties in vocabulary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>find difficulties in mechanics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>find difficulties in organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>want the teacher to focus on sentence structure and style when correcting their written work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>want the teacher to focus on vocabulary and expressions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>want the teacher to focus on grammar and sentence pattern.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>want the teacher to focus on content and ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
<td>use formal English when using the Internet or SMS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>use colloquial English when using the Internet or SMS.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5%</td>
<td>use both types.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Effect of Focused and Unfocused Feedback on Learners’ Writing Accuracy within Different Gender and Cultural Background Groups

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Abstract
This research is to measure the effect of focused and unfocused feedback on second language (L2) learners’ writing accuracy with involving gender and learners’ cultural background factors. The study applied a pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design. The participants were 128 learners at IAIN Palangka Raya, Indonesia. During the learning process, the first treatment group was treated using Focused Direct Feedback; the second treatment group was treated using Unfocused Direct Feedback, and the control group was not given any treatments or No Feedback. Data were analyzed using a three-way ANOVA analyses. The analysis confirmed that the focused direct of feedback gave a facilitative effect on the learners’ writing accuracy. In terms of gender, the learners’ writing accuracy differed significantly different between males and female. In terms of cultural background, the learners’ writing accuracy did not differ significantly among each ethnics. There were no differences significantly on the learners’ writing accuracy caused by gender and the types of corrective feedback factors. There were no differences significantly on the learners’ writing accuracy caused by cultural background and types of corrective feedback factors. There were no differences significantly on the learners’ writing accuracy caused by cultural background and types of corrective feedback factors. There were no differences significantly on the learners’ writing accuracy caused by gender, cultural background the types of corrective feedback factors. To conclude, it was noted that gender and different types of feedback had a vital thing in increasing learners’ writing accuracy. Corrective feedback was important for both the teachers and learners in L2 writing class.

Keywords: gender, cultural background, focused and unfocused feedback, writing accuracy

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Introduction
During many years, Written Corrective Feedback has been observed from different views. In the perspective of the behaviorist approach of the 1950s and 1960s, errors were regarded as non-learning and they ought to be corrected. Historically, giving corrective feedback is seen from various perspectives. In 1996, Truscott argued that feedback should be avoided. His response was intended to Ferris (1999) who disagreed to Truscott's claims. Since then, some researchers investigated on written feedback. In the perspective of the behaviorist approach, errors are considered as the result of non-learning and must be corrected. In line with this, Bitchener & Ferris (2012) state that errors were perceived much more negatively than today’s education. Behaviorists assumed that errors should be corrected strictly and systematically.

Being able to write an essay has been considered as an urgent skill at an Essay Writing class. Writing can be a hard task for learners in the classroom (Wessels, & Herrera, 2014). The 2015 syllabus for English Study Program at IAIN Palangka Raya stated that the learners were designed to be able to write an essay about 450-500 words. Since some researchers have found feedback to have positive and, a few of them, negative effects on L2 writing, it is important to explore it and how feedback gives effect on the learners' writing performance. To develop learners’ writing skills, written feedback as a teaching tool has been discussed extensively in the teacher training college. Although it may seem like something solely positive, the topic is quite controversial; and when implementing it in writing classroom setting there are questions to be asked. For example, does the written corrective feedback give a facilitative effect or not for the students? the answer to that particular question does not come easily. Over the years, experts have measured the effects of feedback on L2 writers with different results. This is one of the reasons for the researcher to measure the effect of feedback regarding gender and learners’ cultural background.

Researches on the impact of feedback have been conducted by some researchers. For example, Saeb (2014) measuring the influence of focused and unfocused feedback for L2 beginners found that focused and unfocused feedback groups gave a facilitative effect on learners' writing accuracy for both experimental classes. However, the focused and unfocused groups did not differ significantly. Meanwhile, Sonja (2013) confirms that focused feedback was useful in developing writing accuracy. Next, Ellis, Sheen, Murakami, & Takashima (2008) found that the feedback gave effect for focused and unfocused class. Then, Sheen, Wright, & Moldawa (2009) measuring the effects of the focused and unfocused approaches, found that focused feedback contributed to grammatical accuracy. All results indicated that focused and unfocused feedback was useful in writing accuracy. In the current study, Focused Direct Feedback (FDF) was operationalized as (1) showing the error location by crossing the errors of a linguistic error (for example observing pronoun agreement for the first writing product, examining verb agreement for the second writing product, and examining singular plural forms for the third writing product) and (2) giving the appropriate forms.

Unfocused feedback is the model of feedback in which all learners’ linguistic errors are corrected by language instructors (Ellis et al., 2008; Ellis, 2009). Unfocused feedback involves giving feedback on all errors. Here, the feedback was given on all language forms. In the current study, Un-focused Direct Feedback (UDF) was operationalized as (1) indicating the error location
on all linguistic errors made by the learners; (2) giving the appropriate forms for all errors. Thus, it involved giving feedback on all errors.

The other factor for successful learning in an L2 writing class is the learners’ cultural background. Hyland (2003) states that cultural factors are reasons for writing differences. Cultural factors formed students' background insights and it influenced their writing performance. In addition, Made & Fitriati (2017) state that cultural aspect constraints appeared more frequently. Indonesia is a multicultural country. It automatically makes Indonesia becoming a multilingual country. In Indonesia, each culture has its own language and dialect. According to Brown (2007), culture is a way of life. In the present study, there are only three ethnic cultural backgrounds being discussed: Javanese, Banjarese, and Dayaknese. In my opinion, the students cultural background makes the writing differences and can influence the way of the appropriate feedback. Teachers and students from different cultures may misunderstand their communication in the writing process, which causes ineffective feedback.

Different from all studies above, this research emphasizes on measuring the influence of focused and unfocused direct feedback with involving different gender and learners’ cultural background as potential factors for successful learning. The novelty of this study is that the learners’ gender and cultural background were taken into consideration for deeper analyzing data. The purpose was to measure the effect of focused and unfocused direct feedback by considering gender factors: male and female; and cultural background factors: Dayak, Banjarese, and Javanese. Therefore, the research problems: (RQ1) Does the learners’ writing accuracy differ significantly caused by types of corrective feedback factor? (RQ2) Does the learners’ writing accuracy differ significantly caused by gender factor? (RQ3) Does the learners’ writing accuracy differ significantly caused by cultural background factor? (RQ4) Does the learners’ writing accuracy differ significantly caused by the gender and types of feedback factors? (RQ5) Does the learners’ writing accuracy differ significantly caused by the learners’ cultural background and types of feedback factors? (RQ6) Does the learners’ writing accuracy differ significantly caused by gender and cultural background factors? (RQ7) Does the learners’ writing accuracy differ significantly caused by gender, learners’ cultural background and types of feedback factors?

Method

This part covered the research method, design, participants, procedures, and analysis of data. The design applied a pretest-posttest quasi-experiment. Participants were 128 L2 learners at IAIN Palangka Raya of 2018/ 2019 academic years. The participants were assigned randomly into two groups based on gender (male 56 and female 72), and three groups based on their cultural background: (Dayaknese 38, Banjarese 42, and Javanese 48). They were also clustered into three groups consisting of two experimental classes: the first treatment class (n=44), the second treatment class (n=41), and one control class (n=43). The distribution of the participants was described in this table 1.

Table 1. The Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Feedback</th>
<th>Learners’ cultural background</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dayaknese</td>
<td>Banjarese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focused Direct Feedback (FDF)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Effect of Focused and Unfocused Feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedures</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unfocused Direct Feedback (UDF)</td>
<td>No feedback (NF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtotal</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Procedures
The entire study was spread over one semester in writing essay class. Each meeting was done a week for 16 meetings. At the early beginning, all participants were given pretest to observe the existing ability in writing an essay. During the class, the treatment group 1 was given treatment using Focused Direct Feedback (FDF). Here, the teacher provided the feedback by (1) identifying the errors by crossing the errors of a linguistic error (for example observing pronoun agreement for the first writing product, examining verb agreement for the second writing product, and examining singular plural forms for the third writing product) and (2) giving the appropriate forms. Then, the treatment group 2 was given treatment using Unfocused Direct Feedback (UDF). Here, the teacher provided all linguistic errors made by the learners. It involved giving feedback on all errors. On the contrary, the control group was not given any treatments. The teacher assigned the participants to write an essay. Then, the teacher handed the participants' writing to be assessed without providing feedback or No Feedback (NF). At the last session, all participants were given a writing posttest. They should write an essay about 450-500 words. The students’ composition was scored using the scoring method as developed by Weigle (2002,) and scoring standard of IAIN Palangka Raya (2011, p. 15). It was done to produce the right criteria to score the idea development aspects of students’ essay writing.

Data Analysis
The hypotheses of null are: (a) the population mean of writing score did not differ due to the types of corrective feedback factor; (b) the population mean of writing score did not differ due to the gender factor; (c) the population mean of writing score did not differ due to the learners’ cultural background factor; (d) the gender and types of feedback factors did not give interaction effect in the population mean of writing score; (e) the learners’ cultural background and types of feedback factors did not give interaction effect in the population mean of writing score; (f) the gender and learners’ cultural background factors did not give interaction effect in the population mean of writing score; and (g) gender, learners’ cultural background and types of feedback factors did not give interaction effect in the population mean of writing score. Responding to the seven research questions; a three-way ANOVA test was applied. It is used to measure the interaction effect between three independent variables toward a dependent variable. Here, there were three categorical independent variables being investigated, namely: gender (male-female), learners’ cultural background (Dayaknese, Banjarese, and Javanese), and types of feedback (Focused and Unfocused Direct Feedback); and one dependent variable: learners’ writing score. The scores of the three groups were analyzed with a three-way ANOVA and the outcomes were compared to see the interaction effect of independent variables (focused and unfocused feedback) on the learners’ writing accuracy with involving gender factors (male and female), learners’ cultural background (Dayaknese, Banjarese, and Javanese). All statistical procedures were calculated using SPSS software (version 16).
Results

Before testing the hypotheses, the normality and homogeneity tests, as required in ANOVA test assumption, were conducted. As a result of Shapiro-Wilk statistic, the sig. value (p-value) for each category for Dayaknese FDF male (p=0.893), female (p=0.987); for Banjarese FDF male (p=0.980), female (p=0.875); for Javanese FDF male (p=0.604), female (p=0.687); for Dayaknese UDF male (p=0.167), female (p=0.421); for Banjarese UDF male (p=0.106), female (p=0.930); for Javanese UDF male (p=0.071), female (p=0.410). Meanwhile, Dayaknese NF male (p=0.451), female (p=0.990); for Banjarese NF male (p=0.279), female (p=0.280); for Javanese NF male (p=0.786), female (p=0.758). Since all p-values were higher than 0.050, it was said that the data were in normal distribution. Then, the output of Levene's Test was (p= 0.811 > 0.05). It meant the data were homogenous.

Testing Statistical Hypothesis

To answer the research questions, the learners’ composition of both groups were scored by two raters. It was found to be 0.871, showing that both raters gave balanced scores about learners’ composition (see Table 2 in Appendices).

From the table above, it was found the average writing scores of each group based on gender, learners’ cultural background and feedback types as follows. The mean score of male Dayaknese learners using FDF was 72.67; female 75.50; male Banjarese learners were 69.20; female 76.29; male Javanese learners was 72.00; female 76.70. Then, the mean score of male Dayaknese learners using UDF was 66.00; female 75.17; male Banjarese learners was 69.17; female 73.88; male Javanese learners was 68.86; female 73.22. On the contrary, the mean score of male Dayaknese learners without using feedback/ NF was 55.17; female 55.71; male Banjarese learners was 55.43; female 53.56; male Javanese learners was 52.67; female 57.38. The average score of both male and female Dayaknese using FDF was 74.29; Banjarese, 73.33; and Javanese 74.61. The average score of both male and female Dayaknese using UDF was 71.00; Banjarese, 71.57; and Javanese 71.31. The average score of both males and females without using feedback (NF) of Dayaknese was 55.46, Banjarese 55.36, and Javanese 55.02

There are no differences in the population mean of writing scores due to the types of feedback factor.

To response the RQ1: “Does the learners’ writing accuracy differ significantly caused by types of corrective feedback factor?”, the three-way ANOVA table explained the answer. From the output in Table 3, it was seen that the F value of types WCF was 131.546 and the value of sig. was 0.000. As it was smaller than 0.05, it was said that null hypothesis expressing that the population mean of writing score did not give effect due to the types of feedback factor was not accepted, and the alternative hypothesis expressing that the population mean of writing score gave effect due to the types of feedback factor could not be rejected. Therefore, it was said that the types of feedback gave a facilitative effect on the learners’ writing accuracy. The mean score of learners’ writing accuracy using FDF was 73.73 and using UDF was 70.97 (see Table 4 for further detail). Meanwhile, the mean score of writing accuracy without using feedback (NF) was 54.98. It was said that the learners’ writing accuracy using types of feedback outperformed better than those who did not use feedback in control groups. However, focused direct feedback class performed similar ability as those who received unfocused direct feedback.
Table 3. Results of Three-Way ANOVA Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variation</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Degree of Freedom</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Partial Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>486.297</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>486.297</td>
<td>14.955</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural background</td>
<td>9.726</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.863</td>
<td>.150</td>
<td>.861</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types WCF</td>
<td>8555.312</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4277.656</td>
<td>131.546</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender * Cultural background</td>
<td>11.876</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.938</td>
<td>.183</td>
<td>.833</td>
<td>.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender * types WCF</td>
<td>130.768</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>65.384</td>
<td>2.011</td>
<td>.139</td>
<td>.035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural background * types WCF</td>
<td>19.202</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.800</td>
<td>.148</td>
<td>.964</td>
<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender * Cultural background *</td>
<td>142.460</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>35.615</td>
<td>1.095</td>
<td>.363</td>
<td>.038</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. Types of feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Lower Bound</th>
<th>Upper Bound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focused Direct Feedback (FDF)</td>
<td>73.725</td>
<td>.881</td>
<td>71.979</td>
<td>75.472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfocused Direct Feedback (UDF)</td>
<td>70.965</td>
<td>.908</td>
<td>69.166</td>
<td>72.764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Feedback (NF)</td>
<td>54.984</td>
<td>.879</td>
<td>53.243</td>
<td>56.726</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are no differences in the population mean of writing score due to the gender factor.

To response the RQ2: “Does the learners’ writing accuracy differ significantly caused by gender factor?” it was seen on the three-way ANOVA table. From the output in Table 3, it was found that the F value of gender was 14.955 and the value of significance was 0.000. As it was smaller than 0.05, it was said that the hypothesis of null expressing that there were no differences in the population mean of writing score due to the gender factor was not accepted, and the alternative hypothesis could not be rejected. Therefore, it was said that different gender gave strongly influence on writing accuracy. The mean score of learners’ writing accuracy for male was 64.57 and female was 68.54 (see Table 5 for further detail). It was said that, in terms of gender, the learners’ writing accuracy differed significantly different between males and females. In this case, females performed better than males on the writing accuracy.
Table 5. The Factor of Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>64.572</td>
<td>.770</td>
<td>63.046 - 66.099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>68.544</td>
<td>.679</td>
<td>67.198 - 69.890</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are no differences in the population mean of writing scores due to the cultural background factor.

To respond the RQ3: “Does the learners’ writing accuracy differ significantly caused by cultural background factor?” it was seen on the three-way ANOVA table. From the output in Table 3, it was found that the F value of the cultural background was 0.150 and the value of significance was 0.861. As it was higher than 0.05, it was said that hypothesis null expressing that there were no differences in the population mean of writing score due to the cultural background factor was accepted, and the alternative hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, it was said that learners’ cultural background did not give influence significantly on writing accuracy. The mean score of learners’ writing accuracy for Dayaknese was 66.70; Banjarese 66.17; and Javanese 66.80 (see Table 6 for further detail). It was said that, in terms of cultural background, the learners’ writing accuracy did not differ significantly among Dayaknese, Banjarese, and Javanese.

Table 6. Cultural background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural background</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dayaknese</td>
<td>66.702</td>
<td>.935</td>
<td>64.849 - 68.555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banjarese</td>
<td>66.169</td>
<td>.896</td>
<td>64.393 - 67.944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Javanese</td>
<td>66.804</td>
<td>.834</td>
<td>65.150 - 68.457</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender and the focused and unfocused feedback factors did not give interaction effect in the population mean of writing scores.

To response the RQ4: “Does the learners’ writing accuracy differ significantly caused by the gender and types of feedback factors?” it was seen on the three-way ANOVA table. From the output in Table 3, it was found that the F value of gender and types of feedback was 2.011 and the value of significance was 0.139. As it was higher than 0.05, it was said that the hypothesis of null expressing that gender and the focused and unfocused feedback factors did not give interaction effect in the population mean of writing score was accepted and the hypothesis of alternative was rejected. Therefore, it was said that there were no differences significantly on the learners’ writing
Accuracy caused by gender and the types of corrective feedback factors. The further detail explanation was illustrated in the following table.

Table 7. Gender * types of feedback
Dependent Variable: Writing accuracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Types WCF</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>FDF</td>
<td>71.289</td>
<td>1.333</td>
<td>68.648 - 73.930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UDF</td>
<td>68.008</td>
<td>1.357</td>
<td>65.319 - 70.697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Feedback (NF)</td>
<td>54.421</td>
<td>1.312</td>
<td>51.821 - 57.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>FDF</td>
<td>76.162</td>
<td>1.153</td>
<td>73.877 - 78.447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UDF</td>
<td>73.921</td>
<td>1.206</td>
<td>71.531 - 76.312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Feedback (NF)</td>
<td>55.548</td>
<td>1.170</td>
<td>53.229 - 57.867</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The learners’ cultural background and types of feedback factors did not give an interaction effect in the population mean of writing scores.

To response the RQ5: “Does the learners’ writing accuracy differ significantly caused by the learners’ cultural background and types of feedback factors?” it was seen on the three-way ANOVA table. From the output in Table 3, it was found that the F value of cultural background and types of feedback was 0.148 and the value of significance was 0.964. As it was higher than 0.05, it was said that the null hypothesis expressing that learners’ cultural background and types of feedback factors did not give interaction effect in the population mean of writing score was accepted, and the alternative hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, it could be concluded that there were no differences significantly on the learners’ writing accuracy caused by cultural background and types of corrective feedback factors. The further detail explanation was illustrated in the following table.

Table 8. Cultural background * types WCF
Dependent Variable: Writing accuracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural background</th>
<th>Types of feedback</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dayaknese</td>
<td>FDF</td>
<td>74.083</td>
<td>1.540</td>
<td>71.032 - 77.135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UDF</td>
<td>70.583</td>
<td>1.727</td>
<td>67.162 - 74.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Feedback (NF)</td>
<td>55.440</td>
<td>1.586</td>
<td>52.297 - 58.584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banjarese</td>
<td>FDF</td>
<td>72.743</td>
<td>1.670</td>
<td>69.434 - 76.051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UDF</td>
<td>71.271</td>
<td>1.540</td>
<td>68.219 - 74.322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Feedback (NF)</td>
<td>54.492</td>
<td>1.437</td>
<td>51.644 - 57.340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Javanese</td>
<td>FDF</td>
<td>74.350</td>
<td>1.352</td>
<td>71.670 - 77.030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UDF</td>
<td>71.040</td>
<td>1.437</td>
<td>68.192 - 73.887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Feedback (NF)</td>
<td>55.021</td>
<td>1.540</td>
<td>51.969 - 58.072</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gender and learners’ cultural background factors did not give an interaction effect in the population mean of writing scores.

To respond the RQ6: “Does the learners’ writing accuracy differ significantly caused by the gender and cultural background factors?” it was seen on the three-way ANOVA table. From the output in Table 3, it was found that the F value of gender and types of feedback was 0.183 and the value of significance was 0.833. As it was higher than 0.05, it was said that the hypothesis of null expressing that gender and learners’ cultural background factors did not give interaction effect in the population mean of writing score was not rejected, and the alternative hypothesis was not accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that there were no differences significantly on the learners’ writing accuracy caused by gender and cultural background factors. The further detail explanation was illustrated in the following table.

Table 9. Gender * Cultural background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Cultural background</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Dayaknese</td>
<td>64.611</td>
<td>1.388</td>
<td>61.860 - 67.362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Banjarese</td>
<td>64.598</td>
<td>1.357</td>
<td>61.909 - 67.287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Javanese</td>
<td>64.508</td>
<td>1.253</td>
<td>62.025 - 66.991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Dayaknese</td>
<td>68.794</td>
<td>1.253</td>
<td>66.311 - 71.277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Banjarese</td>
<td>67.739</td>
<td>1.170</td>
<td>65.420 - 70.058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Javanese</td>
<td>69.099</td>
<td>1.102</td>
<td>66.915 - 71.283</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender and learners’ cultural background and types of corrective feedback factors did not give interaction effect in the population mean of writing scores.

To response the RQ7: “Does the learners’ writing accuracy differ significantly caused by gender, learners’ cultural background and types of corrective feedback factors?”, it was seen on the three-way ANOVA table. From the output in Table 3, the F value of gender and types of WCF was 1.095 and the Sig. The value was 0.363. As it was higher than 0.05, it was said that the hypothesis of null expressing that gender and learners’ cultural background and types of corrective feedback factors did not give interaction effect in the population mean of writing score was not rejected, and the hypothesis of alternative was not accepted. Therefore, it was said that there were no differences significantly on the learners’ writing accuracy caused by gender, cultural background the types of corrective feedback factors. The further detail explanation, as described in Table 10.
Table 10. *Gender* * Cultural background * types of feedback

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Cultural background</th>
<th>Types of feedback</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Focused Direct Feedback (FDF)</td>
<td>72.667</td>
<td>2.328</td>
<td>68.053 - 77.280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Dayaknese</td>
<td>Unfocused Direct Feedback (UDF)</td>
<td>66.000</td>
<td>2.550</td>
<td>60.946 - 71.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Banjarese</td>
<td>No Feedback (NF)</td>
<td>55.167</td>
<td>2.328</td>
<td>50.553 - 59.780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Javanese</td>
<td>FDF</td>
<td>69.200</td>
<td>2.550</td>
<td>64.146 - 74.254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>UDF</td>
<td>69.167</td>
<td>2.328</td>
<td>64.553 - 73.780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No Feedback (NF)</td>
<td>55.429</td>
<td>2.155</td>
<td>51.157 - 59.700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Dayaknese</td>
<td>FDF</td>
<td>75.500</td>
<td>2.016</td>
<td>71.504 - 79.496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Banjarese</td>
<td>UDF</td>
<td>76.286</td>
<td>2.155</td>
<td>72.014 - 80.557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Javanese</td>
<td>No Feedback (NF)</td>
<td>59.142</td>
<td>2.155</td>
<td>54.989 - 63.296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FDF</td>
<td>76.700</td>
<td>1.803</td>
<td>73.126 - 80.274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>UDF</td>
<td>73.222</td>
<td>1.901</td>
<td>69.455 - 76.989</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No Feedback (NF)</td>
<td>57.375</td>
<td>2.016</td>
<td>53.379 - 61.371</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 11. The output of Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

**Dependent Variable: Writing accuracy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corrected Model</td>
<td>17.973</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>1.680E4</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>14.955</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural background</td>
<td>.150</td>
<td>.861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types WCF</td>
<td>131.546</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender * Cultural background</td>
<td>.183</td>
<td>.833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender * types WCF</td>
<td>2.011</td>
<td>.139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural background * types WCF</td>
<td>.148</td>
<td>.964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender * Cultural background * types WCF</td>
<td>1.095</td>
<td>.363</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 12. Comparisons

**Writing accuracy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(I) Cultural background</th>
<th>(J) Cultural background</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
<th>Lower Bound</th>
<th>Upper Bound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tukey HSD</td>
<td>Dayaknese</td>
<td>1.3709</td>
<td>1.27671</td>
<td>.532</td>
<td>-1.6624</td>
<td>4.4042</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Javanese</td>
<td>-1.0011</td>
<td>1.23823</td>
<td>.699</td>
<td>-3.9430</td>
<td>1.9408</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dayaknese</td>
<td>Javanese</td>
<td>-1.3709</td>
<td>1.27671</td>
<td>.532</td>
<td>-4.4042</td>
<td>1.6624</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Javanese</td>
<td>-2.3720</td>
<td>1.20487</td>
<td>.125</td>
<td>-5.2346</td>
<td>.4906</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Javanese</td>
<td>Dayaknese</td>
<td>1.0011</td>
<td>1.23823</td>
<td>.699</td>
<td>-1.9408</td>
<td>3.9430</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Banjarese</td>
<td>2.3720</td>
<td>1.20487</td>
<td>.125</td>
<td>-.4906</td>
<td>5.2346</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the table above, the mean difference between Dayaknese and Banjarese was 1.3709 (Sig. 0.532); the mean difference between Dayaknese and Javanese was -1.0011 (Sig. 0.699); and the mean difference between Banjarese and Javanese was 2.3720 (Sig. 0.635). This meant that learners’ cultural background did not differ significantly on the learners’ writing accuracy.

### Table 13. Multiple Comparisons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(I) types feedback</th>
<th>of (J) types feedback</th>
<th>Mean of Differences (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
<th>Lower Bound</th>
<th>Upper Bound</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tukey HSD</td>
<td>Focused DF</td>
<td>-19.1358</td>
<td>1.22282</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>16.2306</td>
<td>22.0411</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Feedback</td>
<td>-16.2938</td>
<td>1.24474</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>13.3365</td>
<td>19.2511</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unfocused DF</td>
<td>-2.8420</td>
<td>1.23781</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>-.0989</td>
<td>5.7829</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Feedback</td>
<td>19.1358</td>
<td>1.22282</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>16.2306</td>
<td>22.0411</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focused DF</td>
<td>-16.2938</td>
<td>1.24474</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>13.3365</td>
<td>19.2511</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unfocused DF</td>
<td>-2.8420</td>
<td>1.23781</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>-.0989</td>
<td>5.7829</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Feedback</td>
<td>19.1358</td>
<td>1.22282</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>16.2306</td>
<td>22.0411</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focused DF</td>
<td>-16.2938</td>
<td>1.24474</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>13.3365</td>
<td>19.2511</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unfocused DF</td>
<td>-2.8420</td>
<td>1.23781</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>-.0989</td>
<td>5.7829</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To sum up, to see the effect of three independent variables toward a dependent variable was in the following output.

The output above explained that all independent variables (gender, types of feedback, and interaction gender and types of feedback or types of feedback and gender) gave effect to the dependent variable. Since the corrected model was 0.000 < 0.050, it meant that the model was valid. The significance value (Sig.) of intercept was 0.000 or less than 0.05. It meant that the intercept was significant. The significance value (Sig.) of gender was 0.000 or smaller than 0.05. It meant that gender gave a facilitative effect significantly to the learners’ writing accuracy. The significance value (Sig.) of types WCF was 0.000 or smaller than 0.05. It meant that types of feedback provided a significant effect on writing accuracy. The significance value (Sig.) of gender and types of feedback was 0.332 or higher than 0.05. Since the sig. of gender and types of feedback was 0.332 or higher than 0.05, it meant that gender and types of feedback did not give effect significantly to the learners’ writing score. The next step to interpreting the result of three-way ANOVA was to find a Post Hoc test. The following table described multiple comparisons.

Based on the table above, the difference in mean between FDF and UDF was 2.8420 (Sig. 0.061). It meant that there was no significant difference between using FDF and UDF on the learners’ writing accuracy. The difference of mean between FDF and No Feedback was 19.1358\(^*\) (Sig. 0.000); the difference of mean between UDF and No Feedback was 16.2938\(^*\) (Sig. 0.000). It meant that there was a significant difference between using both focused and unfocused direct feedback and No Feedback on learners’ writing accuracy. To see the further explanation on the interaction effect between variables was described in the plot diagram as in Figure 1.

![Estimated Marginal Means of Writing accuracy](image)

*Figure 1. Estimated Marginal means of writing accuracy on WCF types 1.*
Based on the figures above, it was said that there was no interaction effect between variables. It meant that gender, cultural background and types of feedback did not give significant effect on the learners’ performance of writing.

To conclude, (1) the types of feedback gave a facilitative effect on the learners’ writing accuracy. The mean score of learners’ writing accuracy using FDF was 73.73 and using UDF was 70.97. Meanwhile, the mean score of writing accuracy without using feedback (NF) was 54.98. It
was said that the learners’ writing accuracy using types of feedback outperformed better than those who did not use feedback in control groups. However, focused direct feedback (mean 73.73) class performed similar ability as those who received unfocused direct feedback (mean 70.97). (2) In terms of gender, the learners’ writing accuracy differed significantly different between males (mean 64.37) and females (mean 68.54). The F value of gender was 14.955 and the value of significance was 0.000. In this case, females performed better than males on the writing accuracy. (3) In terms of cultural background, the learners’ writing accuracy did not differ significantly among Dayaknese (mean 66.70), Banjarese (mean 66.17), and Javanese (mean 66.80). The F value of the cultural background was 0.150 and the value of significance was 0.861 (>0.05). It was said that learners’ cultural background did not give influence significantly on writing accuracy. (4) There were no differences significantly on the learners’ writing accuracy caused by gender and the types of corrective feedback factors. The F value of gender and types of feedback was 2.011 and the value of significance was 0.139 (>0.05). It meant gender and the focused and unfocused feedback factors did not give interaction effect in the population mean of writing score. (5) There were no differences significantly on the learners’ writing accuracy caused by cultural background and types of corrective feedback factors. The F value of cultural background and types of feedback was 0.148 and the value of significance was 0.833 (>0.05). It meant that gender and learners’ cultural background factors did not give interaction effect in the population mean of writing scores. (6) There were no differences significantly on the learners’ writing accuracy caused by gender, cultural background, and types of corrective feedback factors. The F value of gender and types of feedback was 1.095 and the Sig. The value was 0.363 (>0.05). It meant that gender and learners’ cultural background and types of corrective feedback factors did not give interaction effect in the population mean of writing scores.

**Discussion**

The study was to measure the effect of focused and unfocused feedback on L2 learners’ writing accuracy with involving gender and learners’ cultural background factors. Based on the research output, it could be stated that there was a significant difference for the types of feedback (F=131.546, p=0.000), and gender (F=14.955; p=0.000) on the learners’ writing accuracy. However, the learners’ cultural background (F= 0.150; p=0.861) did not give effect. On the contrary, the interaction between: gender and cultural background (F=0.183, p=0.833); gender and types of feedback (F=2.011, p=0.139); learners’ cultural background and types of feedback (F=0.148, p=0.964); and among gender, cultural background and types of feedback (F=1.095, p=0.363) did not give significant effect on the learners’ writing accuracy. The difference between the effectiveness of FDF and UDF remained not significant. Both types of feedback had a positive impact on learners' writing accuracy. In addition, the two ways of giving feedback (FDF and UDF) seem to have a similar effect. The means core of FDF was 73.73 and UDF was 70.97.

This study was in accordance with Karimi and Fotovatnia (2010). The study showed that focused feedback and unfocused feedback gave effect to learners’ grammatical accuracy in L2 writing. It was also in line with Sheen et al, (2009). They found that both treatment groups
increased their accuracy without significant differences between them. This finding was also supported with Ellis, Sheen Murakami, and Takashima (2008), Kassim and Luan Ng (2014). This finding was also validated with some researchers (e.g., Bitchener, Young, & Cameron, 2005; Sheen, 2007; and Evans, Hartshorn, and Strong-Krause, 2011). Dealing with gender factors, the result of this study was in line with Sadeghi, Khonbi, and Gheitranzadeh (2013). Sadeghi et al. found gender gave significant on the learners' writing ability with females performing better than males. To conclude, it was noted that gender and different types of feedback had a vital thing in increasing learners' writing accuracy. In addition, corrective feedback was important for both the teachers and learners in an L2 writing class. Corrective feedback must be provided seriously and frequently to help L2 learners.

Conclusion and Recommendation
The findings proposed some thoughts concerning written feedback in an L2 writing class that might be helpful for both teacher and students in the L2 writing class. In this case, L2 learners should be made aware of the necessity of obtaining feedback. In this case, teachers should give further explanation on the procedure and set the goals together with the learners in the classroom. Teachers should plan well and do carefully to implement teacher feedback since the students would get the advantages of teacher feedback. Furthermore, the teachers' feedback should be clear that when learners understand the teachers' wants. Finally, teachers should monitor the learners during the process of giving feedback to observe their language development in writing class. As this research was conducted with only 128 learners, it was not very likely to generalize the findings. Therefore, further researches might work with a greater number of participants so that they could reach conclusions that are more generalizable.

Acknowledgments
The researcher expresses great thanks to the advisors; Dwi Rukmini, Januarius Mujiyanto, and Djoko Sutopo for the moral supporting to internationally publish this article. The appreciation is also addressed to English students as the participants of this study; the book authors and researchers who are responsible for websites visited; their family for the valuable time support; and above all, the Almighty of God for finishing this article.

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### Appendices

#### Table 2. The learners’ Accuracy

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The Interplay between Social Contexts of Power and Aggravation Strategies: Identity-specific Perspectives in Fictional Discourse

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Abstract  
This paper attempts a pragmatic analysis of the interplay between social contexts of power and sociolinguistic device of aggravation strategies concerning dialogic discourses in Vikram Seth’s novel A Suitable Boy (ASB) (1993). The paper attempts to validate that aggravation strategies have been an integral part of human discourse. It demonstrates how people use aggravation strategies to exercise power over others in different communicative contexts. It also exemplifies how power is vested in specific identities, and their role relationships in different power structures existing in the society based on their caste, age, sex, social standing, political or official identity, and how the power is exerted in the context of their social identities. The paper defines various aspects of aggravation, explains the dominant participatory identities, namely master identities, situated identities, and discourse identities and analyses how these social identities exercise power through aggravation strategies in the dialogic discourses in ASB.

Keywords: aggravation strategies, discourse identities, impoliteness, master identities, situated identities, social contexts of power

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The Interplay between Social Contexts of Power

Kumar, Thakur & James

1. Introduction

Language has been the primary tool of human communication down the ages. “Human language is not just a means to pass useful content from one person to another; it is also a means to shape relationships and thus to negotiate interpersonal meaning and relationships. When we use language, we reveal something about ourselves and establish our relationships with others” (Locher, 2013). People use language “to encourage, discourage, enhance good communication or even cause conflict between interlocutors because we need to use polite [or impolite] language for fruitful communication” (Omar & Wahid, 2010, n.p.). The mainstream sociolinguists who studied the pragmatics of politeness have studied impoliteness as a related part of politeness. The scholars who consider impoliteness also as an essential part of human communication are Brown and Levinson (1987), Leech (2007), Lachenicht (1980) and Culpeper (2005). They define impoliteness or aggravation in language use as a ‘violation of the constraints of politeness’ or ‘the opposite of politeness.’ Another aspect of impoliteness or aggravation in communication is the exercise of power over others using impolite or aggressive language. Using aggravation to exercise power is an age-old practice in human societies. The degree of power exercised through aggravation depends on the social status of the interlocutors, and their ability to use it to establish dominance over others. It is quite interesting to study various aspects of impoliteness or aggravation as a sociolinguistic strategy and apply it to literary texts to understand how it plays and interplays in real-life situations. Moreover, it is also quite interesting to understand how people use aggravation or impoliteness to establish their discursive power over others. This paper attempts to demonstrate the role and functions of aggravation/impoliteness strategies in human interactions and how people use this sociolinguistic device to their advantage in the Indian social contexts. Three dialogic discourses from ASB are analysed to illustrate the interplay of power and aggravation strategies.

2. Aggravation or Impoliteness

The use of abusive or bawdy language is by no means a modern phenomenon. Verbal abuse is as old as language itself. In aggravating language, all characteristics of polite language such as social padding, wrapping, and circumlocution are discarded. Hence, impolite language tends to become full of tabooed expressions related to sex, death, and bodily functions like excretion. According to Thakur (2008), “aggravation is noticed in situations of social breakdown, affront, quarrel, or institutions requiring extreme urgency and efficiency and it is deployed for a variety of purposes, such us to express contempt, to be aggressive or provocative, to mock authority, to simply draw attention to oneself, to release tension, and rarely for verbal seduction” (p.139).

The same factors of politeness, namely “power, distance, and rank, are operative in impolite language as well. Politeness and impoliteness are the two sides of the same coin” (Ellen, 2001, p.45). Hence, we can say that aggravating language is also rule-governed like polite language. People swear and curse according to rules. In other words, aggravating language is not irrational, or a symptom of an uncivilized and backward society and human rationality is operative in the selection of both polite and impolite devices of language.
2.1. The socio-pragmatic strategy of aggravation/impoliteness

Lachenicht (1980) argues that the purpose of using ‘aggravating language’ is to hurt or damage the hearer’s public self-image or face (p. 607). His social face is torn, and real personality is exposed. According to Thakur (2008), “aggravation manifests in direct complaints, open criticism, and coercion and the victim of aggravation is denied freedom of action and freedom from imposition. The social personality and self-image of the recipient is disapproved and sometimes even shattered” (p. 139). Aggravation attempts to expose the negative aspects of addressee’s personality, and there is no space for any civility for the hearer. The ultimate aim of the speaker is to ignore the positive side of the addressee’s personality and to embarrass and humiliate him by actively attempting to underestimate, criticize, and condemn him in terms of exposure and exaggeration of real and imaginary feelings, negligence, and vices.

Impoliteness strategies also carry culture-specific force and significance. Culpeper (2003) remarks that ‘impoliteness is the use of utterances or actions that attack one’s hearer’s face and cause social conflict and disharmony or disturbance rather than promoting harmony’ (p. 1550). The basic structure and function of aggravating language are universal though the linguistic realization and manifestation differ from society to society and culture to culture. Most of the time, the aggravating language, to use Thakur’s (2008) argument, “is extravagant and false in its semantic content, is often absurd and bizarre, and as a general rule, the hearers who are inferior in age, status, interpersonal distance, power, and ranking to the person who uses aggravating language do not use a similar language in return” (p. 139). Verbal aggravation is a source of considerable power. For example, invective command or insulting is associated with power. The use of abusive terms among relatives, as against non-relatives, is not taken to be so serious and obnoxious. Generally, the abusive language displays the pattern of abuse + rebuttal + counter-rebuttal.

Like politeness strategies, aggravating strategies are also positive and negative. Thakur (2008) claims that “positive aggravation techniques consist of the expression of disapproval, criticism, ridicule, complaint, contempt, accusations, reprimand, insult, and disliking of personal traits, characteristics, beliefs, values, and possessions. Negative aggravation strategies comprise interferences, impositions, warnings, disagreements, contradictions, and even threats and violence. Positive aggravation is generally quiet, indirect, credible, and full of pointers of underlying perils or risks. On the other hand, negative aggravation is usually loud, angry, and bombastic” (140). According to Lachenicht (1980), “there are specific strategies in using aggravation in conversation. There are positive as well as negative aggravation strategies in play in any impolite conversation’ (p. 634).

2.2. Positive aggravation

In positive aggravation, the speaker may explicitly or implicitly express his opinion or view that he does not share any ideological, group, or emotional commonality with the addressee. He may also convey that the relationship between the speaker and the hearer is asymmetric and that he does not intend to cooperate with the addressee for the satisfaction of the latter’s face wants (Thakur, 2008, p. 140). According to Lachenicht (1980, p. 634), there are twelve positive aggravation strategies. The twelve positive aggravation strategies are: (1) expression of dislike for the addressee, (2) denial of in-group status, (3) use of non-valid imperatives, (4) offending the
addressee’s sensibilities and beliefs, (5) expression of ill-will for the addressee, (6) use of sarcasm, (7) use of negative politeness, (8) disclaiming common opinions, (9) ignoring and interrupting, (10) showing disinterest in addressee’s projects, (11) failure to offer or ask for reasons and (12) refusals.

2.3. Negative aggravations

The speaker’s aim to cause insult, embarrassment, humiliation, shock, and fear can be achieved by using negative aggravation strategies. As suggested by Lachenicht (1980, p. 658), negative aggravation strategies can be realized by the use of indirectness. The negative aggravation strategies are: (1) use of indirectness, (2) use of the speech of powerful persons, (3) references to the speaker’s power, (4) questions, (5) insistence on the addressee being humble, (6) teasing and baiting, (7) use of positive politeness, (8) attempt to indebted the addressee, (10) deflation, (11) indirect and explicit challenges, (12) references to rights and obligations, (13) disagreements and contradictions, (14) increase in imposition, and (15) use of threats and violence.

3. Social Identities of Power

After defining the various aspects of impoliteness or aggravating language, it is now time to look at how impoliteness or aggravating language is put to use in the three types of participant identities operational in our society at various levels. The three types of participant identities selected for analysis are Master Identities, Situated Identities, and Discourse identities, as defined by Weber (2006, p. 114).

3.1. Master Identities

Master Identities are permanent identities, and they can crosscut all occasions of discourse. These identities are constructed and performed based on age, sex, social class. Some of the examples for master identities are, father-son, mother-daughter, father-daughter, mother-son, elder brother-younger brother, master-servant, upper caste-lower caste, and so on. Thakur (2008) argues that the participants in the ongoing discourse of master identities usually use their power based on their network of distance, power, and ranking between them (p. 247).

3.2. Situated Identities

Situated Identities are less permanent identities, which inhabit particular social settings such as teacher and student(s), superior officer and inferior officer(s), politicians and officials, police officers and ordinary people. In situated identities, one identity has socially legitimate power over the other who is expected to adhere to precise specifications. In situated identities, the powerful person exercises his power using impolite or aggressive language to establish his power over the less powerful opponent. In most situations where the powerful interlocutor uses impolite or aggressive language, the less powerful hearer generally tends to become a mute spectator or in case of responding to the aggressive behaviour, talks in a very mild tone, i.e. a tone of submission or total surrender. This mild tone or submission is to avoid the situation from becoming hostile or antagonistic and end up in more complications between the interlocutors involved in the dialogue. Furthermore, submission or surrender can be a part of an attempt to mitigate the situation and to avoid inviting future trouble(s) from the influential person.
3.3. Discourse Identities

Discourse Identities are ephemeral identities (lasting for a short time or existing only in a specific situation) which constantly shift among discourse participants. These identities are created by the incidental verbal interactions among the participants in a particular situation or set of situations. In discourse identities, the use of aggressive, abusive language stems from the need to establish power over the other with more powerful language. Most of the times, the discourse borders on verbal violence that is used in order to dominate the situation emerging out of some dire need to protect one's self or the people around.

4. Analysis

The explanation of the types of identities leads the discussion to examine how characters from ASB establish their power over others using impolite or aggravating language. The dialogues are selected for analysis represent the three types of social identities, namely Master Identities, Situated Identities, and Discourse identities.

4.1. The interplay of power in the context of Master Identity

Exercising power through impoliteness or aggravating language is a common phenomenon in relationships that are controlled by master identities who exercise power over the people who are at a lower level in the social hierarchy. In the following dialogue, extracted from ASB, the mother who holds a master identity exercises power over her daughter, who relatively holds a weaker familial position in power. In Indian society, as the position of a mother is more dominant than that of a daughter. In this extract, we see Mrs. Rupa Mehra (the mother) abusing Lata (the daughter) using aggressive and impolite language against Lata’s love affair with a Muslim boy.

**Dialogue 1**

**Turn 1**: Mrs. Rupa: ‘Be quiet! Don’t answer me back! I’ll give you two tight slaps.
Roaming shamelessly near the dhobi-ghat and having a gala time…What’s his name?

**Turn 2**: Lata: Kabir…

**Turn 3**: Mrs. Rupa: ‘A Muslim!’…What did I do in my past life that I have brought this upon my beloved daughter? … Do you want to marry him? (in a fury)

**Turn 4**: Lata: Yes. (getting angrier)

**Turn 5**: Mrs. Rupa: He’ll marry you—and next year he’ll say “Talaq talaq talaq” and you’ll be out on the streets. You obstinate, stupid girl! You should drown yourself in a handful of water for sheer shame.

**Turn 6**: Lata: I will marry him. (unilaterally)

**Turn 7**: Mrs. Rupa: I’ll lock you up. Like when you said you wanted to become a nun….

**Turn 8**: Lata: I wish I had become a nun. I remember Daddy used to tell us we should follow our own hearts.

**Turn 9**: Mrs. Rupa: Still answering back? (infuriated) I’ll give you two tight slaps. (Slapped her daughter hard, twice, and instantly burst into tears) (ASB, pp.181-182)

When we look at the conversation carefully, we find the reason for Mrs. Rupa Mehra’s aggressiveness and impoliteness. They are a reaction to her daughter’s love affair with Kabir Durrani, a Muslim boy. Mrs. Rupa Mehra considers her daughter's relationship with a man as a betrayal of her trust on her daughter. She comes to know about her daughter’s affair from Mrs.
Tandon. She told her that someone had seen Lata walking hand in hand with a boy on the banks of Ganga near the dhobi ghat. Mrs. Rupa Mehra’s aggression is caused by the socio-cultural situation that requires extreme urgency and efficiency. She uses abusive language to express her contempt over her daughter’s affair with a boy who follows another religion. She releases her tension through her reprimanding language. She mocks her daughter’s choice of a Muslim to have an intimate relationship, which is against the social norms that prohibit a Hindu girl from marrying a Muslim boy. It makes the mother more annoyed, and she threatens to lock her up as she had done earlier when Lata wanted to become a nun at an earlier occasion. She also expresses her extreme contempt of the affair by warning Lata that within a year of marriage Kabir will divorce her saying, “Talaq, talaq, talaq” (Turn 5) and she would end up on the streets. On her part, Lata resists her mother’s taunting by saying, “I will marry him” (Turn 6) with extra stress on “will.” The mother calls her obstinate and stupid and goes to the extent of asking her daughter to ‘drown herself in a handful of water for sheer shame’ (Turn 5), which is an extreme way of suggesting that Lata has no right to live for the shame she has brought to her mother. This is an extremely aggressive conversation a mother can have with her daughter. Finally, Lata’s attempt to justify her deed, “I remember Daddy used to tell us we should follow our own hearts” (Turn 8) meets with a more violent reaction from her mother. The mother says, “Still answering back? (Infuriated) I’ll give you two tight slaps” (Turn 9) and then slaps her daughter to establish her total dominance over her daughter.

In this dialogue, Mrs. Rupa Mehra’s impoliteness is provoked by what she terms as her daughter's irresponsible, stupid behavior of having an affair with a Muslim boy, which is unacceptable in the society as well as in the Hindu community. It is a sense of shame that Mrs. Rupa Mehra felt by her daughter’s action that provoked her to use impolite, aggressive and abusive language and it finally ends up in physical violence of Mrs. Rupa Mehra slapping Lata. Lata, in the given situation, is mostly a silent victim, and her attempt to defend herself from her mother’s abusive outbursts and the physical violence fails because of her situation as a less powerful participant against her mother who is more powerful due to the power vested in the hands of parents by established social norms. Thus, Mrs. Rupa Mehra, holding a socially-dominant role as a mother to map out the personal life of the children, uses aggressive and impolite language to establish more control over her daughter’s actions. Lata, confronted by her mother, has no power to counter-argue or establish her individuality through her argumentative replies. It is an outcome of the power structure established and practiced in Indian society.

4.2. The interplay of power in the context of Situated Identities

This section focuses on examining the use of impolite or aggressive language in the context of situated identity. This conversational extract takes place between Sandeep Lahiri, a Sub-Divisional Officer of the State Government and Mr. Jha, the Chairman of the Legislative Council and a friend of the Chief Minister. This conversation is a typical example of the impolite and aggressive exchanges that often happen between powerful politicians and government officers. In India, even though the government officials are conferred with so many constitutional powers, they are at the receiving end when dealing with politicians. The officers cannot retaliate to their aggression for fear of future troubles. It is habitual for the politicians to interfere and supersede the decisions of the officers and to use impolite or aggressive language with them. In this conversation, we find Sandeep Lahiri on a courtesy visit to Jha as he is his senior by age, and to discuss fund collection to celebrate Independence Day. The topic is opened for discussion by Jha,
and Sandeep Lahiri requests Jha to help him in fundraising using his influence with the people. He explains to Jha that the fund is to put up a “good show, distribute sweets, feed the poor, and so on” (ASB, pp. 962). Then, the conversation moves on to the Congress Party celebrating the Independence Day, and Jha suggests (Turn 5) that Sandeep Lahiri gives half of the money collected to the party so that it can also put up a good show on that day. Sandeep refuses saying he is collecting the fund in the capacity of a government official and that he is obliged to use it only for the specific purpose (Turn 6) and that his hands are tied to use it as he liked. He adds that there are many other political parties like the Congress Party, and in case the money is shared, it should be divided equally among all the parties (Turn 12). This denial and counter-suggestion irritate Jha, and he becomes very aggressive and abusive and attacks Sandeep Lahiri with a direct threat. Let us now read the dialogue between Jha and Sandeep Lahiri:

Dialogue 2

**Turn 1:** Jha: About the fund-raising for Independence Day.

**Turn 2:** Sandeep Lahiri: Ah yes, … In fact, Sir, I am counting on your help.

**Turn 3:** Jha: And I am counting on your help. That is why I have called you.

**Turn 4:** Sandeep Lahiri: My help? (smiling helplessly and warily)

**Turn 5:** Jha: Yes, yes. You see, Congress also has plans for Independence Day and we will take half the funds you collect, and use them for a separate display...

**Turn 6:** Sandeep Lahiri: You see sir, (moving his hands around freely in curves of helplessness) my hands are tied.

**Turn 7:** Jha: (…continued to stare, then exploded) What do you mean? (he almost shouted) No hands are tied. Congress will untie your hands…

**Turn 8:** Sandeep Lahiri: Sir it is like this- (began Sandeep Lahiri)

**Turn 9:** Jha: (But Jha did not let him continue) You are a servant of the government, (said Jha fiercely) and the Congress Party runs the government. You will do as we tell you. … How much do you think you will collect?

**Turn 10:** Sandeep Lahiri: I don’t know, Sir, I haven’t done this sort of collecting before.

**Turn 11:** Jha: Let us say, five hundred rupees. So we will get two hundred and fifty, you will get two hundred and fifty-and everyone will be satisfied…

**Turn 12:** Sandeep Lahiri: To be fair, Sir, we would have to give an equal amount to all these parties- to the communist party, to the Bhartiya Jan Sang, to the Ram Rajya Parishad, to the Hindu Mahasabha, to the Revolutionary Socialist Party-

**Turn 13:** Jha: What! (bursting out) What? (swallowing) What? You are comparing us to the Socialist party? …

**Turn 14:** Sandeep Lahiri: Certainly, Sir, Why not? The Congress is just one of many parties. In this respect, they are all same…

**Turn 15:** Jha: You equate us with the other parties? (trembling with anger)… In that case, I will show you. I will show you what the Congress means. I will make sure that you are not able to raise any funds. Not one paisa will you be able to get. You will see, you will see.

**Turn 16:** Sandeep Lahiri: Well, yes, Sir, we will see, (said Sandeep getting up. Jha did not get up from his chair. Turning at the door Sandeep aimed his weak smile at the furious Congressmen in a final attempt at goodwill. The Congressman did not smile back) (ASB, pp. 962-964)
When the conversation is analyzed, we can see how Jha is using aggressive and impolite language to establish his power over the SDO Sandeep. He exercises his power that is assumed by being a politician of the ruling party. In democratic India, political leaders are elected by people, and they are much more potent than the officials who implement the constitutional rules. The government officials are always expected to be subservient to the political leaders, toe their line of thinking and execute their orders; however, illogical they may be. When an official refuses to carry out any orders, a clash of interests arises, and the first thing to follow is the use of abusive and aggressive language. It is exhibited in this conversation, in the rudeness of Jha when he directly challenges Sandeep saying, (in Turn 15) “I will show you. I will show you what the Congress means. I will make sure that you are not able to raise any funds. Not one paisa will you be able to get. You will see, you will see” (ASB, pp. 964).

The conversation between them starts very smoothly (Turn 1 - 6), but it takes an aggressive turn (Turn 6) when Sandeep tells Jha, “My hands are tied.” In (Turn 7) we see, Jha directly challenging him, raising his voice, and shouting at Sandeep. However, Sandeep is not able to counter the threats of the politician because countering and challenging a politician means risking the future of his career and his peace of mind. Fearing future troubles from Jha, he meekly surrenders saying (Turn 16) “Well, yes, Sir, we will see,” and leaves the place thereby giving the politician the benefit of his impolite, aggressive talk. Thus, Jha wins by using aggressive, impolite, and threatening language to his advantage. He achieves power over the official by the mere use of impolite, aggressive language.

In this dialogue, Jha expresses his utmost contempt and displeasure in a very loud voice. Whereas, Sandeep becomes a meek recipient of Jha’s aggressive and rude language and swallows insult afraid of further aggravation from the situation and to protect himself from future troubles from the politician. Sandeep’s meek response and submission are the results of his present situation where he is at a definite disadvantage. This dialogue is a clear example of how people try to establish their power over others by using aggravating or impolite language in the context of situated identities.

4.3. The interplay of power in the context of Discourse Identities

In the Indian social context, establishing a discourse identity by using verbally aggressive language is a part of daily life. India is a country with different social structures, consisting of different religious class and caste identities. In such a context, discourse identities play a vital role in establishing one’s identity-driven by power over the other. The need for establishing power using aggressive and abusive language is displayed in ASB in many situations. What follows next is an analysis of dialogue from ASB in which the speaker in the capacity of a discourse identity uses very aggressive and abusive language to protect his friend from a violent mob driven by a rioting frenzy.

In this extract, Maan, and Firoz, who are friends, are walking together on a dark lane when they hear the beating of drums and frenzied shouting of a mob moving towards them. Maan smells danger, turns Firoz around by his shoulders, and asks him to run for his life, as the crowd is a Hindu crowd on a rampage. Mann is sure Firoz is in great danger as he is a Muslim, and the approaching violent crowd will surely harm Firoz. However, Firoz refuses to move, saying he will
not leave Maan alone, but Maan insists that he runs and saves his life as the crowd will not harm him as he is a Hindu. Meanwhile, the crowd of twenty to thirty men armed with spears and knives and flaming torches reaches them. The duo is confronted by the mob. Maan claims that they are not Muslims and one young man from the crowd insists that they recite Gayatri Mantra and Maan recites it. Meanwhile, one among the crowd recognizes Firoz and prompts others that he is a Muslim and insists that Firoz takes off his clothes so that they can check whether he is circumcised to make sure he is a Muslim or not. Then, Firoz is hit on the stomach using a blood-stained lathi, and he loses his balance. Maan has no other option but to use all his powers to protect his friend. As Maan and Firoz are without any weapons, the only weapon he has in his possession is his ability to speak and put up a brave verbal aggressive and abusive fight to protect Firoz from the madly violent crowd. Maan recognizes one person in the crowd, Nand Kishor, a teacher by profession, and he picks up an aggressive conversation with him challenging his sensibilities to buy more time to protect his friend. As he talks to Nand Kishor, Maan picks up courage, uses language very aggressively, establishes power, and dominates them by his aggressive and abusive language. Now, let us look at the dialogue:

**Dialogue 3**

*Turn 1: A man from the crowd:* The other’s a Muslim. Why would he be dressed like that?...

*Turn 2: Another man from the crowd:* Kill the cruel, cow-murdering haramzada – cut the sister-fuckers throat…

*Turn 3: A Young Man from the crowd:* What are you? (said the young man, prodding Firoz in the stomach with his bloodstained lathi) Quick—speak—speak, before I use this on your head—…

*Turn 4: Maan: Nand Kishor!* (shouting) What are you doing here in this gang? Aren’t you ashamed of yourself? You’re supposed to be a teacher.

*Turn 5: A Young Man from the crowd:* Shut up— Just because of you like circumcised cocks do you think we’ll let the Mussalman go? (again prodding Firoz with the bloodstained lathi)

*Turn 6: Maan:* You teach my nephew…..We’re doing no one any harm. Let us go on our way. Come! (he said to Firoz, grabbing him by the shoulder) Come. (He tried to shoulder his way past the mob).

*Turn 6: A Young man from the crowd:* Not so fast. You can go, you sister-fucking traitor—but you can’t.

*Turn 7: Maan:* (Maan turned on him, ignoring his lathi, caught him by the throat in sudden fury). You mother-fucker! (He said to him in a low growl that nevertheless carried to every man in the mob). Do you know what day this is? This man is my brother, more than my brother, and today in our neighborhood we were celebrating Bharat Milaap. If you harm one hair of my brother’s head—if even one hair of his head is harmed—Lord Rama will seize your filthy soul and send it flaming into hell—and you’ll be born in your next life as the filthy krait you are. Go home lick up your own blood, you sister-fucker, before I break your neck. He wrenched the young man’s lathi from his grasp and pushed him into the crowd. (ASB, pp.1060-61)
In the preceding dialogue, we understand that the crowd that stopped Maan and Firoz is very violent and on a killing spree and they would not listen to any reason. The mob uses filthy abusive language threatening to kill Firoz (Turn 2). Maan uses his tact and counters their aggressiveness (Turn 7) by using a more aggressive language. He threatens them with counter-volence by invoking the name of Lord Rama and threatens them of dire punishment from Lord Rama. First, Maan picks up one man from the crowd and establishes his familiarity with him so that the crowd’s aggressiveness is neutralized a bit and he could buy some time to deal with the situation by challenging his sensibilities as a teacher. He counters their physical violence with very aggressive abusive verbal violence to bail them out of the situation. Maan’s persuasive speech invoking Lord Rama, with a language, which is more aggressive than that of the young man from the crowd, gives them a chance to escape the attack of the crowd. Maan starts his conversation, “You mother-fucker!” (Turn 7). To counter the aggressiveness of the young man who calls Firoz a “sister-fucker” (Turn 6). This kind of forceful aggressive retaliation in speech counters the threat of physical violence by the young man. He tells the crowd that Firoz is his brother and even if one of his hair is harmed, Lord Rama will put him into hell with flaming fire. He uses his aggressive language with tact, creating both moral and physical fear among the opponents (Turn 7). He also points to the fact that they will be punished according to the Hindu religion and they will be born as a Krait, a deadly poisonous snake, in their next birth. It again is a threat that their actions will not go unpunished by God. He also extends his verbal violence asking the young man to go home and lick his blood to quench his thirst for blood (Turn 7). He also supports his violent language with the physical action of wrenching the bloodstained lathi from the young man who repeatedly hits Firoz. In the end, Maan succeeds in controlling the crowd and escapes protecting his friend, Firoz.

The use of aggressive and abusive language by Maan in the above conversation is an example of how one uses it to protect one’s self and others with them from any bodily harm. Here, we also see how tactfully Maan uses his aggressive language strategically to manipulate the crowd’s beliefs, and turns the adverse situation to his favor and protects his friend from the violent and angry mob. It is also evident from the situation that, using impolite, aggressive language helps people establish dominance over others in a difficult situation to safeguard their safety interests. In order to protect his friend, Maan uses powerful impolite, aggressive language and dominates the crowd by appealing to their religious beliefs as well as threatening them with expressions related to sex, bodily functions and punishment from God. It works, and the crowd becomes powerless on the face of Maan’s aggressive, impolite outbursts, which are directly aimed at them. Maan’s words become more powerful than the weapons the crowd carried with them. Maan could counter the threat of physical violence and danger to their life and dominate the crowd with his persuasive abusive speech.

Moreover, here we find a social breakdown bordering deadly violence that is a big threat to the dialogue participant who is in an extremely urgent situation. There is a threat of physical violence, padded with verbal abuse that is very aggressive and life-threatening. Also, the situation demands immediate counteraction on the part of the people at the receiving end as the situation may turn aggressive, violent, and tragic if it is not controlled immediately. In this dire need to protect one’s life, language and rhetoric give tremendous power even over the violent crowd. The dialogic power Maan establishes by negating and countering aggressive and abusive language,
which is used as a prelude to justifying their violent action proves to be successful and helps him accomplish his goal of saving his friend. This dialogue demonstrates that the use of impolite, aggressive, or abusive language stems from the need to establish power over the others. It shows how a discourse charged with verbal violence is used to dominate the situation emerging out of a dire need to protect one’s self and the friend from the physical violence of the angry mob.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the use of impoliteness or aggravating language is as old as the language itself. As we see in the dialogues analysed in this paper, the use of social padding, wrapping, and circumlocution of the polite language is discarded. Moreover, most of the impoliteness is pointed directly at the addressee and in some cases; it is used by a participant to counter the threat posed by the situation as a strategy to counter the aggressive behavior directed towards the self. It is evident from the way Maan uses aggressive language involving derogatory, abusive language to counter the immediate threat he and his friend Firoz encounter on the streets from the frenzied mob. Another characteristic of impoliteness or aggravating language use is that it is often full of tabooed expressions related to sex, death, bodily functions. It is very much present in the dialogue between Maan and the members of the violent crowd. Finally, through these analyses, we understand that the use of impoliteness or aggravation is an obvious part of our speech with its function and purpose. The use of aggravation and abusive language is also governed by norms like polite language, and it has all the rationality like that of polite language. Moreover, we can see that the use of such language is not a symptom of an uncivilized and backward society, but it is a part of any society, and the use of such language springs from the rationality that is operative in humans. Thus, it is established that, (a) aggressive and impolite language can be used to maintain power over others to establish a smooth flow of day-to-day mutual social transactions and living, (Mrs. Rupa and Lata: the case of Master Identity) (b) as a weapon to protect one's own self or the other(s) around, (Mann, Firoz against the violent crowd: the case of Discourse Identity) or (c) to release the frustrations that emanate from the clash of powered identities (Jha and Sandeep Lahiri: the Situated Identity). Furthermore, the use of aggressive language and behavior also helps to mitigate situations that pose a direct potential threat or danger to people, and also to protect the norms that govern individual roles in a societal framework. It also helps to balance the power each one needs to establish for a decent and respectful living. Thus, the impolite or aggravating language has its place and importance in contextualized sociolinguistic communication, which helps create and maintain social order and balance in society.

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References
Improving Postgraduates’ Academic Writing Skills with Summarizing Strategy

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Abstract
Writing is one of the essential poles of language learning, and should be one of the senior interest, and concern to teachers, students, and researchers. The purpose of this study is to identify the effect of using the summarizing strategy on postgraduates’ learners. To develop the summary writing skills, two months implementation is applied to twenty Iraqi postgraduates’ learners, who are studying English as a foreign language (EFL). The participants were from two departments in the college of political sciences at A-Nahrain University, Iraq, during the academic year 2018-2019. It was carried out in a single-group pre-post-test model only. A pre-test on summary writing conducted to participants a week before the summarizing strategy applied. The experimental process of the study lasted eight weeks, where the participants received 16 treatment sessions. Five different passages choose from their textbook (Headway for Academic Skills Level3), which was recommended by the university. The selected written passage for post-test was "globalization." The participants asked to summarize the passage within 45 minutes according to the new strategy. Data of the summary written test collected, and scored according to the five criteria such as; (grammar, vocabulary, organizing, content, and coherence). The findings of the study indicated that the summarizing strategy has a significant effect on postgraduates' learners in academic writing skills, so it is recommended that this strategy be applied in the curriculum of our schools and universities.

Keywords: Academic writing skills, EFL summarizing strategy, Iraqi postgraduates' students

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1. Introduction

English is the most-used language round the world. It is the center of our learning: without it, we cannot make sense or communicate and understanding any subject via reading and writing. It's known that text as English skill is necessary for our everyday life and writing enables us to express our thoughts and idea. Writing is a skill which can be learned in the early stages of our study, starting from the primary schools up to universities. In the early stages, students begin to learn how to write letters, simple words, and their names in the English language, and then their writing ability developed according to the level of their study. Writing is very critical for our human history. (Gilbert & Graham, 2010).

Most of our students need writing skill in their fields of research, because writing is an essential element during their academic years of study. Students, who have a good script with no grammatical or spelling errors, will definitely can success in every written activity, such as; essays, assignment, research paper and their exam.

"Writing is a crucial component of language performances. English writing in both educational and professional settings is increasingly important in countries of non-native speakers of English". (Leki, 2001, p.199). Writing is used to inform, to learn, to persuade, to entertain, and also to self-reflect. It is essential in terms of skill that students' need to be successful in college (Graham, 2012). Writing is not just the final, polished draft. Writing involves routines, skills, strategies, and practices, for generating, revising, and editing different kinds of texts. (Fink, 1998)

The writing process involves teaching students to write in a variety of genres, encouraging creativity, and incorporating writing conventions. This process can be used in all areas of the curriculum and provides an excellent way to connect instruction with state writing standards. Writing in the disciplines varies widely in terms of content, and research methods and citation styles (Friedrich, 2008).

Academic writing is critical to present students' arguments in a logical order and to arrive at conclusions. In academic writing, writers always interact with each other's' texts, and so there will be frequent references to the ideas, thinking or research of other authors writing in this field. Hayland (2002) asserted that "Academic writing is not just about conveying an ideational "content"; it is also about the representation of self. Recent research has suggested that academic prose is not entirely impersonal, but that writers gain credibility by projecting an identity invested with proper authority, displaying confidence in their evaluations and commitment to their ideas'. (p. 1091)

Summarizing as a strategy encourage students to develop their steps in writing, starting with traditional pen, and paper to writing a short story, an article and ending with the most updating social media. It is the act of providing a clear statement of the essential points. When a student writes in his ideas, and thoughts using certain words and phrases will encourage him to express his point of view .and it helps him to demonstrate and understand the relevant information.

2. The Problem

English is a difficult and challenging task for many non-native English-speaking and writing students. Academic writing appears to be one of the most important skills for university students to
learn. These challenges in English learning are found by Arab learners, because they tried to transfer their mother tongue language to the foreign language. (Lakshmi, 2013)

Enhancing English language proficiency, especially, academic writing ability at postgraduate level is the precondition to promote and extend research work in the Arab universities. It is observed that traditional English language courses based on general English cannot serve the needs of university students for research writing as plurality of postgraduates do not point out any writing ability, especially, academic writing skills needed to promote research activity in Pakistan. (Sajid & Siddiqui, 2015)

Generally, in Iraq, most of our undergraduates' and postgraduates 'ESL students have many difficulties in academic English writing, they don’t have enough experiences in writing an assignment, this is due to the different level of their linguistic and educational backgrounds. Moreover, academic writing been ignored in our universities, and colleges for many years and this is due to the traditional methods of teachings which neglected this kind of activity. (Al-Badi, 2015). Therefore the postgraduates’ students in Iraqi universities faced a lot of problems when they are instructed to write their academic assignments such as critical reviews, paraphrasing exercises, summaries, term papers and theses in English during their course of study where a high standard of academic writing competence is required (Rabab’ah, 2001). This statement is compounded by the fact that the students have not been taught academic writing or attended such workshops prior to joining in an English language master’s program me. Learning to write involves the ability to reflect upon and talk about one’s writing. It is a highly sophisticated activity which includes the “active control over cognitive processes engaged in learning” (Hattie, 2010, p.188).

Al-Badi, (2015) asserts that ESL learners suffer from the lack of knowledge of how to organize their idea and information about the chosen academic subject and how to summarize the written text. The lack of strategic skills is the cause of students’ difficulties in writing useful summaries. Poor writing skills lead to inequality results. When students lack skills in these areas, their writing may be unsatisfactory in multiple ways from poor grammar and syntax to the unclear organization to weak reasoning and arguments. As a result, students have not had enough practice to develop a set of advanced writing skills. Nunan(1989) pointed out that “writing is an extremely complex, cognitive skill for everyone because, in this activity, the writer has to show control of some variables simultaneously” ( p.36). It is a thinking tool.” It is a tool for language development, for critical thinking, and for learning in all disciplines.” ( Bjork & Raisanen,1997, p.8).

Teaching students how to write summaries is a task that many teachers view with distaste, and even trepidation. Some considered summarizing is boring to explain, and tedious to grade, so they avoid both as far as possible. Stein, Dixon, & Isaacson (1994) suggest that "writing disabilities" derive from too little time allocated to writing instruction or from instruction inadequately designed for the learning needs of students. (p. 392).

3. The Significance
Written language skills are a vital part of many positions: it is the key to communication. Suitable offers a message and a connection with others. Whether it's an assignment, letter writing, and reports or any other way, to become a good writer needs a lot of practice.
Graham & Harris (2016) noted that, "Good writing is not a gift. It is forged by desire, practice, and assistance from others. You can play a central role in this development by teaching writing effectively." (p.359). It’s a fundamental skill that is practiced over and over again; because without sufficient practice, students cannot develop their writing skills to a higher level. Students use writing skill to help them to think through, clarify, and develop their new ideas about how they might respond to the title that been set. Writing is the painting of the voice. (Voltaire) It’s a powerful tool if appropriately wielded properly (Creme & Lea, 1997, p. 115) asserts that 'you may not know what you think until you have written it down." Several studies in the development of thinking skills and for language development have shown that it is necessary to develop writing skills through summarizing strategy. (Graham & Herbert, 2011)

Academic writing is necessary for all students, academics, and researchers, and no one can deny its importance, as writing academic assignments are common learning situation at university. Writing needs to know about grammar, genre, and vocabulary. It is the ability to self-regulate one’s learning (Graham & Harris, 2000; Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1997).

Students will, therefore, need to extract the relevant information from each paragraph when making a summary. (Marse, 2008) asserts that an academic review is the ability to put the main points of a source text in brief form. Teaching students how to summarize will improve their memory for what is read. Summarization strategies can be used widely in every content area. Summarizing is an essential skill in academic writing; it is useful in many types of writing, and at different points in the writing process. Summarizing requires crucial reading, thinking and writing skills which are fundamental to success at any course level.

Summary skills are crucial factors in an academic setting because students are frequently required to produce summary assignments; however, summary writing is a complicated task to accomplish during a school year. Proficient students may monitor their understanding of a text by summarizing the passage as they read. They distinguishing the essential information, and re-stated it into a few short cohesive sentences.

The advantage of summarizing lies in showing the "big picture," which allows the reader to frame what you are saying, and for the writer to gain a better sense of where you are going with your writing, which parts need refinement, and whether you have understood the information you have gathered.

4. Aim of the Study
The study aimed to examine the effect of summarizing strategy on postgraduates' learners in improving their English academic writing skills.

5. Hypothesize of the Study
The present study is hypothesized the followings;
1. Summarizing strategy has a significant effect on postgraduates' students in improving English academic writing skills.
2. Summarizing strategy hasn't any significant impact on postgraduates' students in developing English academic writing skills.
6. Limits of the Study
This study is limited to:
1. Postgraduates from the College of political sciences at University at Al- Nahrain during the academic year (2018-2019).
2. The prescribed textbook is "Headway Academic Skills: level 3 Student's Book".

2. Literature Review
2.1. What is summarizing?
Summarizing is defined as a short statement that explains the main idea or facts for something written, such as a report, a story, or any written text. (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019). It is about how to put the main idea in the writer's own words, including the main points only. It is useful for different types of writing. Summarizing is the ability to identify and select relevant information about the main idea in the text is vital in producing a fruitful summary.

A summary is a shortened version of a text. It is the way of how to inform your reader of what is the book about. It describes its main idea, and summarizes the supporting arguments that develop that idea. A summary is a simple and easy way to understand and doesn’t contain any idioms, metaphors, sayings, and complicated English style. The review is almost always in the writer’s own words. However, keywords can be used directly from the passage. It is the way of reducing and shorten the text to one-third or one-quarter its original size by getting the main idea of the said article, stories, or essay. (Buckley, 2004)

Writing a summary of what you know about your topic before you start drafting your actual paper can sometimes be helpful. Summarizing teaches students how to take a large selection of text and reduce it to the main points for amore concise understanding. Upon reading a passage, summarizing helps students learn to determine main ideas and integrate essential details that support them. It is a technique that enables students to focus on key words and phrases of an assigned text that are worth noting and remembering.

Figure 1 Shows Summarizing Text
2.1.1. Why is summarizing important?
Summarizing is one of the most useful strategies in teaching that we have today; it is the process to select important information from the main text. It is one of those skills that may seem very easy to a teacher but can be difficult for students who have not been adequate knowledge of how to summarize. Many studies state that summarization is one of the effective strategies that should be used in the classroom to develop students writing skill, it requires students to concentrate on the main ideas of a text and then choose the vital information without deleting the key concepts. Spack (1988) has mentioned that the most vital skill a student can engage in is "the complex activity to write from other texts", which is "a major part of their academic experience."(p.42)

Summarizing helps English second language learners to develop their thinking skills because they try to restate the information in the text. It also improves the ability to evaluate details by choosing the important details when they summarize the text. (Freeman & Freeman, 2009; Zwiers, 2008; Frances, et al. 2006)

Summarizing requires readers to focus on the main elements of a text, and to decide what is essential. Writing a summary is a fundamental skill for both writers and readers who read- along with the passage. According to Havola (1986), good summarizers master reading techniques; they first find meaning in the text and figure out how different parts of the text are connected (p.138). It helps those readers to review what they had read and re-write it again depending on their experiences and imagination.

2.1.2. The Benefits of Teaching Summarizing Strategies
Summarization, in general, provides many benefits for both teachers and students as well.
1- Summarizing builds comprehension by helping to reduce confusion.
2- Summarizing helps to find the main points and key details
3- Summarizing saves time during test review sessions
4- Students can construct personal meaning.
5- Students learn how to discern the essential ideas in a text,
6- Students can improve their memory for what been read.
7- Students and teachers find out what they know and what they still need to know.
8- Teachers discover what students understand and remember.
9- Teachers discover student held misconceptions and misunderstandings.
10- Teachers train students to process the information they read intending to break down content into short pieces.
11- Teachers train students to process the information they learn with the goal of breaking down content into succinct pieces.
12- This strategy be used with the whole class, small groups, or as an individual assignment. (Jones, 2007; Lorcher, 2018)

2.2. Academic writing
Academic writing is a formal language derived from Latin, and it refers to the language and associated practices that people need to undertake study or work in English medium higher education. (Gillett, 2011). It is an essential part of thinking and learning in school contexts,
particularly in the light of 21st-century demands (Johannessen, 2001), and writing tasks are “critical tools for intellectual and social development” (Bruning & Horn, 2000, p.30).

Academic writing is characterized by evidence-based arguments, precise word choice, logical organization, and an impersonal tone. It is stringy, which means it has one central point or theme with every part participate in the mainline of argument, without digressions or repetitions. (Valdes, 2019).

Academic writing is any formal written work produced in an academic setting. It requires a formal tone and using correct punctuation, grammar, and spelling. Learners have tried to keep their writing straightforward and clear, and don’t include any information that isn’t necessary to support the text. In academic writing, writers always interact with each other’s texts, and so there will be frequent references to the ideas, thinking or research of other authors writing in this field. (Crème & Lea, 2003 & Borg, 2008).

Academic writing refers to a style of expression that researchers use to define the intellectual boundaries of their disciplines and their specific areas of expertise. Characteristics of academic writing include a formal tone, use of the third-person rather than first-person perspective (usually), a clear focus on the research problem under investigation, and precise word choice.

2.2.1. Features of Academic Writing
Academic writing has five main characteristics:
1. Evidence-based referencing and citing
2. Appropriately structured
3. Organized clearly
4. Demonstrates critical reading, writing and thinking
5. Written in an appropriate style

(Bourdieu & Passeron, 1994)

3. Methodology
3.1. Participants
The participants of this study were 50 postgraduates of four departments in the college of political sciences at Al-Nahrain University in Baghdad. The survey conducted throughout the academic year 2018-2019.

3.2. The Sample
The sample of the study consists of 20 postgraduates chosen randomly from two departments in the college. Their age ranged from 25 to 29. All participants were learning English as a foreign language and receiving the regular eight weeks writing course within two hours weekly.

3.3. The Design
This research was conducted in an experimental design with one-group pretest-posttest design to find out their performance in writing an academic essay through summarizing strategy.

3.4. Materials
The instrument used in the present study was a written test. The test aimed at measuring postgraduates’ ability in summarizing academic texts by using the summarizing strategy. The
participants were given a written passage to be read and summarized in the last phase of the explicit summarizing instruction they were involved in.

3.5. The Instrument of the Study.
The researcher used the following instruments, to fulfill the aim of the study.
1- In this research, a pre- and post-tests in writing were administered. Five expository texts were chosen from Headway Academic Skills Level 3 Student's book for reading and writing. All the passages were selected from the same book, which been suggested by the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The reading comprehension passages were 400-600 words in length. The topics of these passages were in different subjects.
2- Summarizing strategy was used in the instructional program.
3- Check-list of ten items was used to know the student’s idea about the new approach. (See Appendix A).

3.6. The Validity and Reliability of the Test
The researchers gave the exam to university professors, supervisors, and teachers of the English language. They were asked to see the validity of the study, whether it is related and appropriate or not. All agreed that the study was suitable and can evaluate the students’ ability to write academic writing. Cronbach Alpha was used, and it was (0.65), so, the researchers felt confident about the validity and reliability of the exam.

3.7. Pilot Study
A pilot study was conducted before the experimental study to test and revise the material and the methods (Mackey& Gass, 2005). The participants in the pilot research were not a part of the experimental research, so the results were not included in the study. The researcher conducted the pilot study on five students who are studying the English language in the same college.

3.8. Lesson Plans on Summary Writing
The research puts his plan and explains the study, and how to use the summarization strategy to his participants. It is also essential that students practice the summarization strategy and get feedback from the teacher about the quality of their summaries. When participants need help, the teacher should encourage them to use modified or elaborated methods of summarization that best fit the students and the situation.

3.8.1. Steps for Summarizing
The students were instructed to implement the summarizing strategy in writing through the following steps:
1. Read the whole text you are summarizing carefully and with full concentration at least twice to make sure you understand it.
2. Highlight the main points and keywords and eliminate them.
3. List key-words in the order they appeared in the passage.
4. Identify the portions of the text that support the main idea; underline these sections
5. Delete the useless information such as illustrations, quotations, etc. from the original passage.
6. Paraphrase the key points and rewrite them again by using your own words.
7. Combine your sentences using transitional words or phrases.
7. Summarize each part, paragraph, or segment in one to two sentences.
8. Your summary should be shorter than the original text for about one-third of its original size.
9. Do not add anything beyond the author’s ideas (do not include your opinion)

3.9. Procedure
At the beginning and before starting the treatment sessions, a pet-test was given to all the participants to make sure that they had the same level in writing. The participants did not receive any instruction about summarizing strategy. The chosen text was "The UK educational system," it consists of 315 words taken from their textbook, Headway for Academic Skills Level 3 page 6. To be tested as a pre-test. The researcher asked the participants to read the written essay and re-write the passage once again in their language within 45 minutes. Certain English experts evaluated the pre-test. (See Appendix B)

The researcher informed his postgraduates that this strategy would help them to write a summary, and it can help them to improve their academic writing skills. In the first week of the treatment, the teacher explained the summarizing strategy and stating its goal and importance, then he tries to write the primary sentence of the first paragraph in a text presented to students before starting the session, and then asked students if the details shown in the following sentences give the main idea, then the researcher asked his students to find the primary sentence of the next paragraph in the passage and how to use keywords or phrases to identify the main points from the text and deleting the unessential details in the passage.

The teacher encourages his participants to monitor their learning to evaluate, whether they used topic sentence selection strategy appropriately. The teacher-guided participants with the steps of summarizing and how to determine the statements that support the main idea by revealing sentences, which are more central to the main idea. During the instruction, the learners learned summary writing as a part of their regular class program. They were given five different texts to be read in which each passage has 400 to 600 words in length, and with different subjects, such as:

1-Music used as a healing therapy 385 words
2- Lessons from Curitiba, 540 words
3- Anew capital, 339 words
4-World of water 380 words
5- Providing water for the world 436 words

After the instruction sessions finished a post-test was conducted at the last week of the experiment. The post-test aimed to find if there are statistically significant differences between participants before and after the treatment. The procedures in the post-test were the same as the pre-test. Participants asked to write a summary of a passage chosen from the corresponding text-book and under the same conditions as the pre-test. The selected passage was "Globalization: is it force for good or for bad,' it consists of 495 words, page 37 (See appendix C).

For assessment, the researcher collected the papers for the writing test and read over them to make sure they understand the summarization process.
The results statistically analyzed by using analytical scoring for measuring specific written criteria of writing such as; (grammar, vocabulary, organizing, content, and coherence) are scored from 1 to 5. The subjects' scores were out of 100.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1. Data analysis

The research collected the testing result of the participants after the end of the test. The final results analyzed according to the five writing criteria (grammar, vocabulary, organizing, content, and coherence) to see if there are any changes in the participants' performance in academic writing through summarizing strategy. The results are presented in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing Parts</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>St. Deviation</th>
<th>T-Value</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>-14.119</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>3.34</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>2.02</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>-16.988</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizing</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>-8.948</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>-12.069</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coherence</td>
<td>Pre</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>-28.213</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Post</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>42</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above result shows that the mean score and standard deviation for the pre-test in grammar were (M =2.39, SD =.66), while in the post-test was (M =3.34, SD =.39). The mean score and standard deviation for the pre-test in vocabulary were (M =2.02, SD =.47), while in the post-test was (M =3.31, SD =29). The mean score and standard deviation for the pre-test in organizing were (M =2.43, SD =.74), while in the post-test was (M =3.23, SD =.30). The mean score and standard deviation for the pre-test in content were (M =2.36, SD =.46), while in the post-test were (M =3.25, SD =.46), and the mean score and standard deviation for the pre-test incoherence was (M =1.92, SD =.51), while in the post-test was (M =3.47, SD =.42), at 0.05 significance level. The result of analytical analysis shows that the score of the five criteria of writing such as; (grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, organizing content, and coherence) indicate that there is a significant difference before and after the treatment.

4.2. Discussion

According to the research questions if the summarizing strategy effects on postgraduates' performance in writing an academic passage or there isn’t any effect. The results show that summarization is successfully applied as a strategy to improve learners' performance in academic writing, so the null hypothesis is rejected.

The writing scores for postgraduates' in the post-test showed a significant improvement, which indicates that summarizing strategies had a significant effect on writing skill. The learners
aware to reframing the central passage in their way; they know how to organize the main idea and
the related details in their own words caring about all the language features.

The result of this study is similar to (Pakzadian, 2011); he tries to explore" The Effectiveness
of Using Summarization Strategies on EFL learners' level of Comprehending English Texts." The
researcher reached to the conclusion that summarizing strategy plays an active role to help teachers
and teacher trainers. This study is also similar to (Özdemir, 2018); he tries to examine the "Effect
of Summarization Strategies Usages and Narrative Text Summarization Success". The results
showed that there is an increase in the mean score of the post-test for the favor of the students who
used the summarizing strategy. This study is also compatible with (Mallia, 2017), "Strategies for
Developing English Academic Writing Skills.' The research discusses essential ‘pre-writing’ tasks,
and outlines some of the crucial elements of academic writing; these often focus on paragraph
structure, necessary components of an essay, and different functional types of essays. The researcher
uses many strategies for developing English academic writing skills.

5. Conclusions and Suggestions
5.1. Conclusions
This study was designed to find out how if the summarizing strategy can improve Postgraduates’
academic writing skills in the college of political sciences. The pre - post results of the treatment
showed that the summarizing strategy has a positive influence on postgraduates' learners to
understand the passage and how to re-state it again in their words and phrases. The results showed
that there is a statistically significant difference in the postgraduates' performance before and after
the treatment. This treatment revealed that the summarization strategy could be successfully applied
to improve learners' ability in academic writing skills.

5.2. Recommendations
Due to the conclusion of the study, many recommendations could followed as;-
1- Further researches are recommended to reveal some techniques and strategies to increase students'
ability in academic writing.
2- More studies could conduct to find the effect of summarizing strategy on other activities, such as
reading and listening.
3- Summarization strategies should include in the curricula of education through teaching the
English language.

5.3. Suggestions
Based on the conclusion and recommendations of the students' performance in summarizing texts,
the following pedagogical implications are considered.
1- Teachers should improve students' writing skill by using summery strategy and evaluate the results
on using this strategy.
2- Encourage students for more practices in using such modern strategy in writing, like paraphrasing
and note -taking approaches that develop the student's thinking process.

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References

Improving Postgraduates’ Academic Writing Skills with Summarizing Strategy

Khazaal


Appendices
Appendix (A)
Student’s Summary Checklist

Dear student,
Use the following checklist to critique your summaries or those of your peers. Please. Answer (Yes, Poor, and No.) in the right place.

Student Name------------------- Time: 20 minutes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Did the first sentences you mention give the author and the title of the article of the original text?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Did you identify the main idea at the beginning of your summary?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Did you include all the essential points of the original text in summary?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Did you delete the unnecessary information found in the original text?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Did your summary read like a unified, clear, and accurate paragraph?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Did you keep the author’s meaning the same, not including any details, ideas, or opinions that be eliminated without diminishing the reader’s understanding?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Did you use your own words, your opinions or analysis?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Did you use citation expressions to refer to the author’s ideas?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Did your summary is balanced and objective.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Did your summary read like a unified paragraph, with no apparent errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thank you for your collaboration
Appendix (B)
Sample of one of the Postgraduate's pre-test in Academic Writing Skills
Without the Summarizing Strategy

UK Educational System

All children between 5-6 years in the UK must receive a full time education. 90% of those children joined the state school. In Wales, Scotland, and England, the educational system are the same while in Scotland is different. The school year started from September to July. It's divided into three terms, about 3 weeks each. Students' attended school from Monday to Friday, starting from 9 am to 3:30 pm. Students had morning break, lunch, and a break. Children, (girls and boys) joined school from 9:15 am.

They apply the National Curriculum, which includes English, Mathematics, and Science, and others like History, Geography, physical education, Music and Art. While in Northern Ireland, the curriculum includes Irish language. Students at age 11 joined the comprehensive school and have different abilities. 30% of students of age 16 who must have GCSE exams in ten different subjects, leave the school and have another work. Students who remain in education either continue at school for up to two years or go to a special college. Students must specialize in three or few subjects, and there are another exam, at the age of 16 (AS level) and 18 (A level) at the age of 18. Good results enable them to join university.
Appendix (C)
Sample of one of the Postgraduate's post-test in Academic Writing Skills with the Summarizing Strategy

Globalization: Is It Good or Bad?

Globalization is defined as the process through which integration and interaction of countries and people across the world. It is a result of investment, outsourcing manufacturing and international trade. All these are supported by information technology, with an aim of bringing economies of various countries together.

It is an economic concept that works by using movement of goods and people across borders. Most economists agree that globalization provides a net benefit to individual economies around the world, by making markets more efficient in increasing competition and spread wealth more equally around the world.

Globalization has enabled international trade and allowed different countries to utilize competitive advantages in terms of production.

The concept of globalization raises many questions and controversial issues. Some argue that globalization is positive development as it will give rise to new industries and more jobs in developing countries. Others say globalization is negative in that, it will force poorer countries of the world to do whatever the big developed countries told them to do.

Finally, globalization makes the world global community as one village.

(150) words
Phrasal Verbs in English as a Second/Foreign Language

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Abstract:
Phrasal verbs are used very regularly in the English language, and native English speakers are found to use phrasal verbs on a daily basis and cannot do without the use of phrasal verbs in everyday communicative situations. However, phrasal verbs in English language teaching as a second/foreign language is almost non-existent. That is, English as a second language (ESL)/English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching environments, in the Arab world, and specifically in Iraq, hardly teach the meaning of phrasal verbs to students, and neglect teaching the correct ways of using them, despite the fact that they are an essential part of daily native English communication. Therefore, and due to the vitality of phrasal verbs to native speakers of English, ESL/EFL students should be taught and educated to be capable of understanding and using phrasal verbs when interacting in English because knowledge of phrasal verbs would normally lead to better English language proficiency and more native-like communication. Nonetheless, phrasal verbs are not easy, and students often find them difficult, because phrasal verbs carry a specific meaning which is not inferable from the meaning of its composing words inseparable form as well as other reasons which have been explained within this paper. Hence, this paper points to the necessity of including phrasal verbs in English language teaching. Through implementing a qualitative approach, the aim, within this paper, is to identify and list causes of difficulty that learners of the English language may face when it comes to knowledge of English phrasal verbs, with regard to the spontaneous and fluent use of phrasal verbs by native English speakers. The significance, here, is to point out the need of taking this matter into serious concern and to offer suggestions and recommendations for better English as a second/foreign language learning and teaching, all in hope of better English language proficiency and ability.

Keywords: English as a foreign/second language, phrasal verbs

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Introduction

Learning English as a second/foreign language, in the Arab world, is a requisite and undisputable part of its educational system from primary school to upper levels such as higher university education. Yet, teaching phrasal verbs and the correct use of them in English communication and their necessity is poor and underprovided in English as a second/foreign language teaching classrooms and ESL/EFL environments, specifically in Iraq. Nonparallel to native counterparts, the use of phrasal verbs is found to be hard and difficult for non-native English language learners, especially Arabic mother-tongue students who study English as ESL/EFL.

Phrasal verbs, are verbs which carry a specific meaning that cannot be referred to by analyzing the meaning of its constituent words. Phrasal verbs, furthermore, are rarely found in the Arabic language. Nevertheless, phrasal verbs are a vital part of English language vocabulary and is a basic part of this language's history, heritage and culture. Phrasal verbs are extremely important in English verbal communication, therefore English native speakers use phrasal verbs when they communicate spontaneously and daily. In linguistic studies, it is said that phrasal verbs add flavor to communication and speech. Thus, learning to use phrasal verbs is necessary in order to achieve native-like English language communication. Nevertheless, learning the meaning of phrasal verbs and proper use of them is not as easy as one might think. English EFL/ESL students and learners usually lack the ability to understand the meaning of phrasal verbs when communicating in the English language and lack the ability to communicate using phrasal verbs properly and efficiently. Most English language learners, especially Arabic mother-tongue speakers find using phrasal verbs to be extremely difficult and uneasy, unlike native English speakers, who use them subconsciously and almost every day. Recognizing the meaning of phrasal verbs which are commonly-used in the English language as well as being capable of using phrasal verbs should be regarded an essential part of English learning as a second/foreign language. Despite this, however, phrasal verbs are found to be uninclined in most English second/foreign language learning classrooms and materials. ESL/EFL environments pay very little attention to such an important feature of the English language and necessary part of everyday vocabulary. This is the reason behind this research paper with the aim to emphasize the importance of phrasal verbs through clarifying the necessity of understanding and using phrasal verbs in ESL/EFL educational systems. The aim of this paper is to stress on the fact that using English phrasal is an obligatory part of English vocabulary and native/native-like communication in English. This research suggests reasons why such an important language skill is lacking in ESL/EFL classrooms, dissimilar to native English colleagues. Possible reasons behind the nonexistence of phrasal verbs are explained within this paper, as well as listing explanations of why ESL/EFL learners face difficulties in the ability to comprehend phrasal verbs, their meaning and aptitude to communicate confidently using phrasal verbs. Here, suggestions have been given in the hope of arriving at a clear analysis of the causes of such a problem and possible solutions to overcome stated difficulties.

Literature Review

Phrasal verbs are abundantly used by native English speakers in both formal and informal communication. Phrasal verbs are highly important and are considered a basic part of the English language. There are more than 5,000 different phrasal verbs used in English. (McCarthy & O'Dell, 2004: 4)
However, it is necessary to explain what is meant by "phrasal verbs". First of all, phrasal verbs are verbs which are composed of both a verb and a particle. For example, the phrasal verb "look up" is a phrasal verb which has the verb "look" and the particle "up" as its constituent words. Similarly, the phrasal verb "get through" consists of the verb "get" and the particle "through" as its component parts also.

Nonetheless, ESL/EFL students and learners, of different backgrounds, are found incapable of using phrasal verbs. Non-native speakers, unlike natives, lack the ability to use phrasal verbs effectively and also lack the ability to understand their meaning. This is considered a problem in non-native speakers' knowledge and proficiency of the English language and a gap in English language learning attempts. One possible explanation to the fact that ESL/EFL students and learners lack the ability to comprehend the meaning of phrasal verbs and are incapable of using them in communication is due to the fact that phrasal verbs in English language carry a meaning that is different from the meaning of the constituent words of a phrasal verb. As such, learners must know the meaning of the phrasal verb as one whole unit and not to be inferred by analyzing the meaning of its words (verb/particle) separately. Therefore, the phrasal verb "look up" is composed of the verb "look" which means "to see" and the particle "up" which is the opposite of "down". For example, the phrasal verb "look up" carries a meaning as one whole unit and not separable meanings of its constituents. The phrasal verb "look up" may mean "search for information in a book or computer" as in the sentence "I will look up for the meaning of this word in the dictionary. The phrasal verb "look up" may also mean "visiting someone you have not visited for a long period" as in the example "I will look her up next time I am in Egypt". The phrasal verb "look up" may have a third different meaning which differs according to the context it is used in. This phrasal verb also, for instance, mean that "things are improving" as when saying "things seem to be looking up" carrying an non-ordinary meaning which is "things seem to be improving or getting better." (McCarthy & O'Dell, 2004, p. 6)

Notwithstanding, most ESL/EFL students lack the ability to understand and use phrasal verbs. This, in turn, distinguishes English language learners from native English speakers. For, as stated above, English speakers, of native origins, are found to use phrasal verbs plentifully, daily and spontaneously unlike ESL/EFL students and learners. As such, there is a "need to focus on phrasal verbs in English". (McCarthy & O'Dell, 2004,p.6)

Lack of exposure to phrasal verbs in ESL/EFL settings makes it hard for English language learners to process the meaning of phrasal verbs. Phrasal verbs, despite being essential in everyday English language communication, are not included in most English language learning environments and are encased in almost all ESL/EFL books and materials that are used for teaching English as a second language in the Arab world, in general, and in Iraq, in particular.

English phrasal verbs should be required and a must. Phrasal verbs need to be included in EFL/ESL teaching materials and in EFL/ESL classrooms. Taking these facts into consideration will help non-natives of English improve their English language skills.

A phrasal verb, is a verb that is made up of a verb and a particle. As well, a particle means that it is either an adverb or a preposition or both. I.e., sometimes, a phrasal verb may contain two
particles and not just one, such as "put up with", "look forward to" and "catch up with". Common phrasal verbs, for instance, include "get up", "deal with" and "turn off". (Anonymous, 2016, p.1)

A phrasal verb entails a preposition or an adverbial particle. A phrasal verb is, most often, composed of either one of the following particles: back, up, down, round, around, away, at, about, for, in, into, off, on, out, over, through, to. (McCarthy & O'Dell, 2004, p.9)

As mentioned earlier also, we need to know the meaning of the phrasal verbs as a complete unit and not the meaning of its verb and particle in a separable form. So, "look up" is a phrasal verb that as one whole unit has a different meaning than the meaning of its constituent verb "look" which means "to see" and its particle "up" which means the opposite of "down". (McCarthy & O'Dell, 2004, p.9)

Therefore, the meaning of phrasal verbs is not related to the ordinary meaning of its components. That is, the meaning of the phrasal verb "carry out" which means "to do" or "to conduct" does not carry the common ordinary meaning of its constituents. So, "carry" which means "to lift" and the preposition "out" which means the opposite of "inside" is not similar to the meaning of the phrasal verb "carry out" as one whole unit. (Anonymous, 2016, p.1)

Nonetheless, it is also important to be aware of the grammar pattern of a phrasal verb. A phrasal verb may follow either one of the beneath grammar patterns. A phrasal verb may consist of a verb with no following object as in "We finished the meeting late so we decided to eat out" in which the phrasal verb "eat out" has no following object as, for instance, "eat out the meal" which is incorrect. (McCarthy & O'Dell, 2004, p.9)

A phrasal verb may consist of a verb which must have a non-human object. For example, "This photo brings back happy memories" or "This photo brings happy memories back" in which the phrasal verb grammar pattern is "brings back something" or "brings something back" and not "brings back my sister". (McCarthy & O'Dell, 2004, p.9)

A phrasal verb may have a grammar pattern wherein the verb must be followed by a human object as in "ask somebody out" or "ask out somebody" as in the sentence "I really want to ask Ann out" and not "ask my cat out" which is illogical and incorrect. (McCarthy & O'Dell, 2004, p.9)

Some phrasal verbs may entail either a human or non-human object. So, for example, "look after somebody" or "look after something". For example, we can say either "Please look after my baby while I'm cooking" or "Please look after my cat while I'm away". (McCarthy & O'Dell, 2004, p.9)

Some phrasal verbs must have an object, and the object can come either before or after the verb, according to the sentence used and according to the context. These types of phrasal verbs are called "separable" phrasal verbs as in the separable phrasal verb "turn off" which means "stop working" which may be used in a sentence in two ways: "I turned off the light" or "I turned the light off." (Anonymous, 2016, p.2)
Some phrasal verbs must follow either the grammar pattern wherein the particle must come after the object as in "I will ring her back later" not "I will ring back her" and "Please, look after my cat while I'm away" and not "Please, look my cat after while I'm away". (McCarthy & O'Dell, 2004, p. 9)

The final grammar pattern, a phrasal verb may consist of, is the pattern wherein the object can be before or after the particle. So, one may say "drop off somebody/something" or "drop somebody/something off". As in the example "I dropped off the delivery at his house" or "I dropped the delivery off at his house". (McCarthy & O'Dell, 2004. p. 11)

Nevertheless, it must be realized that a verb that is followed by a number of prepositions or adverbs and does not change its meaning, but keeps its ordinary meaning, is not a phrasal verb. I.e., the verb "run up" is not a phrasal verb because "run up" which means "to move quickly" as in the sentence "The child ran up the hill" keeps its ordinary meaning "to move by foot" despite being followed by a number of different particles, such as "across", "away", etc. And, therefore, all the above are ordinary verbs that have a normally predictable meaning and do not carry an abstract or different meaning. Thus, the above examples are, despite being similar in shape and form to a phrasal verb, are not phrasal verbs. (Anonymous, 2016, p.1)

There are several verbs, which make up a large number of useful everyday phrasal verbs. These verbs are break, bring, call, come, get, give, go, look, make, pass, keep, knock, pick, put, pull, run, set, take, turn.

These verbs form parts of a huge number of the most common used phrasal verbs. Verbs can have a concrete meaning in which the verbs refer to a concrete action as in "break" which means "put into pieces or parts" but more often has an abstract meaning too. As in "Look back on your past memories" which has an abstract meaning that is "to recall" or "to remember."

Notwithstanding, the verb "look back" has a concrete meaning as in "As she was walking she looked back at her crying child" meaning "she turned back to see her child as she was walking away". So, the verb "look back" can be both a regular verb, with an ordinary meaning, or a phrasal verb, with its own special meaning. (McCarthy & O'Dell, 2004, p. 11)

Likewise, the verb "ran away" in the sentence "I ran away from the large dog" is not a phrasal verb because it carries an ordinary meaning which is "move quickly by foot". While, the same verb in the sentence "you shouldn’t run away from your responsibilities" is a phrasal verb because its meaning, in this sentence, is abstract. By an "abstract" meaning, we mean something different, and not ordinary. Also, the verb "ran across" in the example "I ran across the green field" has an ordinary meaning which is also "to move by foot" while "ran across" is considered to be an example of a phrasal verb in the sentence "I ran across my school teacher last week" because it carries an abstract meaning, that is different from the meaning of its composing verb and particle when separated. Hence, the phrasal verb "ran across" in this example means "to meet by chance", which has an abstract and figurative meaning, not an ordinary, unchangeable, normal, and predictable meaning. (Anonymous, 2016, p.1)
Phrasal verbs are used in both written and spoken English and are part of everyday vocabulary, especially common native and native-like communication. Native English speakers do not do without phrasal verbs when speaking and communicating in typical, day to day, communicative situations and settings. Nevertheless, in formal communicative situations, usually a phrasal verb could be replaced by a single verb which carries the same meaning of a phrasal verb. So, for instance, the sentence "I got up at 8 o'clock" consists of the phrasal verb "got up" which could be replaced by the single word "rose" as in "I rose at 8 o'clock" and, therefore, sounds more formal and technical. (Anonymous, 2016:1)

Methods

The methodology this paper follows is a qualitative one. By teaching English as a second language, in and outside Iraq, it has been noticed that ESL/EFL students and English language teaching materials, as well as other ESL/EFL environments and settings lack the presence of English phrasal verbs and hardly even implement them in ELT (English Language Teaching). Therefore being dissimilar to native English speakers and native English situations and circumstances. Hence, and by relying on the analysis and description of previous studies of phrasal verbs, their requirements and their importance, results and data within this paper have been thoroughly reached.

Discussion and Results

Despite the necessity and requirement of phrasal verbs in everyday native communication, they should not be attempted to be taught all at once as a list of vocabulary. English as a second/foreign language students should try to learn phrasal verbs as they come across them and should not attempt to memorize too many all at once. Giving examples of phrasal verbs will usually help learners of English to remember their meanings and understand ways they are used.

Nonetheless, and as explained earlier, phrasal verbs have certain grammar patterns that differ from one phrasal verb to another, for instance, some must have an object (someone/something) while others do not. Some phrasal verbs, in addition, may be separated by the object and are known as "separable" phrasal verbs, while others are otherwise. Therefore, grammar lessons on ways to correctly use phrasal verbs should be given, from time to time, in order to familiarize ESL/EFL students and English language learners of the proper ways to communicate using phrasal verbs, similar to natives. (Anonymous, 2019, p. 1)

Natives of English, unlike non-native speakers, especially in Iraq, grow up and are nurtured in an environment where phrasal verbs are used daily, subconsciously and spontaneously. Therefore, Phrasal verbs are used by native speakers habitually and frequently because native English speakers are raised capable of understanding and using phrasal verbs without any difficulty or strain.

Non-native English speakers, especially ESL/EFL students with an Arabic mother-tongue, are not accustomed to using phrasal verbs and are unaware of their necessity and importance because, for one reason, phrasal verbs rarely exist in Arabic language. Thus, ESL/EFL students of an Arabic mother-tongue, particularly in Iraq, are ignorant of the need for phrasal verbs' knowledge, their meaning and ways of using them. Because ESL/EFL students, especially in the
Arab countries, are unexposed to phrasal verbs and ways of communicating applying phrasal verbs accurately.

Another reason of difficulty in learning meanings and use of phrasal verbs is that one phrasal verb may have a number of different meanings. As exemplified earlier with the phrasal verb "look up" which has a number of different meanings and not just one or two. This, therefore, could confuse non-native English students and learners, especially if not brought up to be accustomed to phrasal verb use and are unfamiliar with this native speakers' skill.

A third reason for the difficulty that students of English as a second/foreign language may encounter when trying to learn the proper ways in using and producing phrasal verbs when communicating in English, is the various ways that phrasal verbs may be formed according to. As known earlier, there are various grammar patterns in which phrasal verbs may be formed into. So, a grammar pattern for one phrasal verb may or may not be the grammar pattern for another phrasal verb. This, accordingly, may be confusing for English language students and learners, especially if not being taught or acquainted to these points and matters.

A fourth reason in why it is difficult for ESL/EFL students to understand and use phrasal verbs well enough is that some verbs are similar to a phrasal verb but are, in fact, not phrasal verbs. This could be something well distinguished and realizable by native English speakers but a major source of confusion for non-native English speakers, especially if these non-native English speakers are not used to dealing with phrasal verbs and are not aware of differences between phrasal verbs and non-phrasal verbs. For instance, the verb "look across" mentioned above, has both an abstract meaning (meaning something different) and is, therefore, considered a phrasal verb as in the sentence "I ran across my school teacher last Friday" meaning "met by chance and coincidentally". While the same verb and similar in shape and form, as in the sentence "I ran across the green field" is an ordinary verb and is not a phrasal verb because it has a non-abstract meaning but an ordinary meaning instead. This is a major source of mix-up and confusion for non-natives of English.

A fourth possible explanation for ESL/EFL students' ignorance and incapacity regarding knowledge of the meaning of phrasal verbs and how to be capable of using them appropriately is that phrasal verbs are almost non-existent in EFL/ESL classrooms and English language teaching environments and materials. For example, As an English language teacher, it has been noticed that educational systems regarding the teaching and study of English as a second/foreign language lack the presence of exercises, drills, grammar lessons, speaking and listening audio practices which involve English language phrasal verbs. Another possible explanation of ESL/EFL students' weakness regarding phrasal verbs is that phrasal verbs also have a meaning which cannot be known from the meaning of the words that it is made up of. Therefore, it is usually difficult for non-native speakers of English to reach and realize the meaning of a phrasal verb without previous knowledge of its meaning and it is normally hard for a non-native speaker to arrive at the correct meaning and use of a phrasal verb without being taught. This, as a result, distinguishes non-native speakers of English, from native speakers, who conventionally understand the meaning of phrasal verbs.
Teaching phrasal verbs in EFL/ESL classrooms should be required because learning the meaning of phrasal verbs and how to use them will help ESL/EFL students and speakers of English, of a non-native origin, to perform better English language proficiency. Lacking the skill to understand and use English phrasal verbs is a lapse in that learner's knowledge of proper English.

The inability to communicate properly and native-like by learners of English as a second/foreign language, regardless of their backgrounds, could be for one reason, a result of their incompetence to understand phrasal verbs whether misunderstanding their meaning when listening to natural native English or misunderstanding ways to properly use them when speaking English.

Uncovering English phrasal verbs in ESL/EFL teaching is a main source of difficulty and a likely source of learning incapability. Failure to adequately learn, use and understand phrasal verbs is due to lack of exposure. English language teaching environments, classrooms, and materials lack phrasal verbs as a part of common vocabulary, do not include such a necessary language skill and lack teaching knowledge of them well enough.

Inability of ESL/EFL students to correctly understand and use phrasal verbs in the English language could be a source of mistakes and errors in students' performance. This, in turn, results to ESL/EFL students' language incompetence. Phrasal verbs being a large part of the English language's vocabulary is based upon that language's history, heritage, and culture. Accordingly, phrasal verbs should be taken into consideration and not to be overlooked.

ESL/EFL students should be given chances to try and exercise using and communicating with phrasal verbs through class exercises, tests, workouts and drills as well as listening and audio lessons that show ways native speakers use phrasal verbs and ways phrasal verbs are pronounced through in-class listening practices. Students need to be familiar with phrasal verbs by hearing native-speakers' daily speech in English with phrasal verbs use as part of the lexis.

Phrasal verbs are very important and necessary in English teaching as a second/foreign language because phrasal verbs are used in formal and non-formal speech, and are a large part of English vocabulary. Phrasal verbs are found a part of standard business, media, and everyday life.

Therefore, phrasal verbs that are frequently used in English should be taught the most, so, for instance, phrasal verbs that come about while watching T.V. programs, listening to music, reading books, surfing the internet and so on, ought to be taught to ESL/EFL students and learners. Listening and speaking courses, should include phrasal verbs, as a part of English vocabulary, especially in college education wherein English language is taught as a second/foreign language.

Non-native speakers of English, who use and understand Phrasal verbs, become more fluent and sound more native-like. Additionally, learning phrasal verbs will increase ESL/EFL students' and learners' vocabulary and lexicon of the language.

The more ESL/EFL students learn about phrasal verbs and apply them, the more creative and natural their English language shall seem. As such, the more ESL/EFL students become capable of understanding and using phrasal verbs, the more profound.
Conclusions

To conclude, phrasal verbs are used on a daily basis by native speakers, unlike non-native English speakers who lack understanding and communicating using this essential and important skill in English language.

There is a need to include phrasal verbs in English as a second/foreign language teaching. It is also crucial in ESL/EFL environments and materials to clarify grammar patterns of phrasal verbs, their meanings and how to properly use them in English. English language teachers and ESL/EFL students should be capable of understanding and using phrasal verbs when speaking in English and when dealing with the English language and its native users.

Last but not least, English as a second/foreign language teachers should highlight, to their students, the importance of using phrasal verbs and the importance of recognizing their meanings. Likewise, teachers should be familiar with commonly-used phrasal verbs and teach them, in order to help and make it easier for their students. Teaching phrasal verbs should be taken into serious concern in English second/foreign language teaching classrooms and materials, which should include phrasal verbs as a part of vocabulary, listening and speaking drills and classroom exercises.

Learning English language, native-like, requires that students of English as a second/foreign language and non-native English language learners, practice using English phrasal verbs and become more knowledgeable about the meaning of, at least, the most common-used phrasal verbs. The more, the better.

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References
Introducing the Target Language Culture to EFL Learners to Enhance Sociocultural Competence

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Abstract
This research attempted to investigate the effect that teaching English language culture has on Algerian EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners' sociocultural competence. It also aimed at showing that having no exposure to English language culture alongside learning the English language itself will affect learners' understanding and production of the language. In this light, the study attempts to answer the following questions: to what extent is the culture of the English language present in the lessons of English language that are introduced to secondary school students? What cultural background do secondary school students have about the English language? And if they do have any cultural background, what is the source of that background and whether culture teaching enhances EFL learners' socio-cultural competence? We hypothesised that teaching culture to Algerian EFL learners will increase their sociocultural competence and improve their understanding of the language. This hypothesis was tested through conducting a quasi-experimental study with a group of eighteen students from Habba Abd El-Madjid Secondary School in El-Meghaier, El-Oued (Algeria). The final results revealed a remarkable improvement among the majority of students concerning their sociocultural competence and their perception and understanding of authentic English language. Therefore, it is recommended that the element of culture should be integrated into English language curricula of Algerian schools and that, if done, it will take students' level one step further towards a better acquisition of English language.

Keywords: Competence, Communicative Competence, Socio-Cultural, Target Culture

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Introduction

In 1966, communicative competence was first introduced to the field of applied linguistics by Hymes (1972). This term means that successful communication requires more than only having linguistic competence. To be identified as a competent foreign language learner, sociocultural competence was among the competencies that Hymes believes they should be possessed in addition to linguistic competence. Sociocultural competence means to have enough knowledge about the target language culture and social norms to be able to communicate effectively in that language and to behave appropriately in the target language society. This competence is considered crucially important for the reason that language is deeply affected by its culture, and its utterances can hardly be free from any cultural interpretations.

To gain such competence, one should be sufficiently aware of the target language culture and the target society's norms. However, we noticed that culture lessons are missing as far as Algerian English language curricula are concerned. The absence of such experiences results in the formation of weak language learners with little ability to produce socio-culturally appropriate utterances, not to mention the keen understanding of the interlocutor's messages. These lessons are supposed to give learners insightful views about the culture of the foreign language under study and to enable them to have enough knowledge in order to communicate smoothly with little breakdown in conversation.

This study is an attempt to show how the different cultural aspects in the target language society can be realised in the target language itself. Furthermore, it tends to show how the possession of a considerable social and cultural knowledge can help learners to achieve the right interpretation of any utterance, form more socially and culturally fitted statements and avoid misunderstandings and breakdowns in communication.

1. Literature Review

Most of us learn a foreign language to be able to communicate in that language. Therefore, one crucial fact that we need to bear in mind is that the way people communicate differs. It is influenced by their norms, values, beliefs, attitudes, history, social status, geographical area and many other interrelated factors. In one word, we can say that their culture influences the way they communicate. Tang (1999) suggests that culture is language and language is culture which is true since language represents the mirror that reflects any society's culture and is also influenced by that culture and any changes that it may carry. Another evidence of the strong relationship between language and culture by Kramsch (1998) is the fact that language expresses, embodies and symbolizes cultural reality which clearly shows that language and culture are bounded together.

Since language is how culture is clearly expressed, then "Language teaching must inevitably be accompanied by teaching about cultural phenomena." (Risager, 2006, p.9). It is now proved that language learning should go along with culture learning and that understanding the
social and cultural aspects of any language is a crucial element to understand and produce the language itself. It is because how people create and receive the language varies from one society to another and what may be regarded as ordinary or appropriate in one society may be considered as confusing and rude in another. Recent studies in the field of foreign language teaching and learning emphasise the idea that mastering a foreign language does not only mean mastering its grammar but also having the ability to produce the language in its appropriate cultural and social context. One should be, to a considerable extent, aware of the cultural identity of their interlocutors so that they can communicate information successfully. Gao (2006) claims that the interdependence of language learning and cultural learning is so evident that one can conclude that language learning is culture learning and consequently, language teaching is cultural teaching. The same goes for Wang (2008) when he states that teaching a foreign language is teaching a foreign culture and that the foreign language teacher is a foreign culture teacher.

Foreign language learners have their own cultural identity; their own body language, hand movements, facial expressions and other linguistically distinguished expressions. When they are involved in the process of foreign language learning, they tend to subconsciously use what they have already acquired from their mother culture to fulfil specific communicative goals in the target language. For this reason, students need to learn the appropriate verbal and non-verbal behavior that goes along with any communication situation bearing in mind that any linguistic expressions, gestures or body movements that are ordinary and acceptable in their society may be perceived otherwise in another and that if the grammatical mistakes are to be tolerated by the members of a speech community, sociocultural errors are not. They are strongly emphasized and can contribute to immediate rejection by the members of the target language community.

Each utterance can have several meanings depending on the context and the circumstances under which it is produced. Only sufficient knowledge of such natural settings and situations can determine the appropriate interpretation of the utterance. However, how would EFL students react if they know the utterances that have been produced as well as the context and circumstances in which they were produced, yet still cannot interpret their meanings? Or even worse, what would they do if something they said has resulted in an unexpected response from their interlocutors? To be able to communicate in a foreign language, one should not only be linguistically but also socioculturally and pragmatically competent. For this goal to be fulfilled, the culture and social norms of the target language should be explored. This is not merely concerned with knowing and studying about such culture and society to develop awareness and allow tolerance and respect towards the other, but also and most importantly concerned with how such knowledge and information are internalized in the language itself.

Having a Sociocultural competence is of crucial importance for FL (foreign language) /SL (second language) learners. This competence refers to having adequate knowledge about the social and cultural rules that are conventional in the target language society such as the level of formality when addressing others, non-verbal communication including eye contact, gestures, facial
expressions, tone of speech, speed of delivery and length of silence or pause before turn-taking. Not only knowing them, but also appropriately applying them. In other words, to know such rules and to also see how these rules are realized in the target language. According to Hinkel (2001), both non-native speakers and native speakers may be unaware that cultures can vary as much as they do. They subconsciously perceive it to be the same in all societies which may cause a great deal of confusion, misunderstanding and even rejection among people from different cultural and social backgrounds for the reason that what might be reasonable in one society is considered to be rude, unacceptable or even a taboo in another.

Learners need to understand that there is an excellent possibility that people who speak a language other than theirs do not share the same values, norms, beliefs and concepts as they do. Moreover, their perception of the world as well as their interpretation of events and their response to what they see and hear also differs. Smith (1985, p.2), for instance, explains that "the presentation of an argument in a way that sounds fluent and elegant in one culture may be regarded as clumsy and circular by members of another culture." As a result, they need to learn that what is regarded as appropriate, acceptable or conventional in their society is not necessarily the same in the target language culture. Respectively, what is usually very normal to say in their everyday life may be considered weird, rude or even taboo in the target language society and vice versa.

Sociocultural competence is not merely about having plenty of information about the culture and the society of the target language, but it is about using the learners' pragmatic ability with what they already know about the culture and society in order to decode their interlocutor's messages and figure out their intended meanings as well as to respond appropriately to them. There is no use from filling students' brains with plenty of information about the target language culture and society if they do not know how to use them for better comprehension and production of the language.

2. Method

In this section, the sample of the study, the research method and data gathering techniques, as well as the procedure of the experiment, will be introduced.

2.1 Participants

This study is devoted to Algerian secondary school students. The sample of this experiment was a group of eighteen (18) Students selected among 254 second-year students at Habba Abd El-Madjid Secondary School 2014/2015. The method that was used is convenient sampling since the criterion adopted in choosing the representatives is their marks in the English language subject during the first trimester of the academic year 2014/2015, i.e., those who have highest scores compared to other students in the population were the subject of the experiment. The point to be proved, here, is that even students who manage to have the highest scores in English language exams lack the required amount of knowledge to be socioculturally competent. Besides, we wanted to guarantee that the students whom we are going to work with have the necessary level of English that will enable them to understand the teacher's talk.
2.2 Research Method and Data Gathering Tools
Since the study is about testing the effect of one variable which is learning the target language culture on another which is learners’ sociocultural competence and the impact that the manipulation of the independent variable will have on the dependent one, it was set to be a quasi-experimental study. In other words, an experiment was conducted including a pre-test to measure the amount of knowledge students have about English language culture, a treatment that includes lessons about different aspects of the target language culture and a post-test to examine whether or not their sociocultural competence has been improved. Also, the quantitative method of data gathering and analysis was used for it is the most helpful in measuring the difference in performance before and after the treatment as well as the extent of the relationship between variables.

2.3 Procedure
The experiment was conducted in three phases.
The pre-test was administered to all eighteen students (N= 18) to answer in a period that does not exceed one hour and a half. The test included ten questions all of which are supposed to be answered by any person with basic knowledge about English language speaking countries. The pre-test aimed to measure cultural knowledge among students which, itself, indicates their level of sociocultural knowledge. The pre-test results revealed that students do not have any cultural understanding given the fact that they could not answer questions that any person with basic cultural knowledge, regardless of being an English language learner, could answer.

Based on the analysis of the students' performance in the pre-test and after knowing their real levels on cultural knowledge, the phase of treatment and lessons preparation began. The treatment consisted of six lessons, and every lesson was devoted to a particular aspect of culture and had specific objectives that students were supposed to accomplish by the end of each session. The main aim of this treatment was to enrich students' knowledge about English language speaking countries and to implicitly make the connection between such knowledge and the language itself.

The post-test aimed at testing sociocultural competence among students and their ability to work out the learned information the cultural knowledge in a way that enables them to correctly interpret what is being said or referred to according to different social contexts. It did not have the same form and content as the pre-test. It was more in-depth and complicated than the pre-test, and it needed an active working out and manipulation of what has been learned. In addition, it had more space devoted to writing to explain answers, unlike the pre-test.

3. Analysis and Interpretation of the Results
Through the process of this experiment, many new issues were revealed and many questions were adequately answered. Through the students' overall results in the pre-test as well as their behaviours and performances during the introduced lessons, we can say that our students,
in general, do not have any sufficient cultural background about English language which is being studied for many years. Most of them do not have the cultural background they are supposed to have at their level. Moreover, the few of them who, to some degree, managed to answer some of the pre-test questions, stated that the source of their cultural knowledge does not come from English language lessons that are introduced in the classroom, but from media, internet and other sources which are known for being invalid since they encourage stereotypes and misconceptions. This answer indicates that culture of English language is also absent in Algerian English language teaching curricula because if it was even to some extent present, most of students would have been able to answer the pre-test questions which we stated before that anyone with basic knowledge about English language speaking countries can answer.

Students who were subject to the experiment have made an enormous leap. They have been acquainted with another side of English language and new perspectives to understand, perceive and interpret it in addition to new techniques to produce it using information and knowledge that was not available for them before. The ultimate aim to learn any language is to be able to communicate using that language by the very end successfully. Therefore, this is one of most important aspects that should be borne in mind when teaching the language because it is not just a matter of linking words to each other using certain rules and their exceptions. What should be considered is how to use these linguistic items in the right way by manipulating and produce them in a manner that is authentic or close from authentic, how to use them in a way that produces the desired response from one's interlocutor and does not result in misunderstanding or breakdown in conversation. Moreover, how to gain the necessary knowledge and competence that enable the learner to get the right interpretation to what their interlocutor is saying considering the context, the tone of the voice, the body language, the references they are using and other circumstances which all, in one way or the other, are strongly influenced by one's culture and social norms. It is all about learning about the target language culture and society along with learning the language itself.

Proceeding with integrating lessons of culture in the curriculum will have endless benefits. We have seen the eagerness among students and their thirstiness to learn more; their eyes were sparkling each time they knew something about the other world which they did not know before or each time they understood something which was confusing and mysterious for them before. Regardless of improving their sociocultural competence and consequently their communicative competence, these lessons will provide a motivating atmosphere for learning; they will provide them with fun that is one very important aspect to keep motivation, concentration and ability to accommodate and absorb more, yet unfortunately is the most neglected aspect and the most lacking element in our English language classes.

The fact that our students did not have any cultural knowledge whatsoever that they could not even differentiate between male and female names of people is really alerting. English language teaching cannot be separated from culture teaching and, for Algerian English language
curricula, introducing culture to EFL learners has become an obligation rather than an option. It is a fact that the foreign language teacher is a culture teacher and the foreign language learner is a culture learner or they should be. Therefore, teaching English language culture must be incorporated in the English language curricula for Algerian secondary schools not for the sake of only the better perception and production of the language itself, but also to awake students' senses and open their minds, from an early age, for the cross cultural and pragmatic differences around the world. This process of culture teaching should be graded in a way that smoothly moves from the very simple, general and obvious input to the very specific, detailed and complicated input.

Introducing culture to Algerian EFL learners has become an obligation rather than an option. It is a fact that the foreign language teacher is a culture teacher and the foreign language learner is a culture learner. Therefore, teaching English language culture must be incorporated in the English language curricula for Algerian secondary schools not for the sake of only the better perception and production of the language itself, but also to awake students' senses and open their minds, from an early age, for the cross-cultural and pragmatic differences around the world. This process of culture teaching should be graded in a way that smoothly moves from the very simple, general and obvious input to the very specific, detailed and complicated input.

This teaching of culture should not be done in the traditional manner or the way other subjects are usually taught with the mere use of textbooks and the complete reliance on oral explanation. The use of aids such as videos, images, ICT tools, concrete objects and any other items where authentic language is produced is a must when teaching the target language culture for they are the only window through which students can see what the culture and social conventions really look like and how the language is really exchanged in its natural context. These aids will shorten the process of language learning with keeping the same benefits including skills and competencies that students would possess by the end of it. In fact, they will save a lot of time and efforts that may be spent with no guaranteed efficiency.

Most of English language used in our classroom is invented, so strict using minimum vocabulary to deliver information it is a prescribed language. We should allow more authentic and native like English language to have larger access to our classes and lessons instead of this prescribed language that blocks students' minds instead of opening them. We should perform that kind of language that opens the doors to new ways of manipulation and using the language that is very much close to the way used in its native context.

Concerning teachers, in addition to the professional information that they should go through in order to learn about how such complicated subject is be taught, another kind of formation needs to be incorporated which is summer trips to the target language society or societies. These summer trips that have touristic goals which aim at getting teachers in touch with the culture of English language, in the first place, should also include programs of intensive training and workshops. The reason is because there are many aspects of culture that cannot be fully understood unless the
teacher personally experiences them and explores them in their natural setting. It seems also to be advisable for the teacher to explicitly point out to the learner that politeness markers are an integral part of the foreign cultural system, and should neither be used nor interpreted by reference to the learner's native system. More effective teaching of the behavioral component may minimize native cultural interference and prevent impolite, ineffective, or otherwise inappropriate behavior on the part of the learner.

There has been a debate of whether to include culture before or after students have mastered the linguistic aspect of the language. We believe that no matter how long students study the language they will not fully reach the ultimate level of linguistic competence, at least not by the time devoted for them to learn the language (Algerian school students spend 7 academic years learning English), which means that we should not count the possibility of waiting the learners until they master the linguistic aspect of the language. However, this does not mean to start teaching them the culture right from the beginning, not even right after they reach the basic level. What we should bear in mind is the students' sense of evaluation. In my viewpoint, culture integration should not start until our student finish their first four years of English studying. It is because, until this stage is finished, students' sense of evaluation is still low and their social and cultural identity is still not fully built. In this case, teaching culture will be more of a problem than of a mean towards a better understanding of the language. Teaching culture at this level may lead students to reject their own culture and social norms and values and may lead them to be blind followers and imitators of everything that the other culture produces or contains. Another solution is to teach them aspects of big "C" culture during the first years of learning English and live the aspects of small "c" culture to more advanced and mature learners who have the ability to learn about the other, not necessarily to be the other.

Students who did not do well in the post test prove that culture cannot be taught outside the classroom or without a teacher given the fact that they were able to obtain the lessons they have missed from their classmates with their explanations. It shows that culture being taught in the classroom with the supervision and the guidance of a trained teacher is a crucial element in both the simplification of the input and monitoring of the content of the input that reaches the student mind.

Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the role of the foreign language culture in enhancing learners’ socio-cultural competence. The study was conducted through the quasi-experimental design using a pre-test and a post-test where we started from the more obvious and general knowledge to be acquired to the more specific and detailed information. Using a comparative study, the data gathered from both tests were compared to each other followed by certain procedures to analyze them to test the hypothesis. Hypothesis testing was done by calculating the t-ratio which resulted in a reliable proof for accepting the hypothesis which assumes that teaching culture to EFL learners will increase their sociocultural competence. This experiment reached its objective.
Students who were subject to this experiment have made a huge leap. They have moved to a whole next level and explored new things they would never have the chance to discover through their English language curriculum. The ultimate aim to learn any language is to be able to successfully communicate using that language by the very end. Therefore, this is one of most important aspects that should be borne in mind when starting to teach the language. What should be considered is how to use these linguistic items the right way; how to manipulate and produce them in a manner that is authentic or, at least, close to authentic and which does not result in confusion, misunderstanding, breakdown in conversation or worse, rejection. Moreover, it is important to introduce how to gain the necessary knowledge and competence that enable the learner to get the right interpretation to what their interlocutor is saying considering the context, the tone of the voice, the body language, the references they are using and other circumstances which all, in one way or the other, are strongly influenced by one's culture and social norms. It is all about learning about the target language culture and society along with learning the language itself.

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References


A Plea for a Focus on the Contrasts between Two Paradigms and Their Implications for Problem Statement

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Abstract
To adequately tackle a research problem, master students of applied linguistics should learn that the selection of (a) data elicitation technique (s) should be made in consistence with choices at three other levels: method, methodology and paradigm. Hence, this paper addresses the following question: how should the methodology course be reformulated to render it more efficient in raising students’ awareness of this issue? An analysis of some research methods manuals currently in use reveals that two major obstacles hinder students’ ability to learn this issue: the pluralistic nature of applied linguistics and the rampant use of mixed methodologies. To overcome these obstacles, this paper proposes a teaching strategy consisting of focusing the initial phase on a contrastive analysis of two methods, which stand at extreme positions on the methodological continuum in applied linguistics, namely, experimental design and ethnography. Moreover, given that the presentation of the differences between these two methods is not sufficient, the paper argues that this presentation should be reinforced by a foregrounding of the essential differences in problem statement in the two research traditions in question. The paper concludes with some recommendations on the appropriate way to implement the proposed teaching strategy.

Keywords: applied linguistics, ethnography, experimental design, Research methods, problem statement

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Introduction

The Master’s level research methodology course in applied linguistics aims at enabling apprentice researchers to understand, appraise, and conduct research to be able, eventually, to contribute to their field of specialization. However, in spite of receiving instruction in this domain for three semesters, Master students in applied linguistics in the Algerian context are often caught picking up hastily and haphazardly data elicitation techniques to tackle a research problem with no, or only scant, regard to the philosophical underpinnings of their choices. This abnormal, recurring practice puts into question the effectiveness of the methodology course currently in use in equipping the students with the necessary knowledge and skills for an adequate tackling of research problems. A great deal of improvisation, which characterizes the design and teaching of this course, stands without doubt as a significant hindrance to the development of students’ research competence. However, a consideration of the pluralistic nature of the discipline itself as well as a close examination of the research methods manuals currently in use (for example, Dornei (2007); Nunan (1992); Paltridge and Starfield (2007); Sunderland (2010)) bear evidence to suggest that the phenomenon of apprentice researchers use of data elicitation techniques without consideration of their philosophical underpinnings is not specific to the Algerian context, but rather universal.

Acquiring an adequate mastery of research methodology in applied linguistics involves much more than making an arbitrary choice of data elicitation techniques (such as a questionnaire or interview), collecting data, analyzing it and writing a conclusion. “An understanding of appropriate techniques as well as their limitations” is a critical requirement of Master research as indicated by Paltridge and Starfield (2007, p. 56). A judicious assessment of the advantages and limitations of any data elicitation technique, however, depends on students’ ability to make consistent choices at four levels: data collection technique, method, methodology, and paradigm (Halfpenny, 1981). Before submerging them in the nuts and bolts of data collection and analysis, the effective training of Master students in applied linguistics as successful methodologists depends primarily on raising their awareness of a critical principle: these four levels are interconnected and, therefore, should not be dichotomized. That is to say, Master students should learn that the choice of one or more data collection techniques is made based on its coherence with the procedural framework of an established method, which in turn should be consistent with a methodology, and therefore, in harmony with an established paradigm. As Jorgensen and Philips (2002, p. 4) so aptly and succinctly put it, “each approach [to research] …is not just a method for [data collection and] analysis, but a theoretical and methodological whole-a complete package.”

To ensure Master students’ grasp of this crucial principle, the research methodology course should focus on the contrasts between two methods, which stand at extreme positions on the methods continuum in applied linguistics, namely, experimental design and ethnography. Pederson’s (2006, p. 192) demonstrated “the continued dominance ‘in recent applied linguistic literature of the two paradigms to which the selected methods correspond, which provides additional support for the proposed solution. Learning this critical principle provides apprentice researchers with the necessary background to learn easily other less common methods. Moreover, the ability to use this principle enables students to eventually embark on the creative process of designing and using the mixed methods relevant to their research endeavors.
Moreover, learning to problematize a research issue is a highly challenging task for novice researchers. The statement of the problem, according to Porte (2002), enables the reader to evaluate the relevance and the ensuing arguments of the research issue. However, some research methods manuals in applied linguistics present the statement of the problem in a monolithic fashion, which blurs the defining differences between the different models and adds to students’ confusions. As a matter of fact, the contrasts between the two paradigms result in two different processes of scientific argumentation (Chevrier, 2003). The processes of argumentation reflecting the inherent principles of each paradigm should be demonstrated, first and foremost, in the statement of the problem. Hence, to enhance students’ grasp of the necessity to establish a logical link among the levels of paradigm, methodology and method when selecting (a) data elicitation technique(s), these differences should be highlighted in the research methods course.

In light of the above, this paper seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the nature of the relationship between paradigm, methodology, method, and elicitation technique in academic research?
2. What are the contrasts between experiment and ethnography at different levels?
3. What are the implications of these contrasts on problem statement?

Applied Linguistics as a Pluralistic Discipline

The first challenge that faces the teacher of research methodology embarking on the design of his course emanates from the field of specialization itself. Applied linguistics is a pluralistic discipline that draws from an ever-growing number of feeder disciplines to “address […] language-based problems in real-world contexts” Grabe (2002, p. 10) (as cited in Al Alami 2015, p. 1330). This pluralistic discipline comprises an ever-increasing number of loosely assembled subfields like language teaching methodology, syllabus and materials design, language testing, language for specific purposes, second language acquisition, language policy and planning, forensic linguistics, sociolinguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis, translation studies and lexicography” (Groom and Littlemore, 2011, p. 28). Whenever a new subfield enters its domain, the discipline faces the challenge of redefining itself and, more importantly, of integrating new methodological tools. Thus, while the presentation of a comprehensive survey of existing methods in applied linguistics is far beyond the scope of any methodology course, any attempt to familiarize students with the maximum number possible of methods results but in a shallow understanding of these methods. Such a superficial treatment of a large number of methods and data collection techniques induces students to use them haphazardly and, therefore, deprives them of any chance to reach a sound interpretation of their research results.

Research Methods Manuals in Applied Linguistics

The second challenge emanates from the manuals that serve as the source for the design of the research methods course. Although an abundance of research methods manuals are nowadays available to both teachers and students (for example, Dornei (2007), Paltridge and Starfied (2007), Sunderland (2010), an examination of the content of these manuals demonstrates that these manuals are apparently more concerned with the presentation of a survey of the prevalent research strategies and data collection techniques than with training apprentice researchers to design interpretable research through establishing the necessary connection between data collection techniques and their underlying research philosophies and approaches. Most often than not, the
writers of these manuals argue that providing novice researchers with more procedural knowledge in research methods is far more rewarding than wasting time in the presentation and discussion of the philosophical controversies that nurtured over the years the paradigm wars in the social sciences (Dornei, 2007). For example, Dornei (2007) maintains that

“I cannot relate well to research texts that are too heavy on discussing the philosophical underpinnings of research methodology… I get easily disoriented in the midst of discussing research at such an abstract level, and often find myself thinking; can’t we just get on with it …?” (p.18)

As a result of this anomalous practice, the teachers and students who rely on these manuals fall easy prey to the same practice to the detriment of the internal validity of research conceived this way.

**The Challenge of Eclecticism and Mixed Methodology**

Nevertheless, our proposed teaching strategy might be criticized for two reasons: 1. represents a purists’ point of view, and 2. mixed methods might justify the rampant dichotomizing practices between data collection techniques and their philosophical underpinnings denounced above. Mixed methods or eclecticism, however, should not be considered as an easy way out because it is, arguably, more demanding and more time consuming than the purists’ stance because the resort to mixed methods does not justify an unrestricted use of some data collection techniques to solve a problem.

Regarding mixed methods, a distinction is made between two types: unprincipled eclecticism and principled eclecticism. As far as this thorny issue is concerned, Jorgensen and Philips (2002) set a highly pertinent distinction between multi-perspectival work, an informed choice of different perspectives to obtain distinctive forms of knowledge on a given phenomenon, and unrestricted eclecticism—a mere jumbling of different approaches/methods without any reflection on drawing a logical relationship between them, on the other. As far as this distinction is concerned, Jorgensen and Philips (2002) remark that ‘multiperspectivalism’ requires that one weighs the methods up against each other, identifying what kind of (local) knowledge each approach can supply, and modifying the approaches in the light of these considerations. Accordingly, Jorgensen and Philips (2002, p. 4) recommend that “to construct a coherent framework, it is crucial to be aware of the philosophical, theoretical and methodological differences and similarities among the approaches.” In the same vein, Denzin and Lincoln (2000) coined the term ‘bricolage’ to refer to a researcher’s ability to develop a freshly new and more adequate interdisciplinary approach, based on a harmonious synergy of existing approaches, to approach a research problem. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) point out that this creative task is highly demanding in that it requires a broad knowledge of research strategies.

Based on the inadequacy of the traditional methods to reach a satisfying answer to the research question, a researcher can justify the use of mixed methods. However, to use principled mixed methods, the researcher should display a thorough knowledge of the merits and demerits of existing paradigms. Therefore, the use of mixed methods is highly demanding and far beyond the reach of apprentice researchers who are still struggling with the first principles.
Hence, to be able to develop and use a multiple perspective approach to answer a complex research question, when necessary, novice researchers should, first and foremost, display a mastery of the fundamentals of the most conventional approaches.

**Academic Research: Some Key Concepts**

Before dealing with the contrast between the two methods in question, it is necessary to introduce some basic concepts that constitute a pre-requisite for students’ understanding of the scientific method.

**Inductive vs. Deductive Reasoning**

In Seventeenth-century western Europe, as result of the crisis in faith that ensued the decline of the catholic church’s authority over the lives of its subjects, some prominent philosophers attempted to provide more credible answers to basic human questions about faith and being; answers that are based on reason rather than on controversial interpretations of the sacred texts. In their attempt to live up to the challenge that they have set for themselves, these philosophers felt the need to broaden the perspective of philosophy itself. Until then, philosophy encompassed two traditional branches: ontology, concerned with the nature of existence, and ethics, concerned with issues of morality. However, René Descartes, a significant figure of this movement, fathered a third branch in philosophy-epistemology, “concerned with the nature, sources and justification of the major kinds of knowledge” Tavakoli (2012, p. 191). During the same period, the Cartesian revolutionary ideas sparked a hot debate between two major schools of thought, the rationalists and the empiricists, about the nature and the origin of human knowledge. This debate has resulted in the maturation of two alternative modes of scientific reasoning: inductivism and deductivism. The former consists of observing and studying single instances to infer general laws that account for all similar cases, whereas the latter consists in the formulation of a general question, the proposition of a tentative answer to this question, and, finally, the empirical verification of the adequacy of the proposed hypothesis.

The most significant breakthrough in the scientific study of the universal laws governing natural phenomena that have been made in the same era was only possible thanks to the development of the actions of the scientific method developed by the empiricists. The actions of this method have remained roughly unchanged since that era. The process of the formulation and testing of scientific hypotheses, however, witnessed a significant shift from inductivism to deductivism. This shift occurred thanks to the ideas of Karl Popper (1902-1994). Popper (as cited in Nunan, 1992) justifies his dismissal of the adequacy of the generalizations formulated by inductivists on the basis that these generalizations are biased towards illogical confirmations because their formulation takes into account only a limited number of the possible cases constituting a given phenomenon. Instead, Popper (as cited in Nunan 1992, p. 15) proposes the adoption of an inductive procedure geared towards the testing of hypotheses that are formulated in such a way that allows their falsification using one and only one disconfirming instance. Notwithstanding, Al Alami’s (2015, p. 1330) assertion that “anything … [applied linguists] claim to be true should be falsifiable”, following the falsificationists’ principle, is only partially valid: this principle applies only to the hypotheses emanating from the experimental/analytical paradigm.
As a result of its impressive effectiveness in the study of natural phenomena in the hard sciences, the human and social sciences adopted the scientific method. The study of problems in the social sciences following the experimental method, according to Hunt and Colander (1984, p. 14), follows roughly the following steps: “[sic] 1. Observe; 2. Define the problem; 3. Review the literature; 4. Observe some more; 5. Develop a theoretical framework and formulate a hypothesis; 6. Choose the research design; 7. Collect the necessary data; 8. Analyze the results; and finally, 9. Draw conclusions.”

Finally, despite its extensive use, however, this procedure, that has aspired to reincarnate the principles and the steps of the standards method in the hard sciences, represents only one of the alternatives available to researchers in the social sciences, in general, and applied linguistics, in particular.

**Paradigm, Methodology, and Method**

According to Hatch and Farhady (1982) (as cited in Al Alami 2015, p. 1331), academic research encompasses three essential elements: “questions, systematic approach, and answers”. These three elements are interrelated: to reach relevant answers to research questions, researchers should adopt a systematic approach in the design of their studies, and the collection, analysis, and interpretation of the data. To be systematic in approaching a research issue, students should learn to establish the connection between three key concepts: paradigm, methodology, and method.

LeCompte and Schensul (2010, p. 55) defines a paradigm as “…a framework for interpretation or a way of viewing the world”, whereas Tavakoli (2012, p. 443) defines it as “…a disciplinary matrix-commitments, beliefs, values, methods, outlooks, and so forth across a discipline.” It follows, then, that a paradigm is a proposition or a set of propositions that are held and shared by members of an academic area of study to be self-evident about the nature of truth and scientific knowledge in their discipline. This philosophical stance lays at the foundation of any choice made by these members regarding the methodological tools, strategies, and techniques used to tackle the research issues that form the object of inquiry within their discipline. These propositions or axioms belong to two interrelated philosophical branches: ontology and epistemology. The former involves beliefs about the nature of reality, and the latter involves assumptions about the way (s) of reaching knowledge about reality; however, assumptions about the nature of reality also determine assumptions about the most effective way of reaching the truth about this reality. Only a consideration of the paradigmatic stance or theoretical framework adopted by members of a particular scientific community can reveal the strengths and the weaknesses of the different methods and data collection techniques. In applied linguistics, a paradigm generally involves conceptions about the nature of language, language learning/teaching, and the role of the language learner/teacher. Applied linguists operate with several paradigms like positivism, interpretivism, behaviorism, constructivism, and postmodernism.

In harmony with the ontological and epistemological allegations of the paradigm adopted by members of an academic area of study, methodology sets goals for research and prescribes strategies to achieve them. In other words, following the claims set by a paradigm, methodology defines the relationship between the researcher and his research. This relationship is expressed in terms of a set of prescriptions about the way to obtain knowledge about a phenomenon. The
researcher’s primary concern in the selection of the methodology is to select the right or correct procedure (s) that are conducive to truth about the reality of a particular phenomenon; the ‘self-evident’ views about the nature of being or reality stipulated by the paradigm determine the degree of adequacy of a particular procedure. As Blessinger (2015) puts it,

“A methodology is a system of established and peer-accepted strategies and methods for conducting research, along with their associated theories, principles, and rules, which are commonly defined by and used within the respective discipline/field by peer-recognized experts within that discipline/field.”

A methodology is, then, a practical, coherent framework developed based on the assumptions about reality, scientific truth and the way to reach this truth stipulated by a particular paradigm. This framework governs the choice of a method. Quantitative and qualitative methodologies represent the most fundamental distinctions in applied linguistic research; the experimental method falls within the scope of the former, and ethnography belongs to the latter.

Last but not least, the method refers to ‘...techniques that are used to gather evidence and conduct research (surveys, interviews, experiments) to solve problems’ (Reddy, 2017). Schweizer (1998), however, defines it as the procedure for obtaining knowledge about a phenomenon. Schweizer’s (1998) definition is more adequate because it places value on the need for the specification of a method to involve a series of rationally sequenced steps to getting evidence about the phenomenon understudy. The sequencing of these steps follows a chosen methodology dictated by the ontological and epistemological positions of a particular paradigm.

Therefore, the selection of a paradigm guides the choice of methodology, which, in turn, guides the decision about the method or methods of data collection. Hence, it is necessary to take into consideration all the aspect when selecting and evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of different data collection techniques.

The remaining part of the paper consists of two halves. The first half contrasts the methods in question, while the second half outlines the implications of these contrasts to statement of the problem.

The Contrasts between the Experimental Method and Ethnography

The Empirical Analytical Paradigm

The scientific study social and human phenomena consist, according to Popkewitz (1984), in breaking instances of human behavior into their constituting elements. These elements which are accessible to empirical observation and analysis allow the discovery of universal laws governing the phenomena understudy. Observing these laws render the phenomenon understudy describable, predictable, and, thus, controllable. Pokewitz (1984) identifies five interrelated central assumptions that lay at the foundation of this paradigm. First, a scientific law or theory is universal and, thus, applies equally to all contexts. Second, a theory is analytical and not normative: scientific inquiry should seek to reach definitive conclusions about the internal mechanisms governing a given phenomenon. To be valid, these conclusions should not involve any subjective consideration. Third, any social phenomenon is made up of a set of interacting variables. Each of these variables can be studied separately to determine the role that the variable in question plays...
in the cause and effect relationship. The study of the cause and effect relationship between variables is the objective of scientific inquiry; only an accurate scientific expression of the cause and effect relationship between the set of variables constituting a phenomenon is susceptible to subject this phenomenon to predictability and manipulation. The study of causality consists of identifying which among the set of variables understudy form the cause, and which form the effect. The former are called independent variables, and the latter are called dependent variables. Fourth, the starting point for scientific a priori reasoning should be the operational definition of the variables; the aim of an operational definition is to make a scientific inquiry manageable and, therefore, doable. To achieve this aim, an adequate operational definition transforms the abstract traits that stand at the background of social and human phenomena into observable and measurable behaviors. Fifth, to make the extrapolation of causality law to all similar contexts possible, the cause and effect relationship between the quantifiable variables is expressed in terms of mathematical equations.

Quantitative Methodology

The quantitative methodology provides the practical framework for the application for the principles stipulated by the empirical/analytical paradigm. This methodology breaks learners’ language proficiency into set variables to test the cause and effect relationships that might exist between them. These variables include language methods, materials, teaching styles as well as the components of learners’ language proficiency. Based on the assumption that reality is objective, stable, and external to the researcher laid by the paradigm in question, this methodology seeks to devise research designs that would allow the objective verification of hypotheses. These hypotheses are tested under tightly controlled conditions, and using standardized, valid, and reliable measurements. Controlled measurements and inferential statistics are the tools whereby this methodology turns research results into causality laws that are, supposedly, applicable to all similar contexts.

The Experimental Method

The only option available for the researcher in applied linguistics to test causality or cause and effect relationships between variables is the experimental method. According to Nunan (1992, p. 24-25), ‘…experiments are carried out to explore the strength of the relationships between variables.’ It should be noted here, however, that because of the applied nature of this branch of knowledge, applied linguists have always been cautious and reluctant to claim a full scientific status of their discipline (Weideman, 2017). Nonetheless, as Weideman (2017) remarks, “Historically, applied linguistics has always been linked with the expectation…that if one could, for example, only subject the practice of language teaching to scientific scrutiny, one would somehow arrive at the ‘best’ way of actually going about the business of teaching and learning a second or foreign language.” (p. 56)

Notwithstanding, subjecting the practice of language teaching to scientific scrutiny evoked here does not mean seeking to discover universal laws about phenomena related to language learning/teaching; it instead implies understanding and testing the effectiveness of some proposed technical solutions using the procedure of the scientific method. For this reason, applied linguistics has been qualified by Weideman (2016, p. 82) as a design discipline in that it “…typically presents..."
the solution to some concrete language problem in the form of a design or plan, which in its turn is informed by a theoretical analysis or justification.” Applied linguistics, in this sense, does not seek to discover universal laws about a given phenomenon, but instead aims at finding effective technical solutions to language-based problems.

The design of a real experiment involves the highest level of control consisting of the isolation of a variable thought to be the cause (the independent variable) and manipulating it against the effect (the phenomenon understudy of the dependent variable). This design necessitates that the level of all the other variables is the same for the whole selected sample understudy. The sample is, then, divided into (a) control group (s) and (an) experimental group. A pretest should be administered to ensure that the two groups are identical at all significant research levels. Then, during the treatment period, only the experimental group is exposed to the treatment or the manipulation of the independent variable. Once the treatment period is completed, a post-test, which should be equivalent to the pre-test, is administered to both groups to determine the extent to which the independent variable is responsible for any differences in the pretest/posttest results between the experimental group and the control group. A critical remark is in order here: only the use of inferential statistics can prove the existence of relevant differences.

Several types of experimental designs, however, can be found in applied linguistics literature. In addition to model or real experiments described above, there are, at least, three other types, which differ in some essential aspects of this model. According to Al Alami (2015, p. 1333), the types of experiments available to the applied linguistic researcher are: “… pre-experimental design, real experimental design, quasi-experimental design, [and] ex post facto design”. According to this typology, only real experiments enable the researcher to test the existence of a cause and effect relationships; the other types can only be used to pave the ground for the implementation of true experiments.

Once the collection of experimental data is complete, the researcher submits the data to quantitative analysis through the use of statistics. In this regard, a distinction is made between two types of statistics: descriptive and inferential. As stated by Levon (2010, p. 70), “Descriptive statistics are indices that give information about the general shape or quality of the data, and include such things as the mean (i.e., average) and the median (i.e., middle) of the data.”. To determine the existence of significant patterns in the data concerning the strength of the cause and effect relationship, the researcher should resort to the use of the second type, namely inferential statistics. According to Levon (2010, p. 70-71), the first thing that inferential statistics test is the null hypothesis. If the null hypothesis is valid, the cause and effect relationship stipulated by the research hypothesis is not valid. Following the falsificationists’ principle, if the thesis in question is well-grounded in the theory of the field, then the rejection of the research hypothesis in a rigorously controlled experiment signals a significant development in the disciplinary field in question. However, if the null hypothesis is not valid, this means that the relationship stipulated by the theory has been confirmed. Although making an original contribution to their field of study is not a requirement at the Master level, students should not fall into the trap of seeking confirmation at all price. The development of the ability to eventually make such contribution requires, following Popper, first and foremost developing the right attitude. This attitude should
push them to strive to falsify the experimental hypothesis: ‘Succeeding’ at confirmation is not always a proof of the validity of the methodological procedure.

The basic structure of the quantitative analysis is succinctly summarized by Levon (2010, p. 76) as follows:

- We identify the variable of interest (dependent variable).
- We use descriptive statistics to get ideas about potential patterns in the data.
- These patterns then help us to devise experimental and null hypotheses.
- We then use inferential statistics to test the null hypothesis.
- If these inferential statistics return a p-value less than or equal to 0.05, then we have statistical significance and can reject the null hypothesis.
- If the p-value is more significant than 0.05, then the null hypothesis cannot be dismissed, and we are unable to support the claims made by the experimental theory.

According to Nunan (1992), there are four most used types of statistical analysis in applied linguistics: the t-test, ANOVA, Chi-square, and correlation. Given that the Master dissertation is only a first initiation to research, students who choose to use an experimental design are generally advised to limit the number of variables to one independent and one dependent variable. As far as the choice of the right statistical test to use, Levon (2010, p. 76) offers ample advice in the form of an algorithm of options. For example, when only one independent variable, which is categorical in type, is manipulated against one dependent variable, the researcher has two options depending on the type of dependent variable. The researcher uses either a t-test-in case the dependent variable is continuous in kind- or a chi-square -when the variable in question is categorical in type.

The experimental method is used to test the strength of the cause and effect relationship. However, despite its highly demanding methodological rigor and the use of sophisticated measures of inferential statistics, the use of this method failed to provide teachers with efficient solutions to classroom language-based problems. The failure of this method to do justice to the complex phenomena of human phenomena, in general, and to provide language teachers with innovations that are directly applicable to their classrooms, in particular, was caused by several factors (Nunan, 1992) (Dornei, 2007). Dornei (2007) advances two significant factors that have pushed applied linguistic research to adopt alternative methods and paradigms: first, the complexity of the language classroom, as being “the main venue of language learning”, and, second, the emergence of new research themes-like gender differences and ethno-linguistic variation, that are challenging to intervention conceptions based on the manipulation of one or two variables.

The Symbolic Science Paradigm

The most essential paradigm that has challenged the hegemonic domination of the experimental, analytical approach in the social sciences is the symbolic science paradigm. This paradigm is, according to Popekewitz (1984), called so because it assumes that human beings who belong to the same community create and cultivate the rules that govern their lives through the behavioral patterns and the daily exchanges; moreover, the processes of the creation and cultivation of these rules are mediated by diverse symbols. The assumption that human beings have agency over the creation and sustainability of the rules that govern their lives and the lives of
those who live with them in the same community marks a radical departure from the idea of universal laws promoted by the Empirical /Analytical paradigm, following the model of physical sciences. Central to the proponents of this paradigm is the idea that social life is mediated by symbols (ideas, concepts, and languages) which are culture-specific and, thus, context-bound. It follows, then, that the only way to understand and appreciate the rules through which members of a given human community govern and sustain their lives is to conduct fieldwork to study the specific intentions and meanings that members of this community give to the habits and symbols they use in their everyday interactions. Crucial to achieving this understanding is the notions of inter-subjectivity, motive, and reason. In addition to the study of the causes of a particular phenomenon, symbolic sciences also study the motives and intentions underlying the behaviors and the discursive practices of those involved in the making of that phenomenon.

According to Popkewitz (1984), five assumptions form the basis of this paradigm. First, the rules that govern and sustain the lives of human communities are specific to a particular culture and context and, thus, should not be assumed to be directly applicable to another context. Second, symbolic theory aims at developing a data-based description of the behavioral patterns and discursive practices used by members of a particular community to create and cultivate the social conventions that govern their lives. Third, Symbolic science adopts a neutral stance vis-à-vis its object of inquiry in the sense that research conducted within the framework of this paradigm should seek to describe adequately the reality of the context understudy without making any attempt to change that reality. Fourth, while this paradigm recognizes the role of formal logic in articulating consistencies and discarding fallacious propositions, it relegates the use of mathematics and statistics to a secondary position in the scientific description. Fifth, symbolic science provides synchronic descriptions to particular contexts. In other words, it confines itself to the story of the current and does not express speculations about the past or future states of the communities and phenomena understudy.

Qualitative Methodology

The proponents of the symbolic science paradigm advocate the use a qualitative methodology to investigate the behavioral patterns and the discursive interactions of members of cultural groups taking into account the participants’ reference schemata. Based on the assumption that reality is dynamic and that scientific truth is relative and subjective, the researcher adhering to the principles of this methodology adopts an insider’s view in order to be able to get naturalistic data concerning the rules that govern and sustain the social and cultural lives of the subjects. The ‘thick’ descriptions and the data emanating from the study and documentation of single instances are supposed to serve a basis for the development of more robust theoretical frameworks that would account for the potential patterns resulting from data analysis.

Ethnography

Ethnography, which originates from anthropology, has evolved to become an effective humanistic research method that can provide a “thick description” of the life of a cultural group and give its members agency to voice their view about the real struggles they face in their daily lives. Lecompte and Shensul (2014) distinguish between two major eras in ethnographic research. A first period which has lasted until the nineteen sixties and which was characterized by longitudinal studies where ethnographers immersed themselves in the communities they wished to
study for long periods that may last for years to be able to provide a comprehensive description of a whole cycle of cultural groups. This immersion approach was greatly influenced by the method of ‘participatory observation’ developed by Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942). After that period, however, ethnography adopted a new approach based on frequent short visits to the research site to work on issues of a narrower scope that focuses only on one aspect of the life of the group understudy. Consequently, ethnography has been embraced by educationalists and applied linguists to deal with the real problems of teaching and learning as the shareholders themselves experience them. VanLier (1990) argues in favor of the use of quasi-ethnographic methods that can fit comfortably within the cycle of academic research at the Master and doctorate levels. Van Lier (1990) summarizes the evolution undergone by this method in its quest to adapt to the problems of education as follows:

“Gradually, ethnography has expanded its sphere of application from fieldwork among unknown ethnic groups to the investigation of groups of people (however identified) in industrialized countries and urban settings, and from there has moved beyond urban anthropology into the social sciences, and finally into education, where at times the classroom is treated as an identifiable group with its cultural characteristics.” (p. 41)

Anderson (1998) defines ethnography as follows:

“The term ethnography generally refers to research which has one or more of the following features: a strong emphasis on exploring phenomena within their natural setting; a tendency to work with data which is not pre-coded in terms of its analytic categories; investigation of a small number of cases; and a form of analysis which emphasizes description and explanation rather than quantification and statistical analysis…” (p. 121)

According to Nunan (1992), ethnography is hypothesis-generating rather than hypothesis testing and seeks to develop theories that are grounded in data. Anderson (1998) defines grounded theory as follows:

“Grounded theory is a general methodology for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analyzed” (Straus and Corbin, 1994, P. 237). It is an inductive approach to theory development …new data are collected in multiple stages. Emergent themes are identified, interpreted, compared, and refined. This process creates a funnel of new information from which constructs and theories are developed... “(p. 122)

For Van Lier (1990, p. 42), this method has been adopted in the field of education because, compared to the experimental method modeled on the exact sciences, it offers two different advantages:

(i) an emic viewpoint
(ii) a holistic treatment of cultural facts or, in other words, a concern with context. ’

Another crucial distinctive feature of ethnography, Van Lier (1990) adds, lies in the opportunity it offers for teachers and learners participation.

Dornei (2007, p. 132) describes the complex process of ethnographic research in terms of four phases. First, the ethnographer enters into a strange environment and attempts to get familiar
with it through the help of members of the target community. In this phase starts “mapping the terrain” and taking field notes. Second, when the researchers feel familiar enough with the new environment, he starts spotting, contacting, and interviewing key informants in the field to develop initial hypotheses. The third phase is the most productive because the researcher is now fully cultured to the target group and consequently, he is capable of generating more sophisticated hypotheses through the use of a variety of techniques. In the fourth and last phase, the researcher leaves the field to be able to sift the findings and to arrive at conclusions.

Ethnography is a qualitative method based on the principles of the constructionist paradigm, which considers truth to be context dependent and reality socially constructed. This method allows the researcher to apprehend reality from both an insider’s and an outsider’s perspective to be able to develop more adequate theories that are grounded in data. However, while ethnography is now well-established in educational research, in general, and in international English education, in particular, this method also is far from being immune to criticism. In this regard, while acknowledging the role that ethnography may play in forging a “professional sociological imagination” among English as foreign language practitioners, Holliday (1996) draws attention to the fact that ethnographic research has wrongly been confined for a long time to the study of verbal data in English language teaching classrooms. Forging a fully-fledged professional imagination, according to Holliday (1996), requires broadening the perspective of ethnography to include all the other possible types of data about participants’ behavior.

Problem statement in the two paradigms

According to Nunan (1992, p. 211), for an activity to be considered research, it should contain at least three elements: “a question, data, analysis, and interpretation.” It follows, then, that if the statement of the problem is considered to be the heart of the research process, the formulation of the research question should be, equally, considered to be the heart of the problem statement. The statement of the problem should be conceived as an argumentative text, the main aim of which is the provision of the necessary elements for the justification of a piece of research. In other words, the statement of the problem aims at persuading the reader of the relevance and feasibility of a given research issue. To convince the reader of the pertinence of the problem, the statement of the problem should present the research theme, a specific problematic issue falling within the scope of a general question, in addition to any other pieces of information susceptible to add clarity and strength to the argument.

The problematization of a research issue is accomplished through the careful and accurate formulation of a research question (s). For Nunan (1992, p. 213), the research question should meet two requirements: “1. worth asking in the first place and 2. capable of being answered”. In other words, the research question should be relevant and researchable. As far as the second requirement is concerned, (Leedy, 1980, p. 52) argues that “for a problem to be researchable, it must imply interpretation of the data leading to a discovery of fact”. Interpretability of data is the key to making a contribution to one’s academic discipline. Interpretation, however, should not be confused with data collection and analysis (Leedy, 1980). The interpretability of data depends mainly on the researcher’s ability to craft his argument with a high level of precision and consistency following the disciplinary conventions. The avoidance of fuzzy thinking and the use of inchoate concepts can only be achieved through a systematic choice of the methodological tools.
during all the phases of the research process: the formulation of the question, the statement of the problem, the design of data collection tool(s) as well as the analysis of the data. However, to be systematic, the researcher should demonstrate awareness of the link between the critical concepts highlighted above, namely, paradigm, methodology, and method. This awareness should be displayed, first and foremost, in the statement of the problem.

Nevertheless, methodology manuals in applied linguistics (for example, Dornei (2007), Nunan (1992), Paltridge and Starfield (2007), Sunderland (2010)) content themselves with stating the requirements in a one-fits-all fashion, which blurs the differences between the different methodologies and, thus, confuses the students. As Chevrier (2003) demonstrates, ethnography and the experimental method differ in fundamental ways in their way of stating the problem. Understanding these significant differences will certainly enable methodology students to appreciate the link among the concepts in question better.

To problematize an issue, two options are available to the researcher, according to Chevrier (2003). The first option consists of reviewing the literature peculiar to a specific academic domain so as, first, to spot potential exact gaps in its conceptual framework, and, second, to propose (a) solution(s) to bridge those gaps through an a priori planned methodology, which yields particular inspections. The second option consists of conducting observations and analysis of a typical situation to get a deeper understanding and to infer the constituting concepts that would enable the researcher to formulate a grounded theory. For Chevrier (2003), the first procedure is deductive and verificatory, whereas the second is inductive and generative. Consequently, these two approaches to research, which correspond respectively to the empirical, analytical paradigm and the symbolic science paradigm, involve two distinctive logical procedures in problematizing a research issue.

**Problematic following a Hypothetical-deductive Procedure**

The confrontation of a theoretical construction with a particular reality forms the essence of the statement of the problem from the hypothetico-deductive perspective (Chevrier, 2003). The specific research question whereby this confrontation is accomplished should be formulated through the use of concepts emanating from a critical review of the literature related to the theme under study.

For it to culminate successfully in the specification of a research question, the elaboration of the statement of the problem should follow a logical sequence of steps (see Figure. 1). First, the researcher chooses a theme of research based on his personal and professional experience as well as his review of the related literature in his domain. The introspection phase about a theme which should be exciting and motivating enough should be followed the challenging task of fine-tuning the researcher’s interest to the interests of the academic discipline in which he is specializing. In other words, the researcher should strive to formulate the theme of his interest using theoretical constructs which are relevant to the literature of the discipline of his specialization. Second, the researcher formulates a general research question based on the collection and the careful examination of general knowledge about the chosen theme. The aim of this examination is the identification of the general concepts, the important principles, the theoretical models as well as the methodologies of predilection in researching the topic under study.
Third, based on the public knowledge, the general question and the methods used in researching it, the researcher engages in deepening his expertise about the topic through adopting a critical stance vis-à-vis more specific disciplinary writings (research articles, research reports, proceedings of scientific conferences, etc.). The crucial reading of the particular literature directed by the general question is an oriented quest that leads to the generation of particular questions. Continuous questioning about the integrity of the propositions, the quality, and validity of the proofs, as well as the degree of compatibility of the hypotheses with one another stand at the genesis of this critical attitude. This continuous questioning serves the construction of a mind map of the collected information, the assessment of the pertinence of information, and, hence, facilitates the formulation of a more specific research question.

*Figure 1. Problematization* following a Quantitative Methodology (Chevrier, 2003, P. 57) (my translation)
The fostering and sharpening of a productive critical attitude require from the researcher the deployment of several fundamental skills such as classifying and evaluating pieces of research on based on specific criteria, analyzing an argument, comparing, making a synthesis and structuring information (facts, concepts and ideas). In this context, students reading texts about a given topic are encouraged to make their proper summaries in the form of tables and figures. On one hand, this facilitates in a fair number of cases the comprehension of ideas, and on the other hand, this facilitates the rapid establishment of less documented or even ignored relations between concepts. The synoptic representation of information, for example, constitutes an effective strategy for finding specific research problems.

The identification of a gap or gaps in the organization and, or coherence of the existing knowledge about the topic is the only valid proof of the success of the process whereby the researcher moves from a general question to a more specific research question through the critical analysis of the specific literature on the topic. Cheverier (2003) lists six types of gaps in academic knowledge about a research topic: 1. The total or partial absence of knowledge concerning the elements of answer to a general research question; 2. Certain conclusions of preceding research are not applicable to a particular situation; 3. certain variables have not been taken into consideration in different pieces of research in spite of the existence of reasons for their potential influence; 4. Feelings of incertitude concerning conclusions because of methodological problems; 5. Contradictions between the findings of research dealing with the same topic; 6. The absence of verification of an interpretation, a model, or a theory.

Stating a particular research problem involves the translation of specific knowledge needs into precise questions, so specific that they serve as a framework for the design and implementation of a strategy to answer them. The specific research question should be formulated in a precise way, and each term should be clearly defined, particularly in an operational manner. An operational definition of the key constructs in the particular research question means that each element of the problem should be observable or measurable.

Moreover, the particular question corresponding to a particular problem should meet the criteria of feasibility: the scale of the question, the time available for doing research, the money available, the collaboration of other people as assistants or subjects, the possibility of doing research in the desired context, accessibility to the measuring instruments, etc. In spite of the importance of the criteria of feasibility, however, the pertinence of the research question about the whole problem remains the central criterion in the choice of a particular research issue.

Problem stating following the hypothetico-deductive procedure should be conceived, according to Chevrier (2003), as the crafting of a coherent, complete and compelling argument on the basis of a critical analysis of the literature of the utility and necessity to explore empirically a particular question or to verify a specific idea (hypothesis) to demonstrate the efficiency and need to advance current knowledge about a particular phenomenon.
a) The pertinence of the piece of research should be underscored. That is, the theme and the general research question constitute (or should form) an authentic (actual) preoccupation for researchers, practitioners or decision-makers.

b) Within the framework of the general research question, pertinent information is presented (empirical and theoretical research results, facts, concepts, relations, models, theories) either to demonstrate the existence of a specific research problem, or to provide elements of the solution to the particular research problem. This information provides a conceptual or theoretical framework for the piece of research.

c) A particular problem is highlighted

d) A particular research question is formulated to guide the collection of the data that would allow the solution of the particular problem.

Figure 2: A Checklist of the elements of problem statement following a deductive procedure by Chevrier (2003, p. 67).

**Problematisation following an inductive procedure**

In contrast with the hypothetico-deductive process which confronts a theoretical construction to a particular reality, the crafting of the problem statement argument following an inductive procedure is realized through the formulation of iterative (repeated) questions based on the sense given to a concrete situation. In other words, whereas the empirical, analytical paradigm is concerned with verifying the validity of causality laws abstracted from context, the symbolic science paradigm seeks to develop more robust theoretical frameworks for the comprehension and description of a particular phenomenon. To achieve this aim, this paradigm allot crucial importance to the meanings that all participants give to their emerging behavioral and discursive patterns during the events and activities constituting that phenomenon. Unlike experimental research which attempts to answer questions that are extraneous to the cultural context of the study, ethnographic research, according to Spradely (1980) (as cited in Holliday 236), seeks to discover “both questions and answers … in the social situation being studied.” The procedure of problematization is, therefore, totally different.

According to Chevrier (2003), the process of problematization of a research issue within the framework of the symbolic science paradigm consists of four significant broad steps: 1. the formulation of a provisional research problem based on a concrete situation manifesting a particular intriguing phenomenon; 2. the formulation of a research question allowing the choice of an adequate methodology; 3. the elaboration of interpretations based on the collection and the inductive analysis of data-generalizations based on the study and documentation of single instances forming the phenomenon under investigation; 4. the iterative reformulation of the problem and the research question in tandem with the raising awareness resulting from the collection and preliminary analysis of the data (see Figure. 3).
First, research within this paradigm does not begin until the researcher enters the field. The first step towards the formulation of a general question is the selection of an interesting phenomenon within the cultural context of a particular group. It should be noted here that, unlike in the experimental, analytical paradigm, the researcher should not be concerned with whether or not the phenomenon has been studied before, but with the potential of the study of this phenomenon to bring about significant new knowledge. Chevrier (2003) lists several types of concrete situations which are likely to motivate the choice of an aspect for an ethnographic study: 1. Established original practices (for example, a teacher who uses a particular method or a school which is distinguished by an alternative educational approach); 2. Recurring problematic events or practices which fail or that are being difficultly established; 3. Happy games or practices that are succeeding; 4. Games which have unexpected components or interventions or unintended consequences; 5. Habitual activities or current practices that are undocumented.

*Figure 3*: Problematization following a Qualitative Methodology (Chevrier, 2003:72) (my translation)
Second, the researcher proceeds from the selected situation to formulate a general research question. According to Chevrier (2003), this provisional question should be general enough to allow the generation of more specific questions that would facilitate the discovery of essential aspects of the phenomenon under study. This general question should also be precise enough to focus the investigation. The focus of research has two main functions: a) establishing the limits and the territory of research, and b) determining the pertinence of the collected information through the provision of cones to decide to include or exclude data in the collection of data or the analysis of data. To formulate this first question, the researcher makes use of his knowledge and personal interpretations. Then, the researcher chooses the methods that he intends to use (observations, interviews, and records) and determine, through theoretical sampling, the participants and the documents to be consulted. The research plan will also be emerging because it depends on subsequent questions.

The general question should allow the generation of specific questions aiming at exploring the structural elements, the interactions and the processes (socio-cultural and organizational) to determine and describe the essential dimensions of the phenomenon. The challenge for the researcher is precise to discover the sharpest and most perceptive questions. However, contrary to the affirmative procedure of the experimental/analytical paradigm, where the specific question remains unchanged during the whole data collection process, the focus is highly likely to change in the way following the procedure of the symbolic science paradigm.

Third, after a first collection of the data, the researcher analyses them and draws a rich and detailed description of the events (full story). Based on this description, the researcher elaborates the hypotheses aiming at comprehending globally or partially a phenomenon. A critical remark is, however, in order here: by hypothesis here is meant an interpretation in the broad sense of the term and not hypotheses with operationalized variables, because the aim is to give insight to the events rather than to establish a linear, unidirectional causal relationship between an independent and a dependent variable. This elaboration of hypotheses, as well as the inductive analysis of data, cannot be realized by demanding from the researcher to make total abstraction of what he knew. To elaborate his grounded theory of the phenomenon, the researcher uses principally (mainly) concepts and hypotheses that have emerged from the collected data. This process, however, does not prevent the researcher from reviewing relevant literature, particular to those using an inductive procedure to obtain useful concepts and to assist him in his comprehension of the phenomenon. In other words, to adequately explain a phenomenon, the researcher should not fall prisoner to one theory. Instead of imposing theory on data, the researcher should possess the skills (theoretical insights) and the necessary attitudes (theoretical opening) to be able to conceptualize and elaborate theory based on data.

Fourth, the effort to give sense to the data enables the researcher to raise awareness of certain particular issues (gaps, incoherencies, etc.) in his knowledge of the phenomenon. These issues concern the unknown facts that prevented him from comprehending the event in its entirety at the beginning of the study. These specific problems lead to raising particular questions which guide the collection of pertinent information. To answer these particular questions, the researcher conducts a more in-depth study of certain particular aspects of the phenomenon. This in-depth analysis permits him to elaborate a grounded theory (emerging concept, emerging relations, and
emerging model) which is complete and more valid (credible). The general research problem can be reformulated during the research process. It can happen especially at the beginning of research that the formulation of the question proves to be incomplete or inadequate in the light of observations emanating from the primary inductive analysis of the data. The wording itself of the problem can, therefore, evolve during the study. The synthetic and final wording of the problem, no matter whether there was a change or not, will be accomplished towards the end of the research. It should be expected, then, that the wording as it is presented in the writing phase to be different from the initial drafting of the problem at the beginning of the research process. The specific questions themselves change to adapt to the observed changes. These questions they are added when there is a lack of information. However, these questions should disappear as soon as they are answered. These answers are reached towards the end of the inductive analysis of the data, when the portrait is composed and begins to acquire sense. The same thing applies to the general question. Unlike in the deductive procedure, where the general question remains unchanged during the collection of data, the research question in an inductive method can itself change during the process.

Figure 4: A Checklist of the elements of problem statement following an inductive procedure by Chevrier (2003, p. 80)

| a) A concrete (social situation), containing a particular phenomenon should be evoked. |
| b) A research problem should be asked about this intriguing situation. |
| c) A research question is formulated. |
| d) The pertinence of the research problem should be demonstrated, i.e., that this problem (or a question) constitute (or should constitute) a real preoccupation of practitioners decision-makers and researchers. |
| e) This research problem represents a theoretical preoccupation (construct, or approach) and that the information known about the issue should be presented (research, models, or theories). |
| f) Otherwise, the method, the model, the concept that has been borrowed or emerged should be mentioned. |
| g) We demonstrate how the research allows us advancing knowledge concerning a problem understudy. |

Conclusion

In academic research, obtaining results that are interpretable and, thus, conducive to relevant answers to study questions depend on the researcher’s adoption of a systematic approach. To be systematic, the researcher should be consistent in the selection of his data collection techniques concerning three levels: paradigm, methodology, and method. Focusing the research methods course on the existing contrasts between two methods, experiment and ethnography is an effective strategy for raising apprentice researchers awareness of this crucial principle. Moreover, to enhance students’ understanding of this principle, the research methods course should articulate the fundamental differences in problem statement around the two traditions. In experimental design, the theory is in quest of real data, whereas, in ethnography, the reality is in search of an argument. These two approaches to research, which correspond, respectively, to the empirical, analytical paradigm and the symbolic science paradigm, involve two distinctive logical procedures in problematizing a research issue.
Of course, this paper has presented only theoretical aspects of the learning information that should be highlighted and enhanced to raise these students’ awareness of the interconnection between the three concepts in question. This type of information is necessary, but not sufficient. A sophisticated teaching methodology articulated around these contrasts is needed to ensure the students’ grasp of this principle. This methodology should aim at involving students in the analysis of the epistemological, methodological, procedural, and discursive aspects of concrete samples of research following the two traditions in question. Task-based teaching of the different sub-skills of producing research, however, is necessary to give students hands-on experience in researching these two traditions.

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