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# Are Arabic and English Research Article Abstracts Different? Rhetorical Structure & Interaction in Focus

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**Abstract**

The current study examines the differences between Arabic and English abstracts of research articles in terms of rhetorical structure and interactional features. To this end, 400 abstracts from prestigious journals in the field of education, equally divided into Arabic and English, were analyzed using Hyland’s (2000) five-move model and Hyland’s (2005) Interaction Model. The results showed that while English abstracts tend to follow conventional moves, Arabic abstracts tend to focus on the moves of Purpose, Method and Findings. It was also found that English abstracts include lengthier Introduction and Conclusion whereas Arabic abstracts include lengthier Method and Findings. Additionally, the combination patterns of moves showed much more variation in English than Arabic abstracts. As for interactional features, English used significantly more hedges and self-mentions while Arabic included more boosters. Interestingly, engagement markers were almost non-existent in the two languages. The results are discussed in light of the existing literature and are interpreted along linguistic, cultural and sociological reasons.

**Keywords:** *abstract; genre; rhetorical structure; move; interaction; stance; engagement*

## Introduction

Publishing in reputable journals is a main tool for researchers to communicate new knowledge to their disciplinary community and to advance their academic career. In this rather challenging endeavor, authors need to conform to the writing conventions of their disciplinary community in order to gain acceptance and recognition. The proposition of a universal scientific discourse that can be learned through education regardless of the author's language (Widdowson, 1979) has long been challenged by several cross-linguistic and cross-cultural studies that have highlighted rhetorical, textual and interactional variation due to socio-cultural factors (e.g., Dahl, 2004; Dontcheva-Navratilova, 2016; Hirano, 2009; Loi, 2010; Loi & Evans, 2010; Loi, Lim & Wharton, 2016; Sheldon, 2011; Yang, 2013). Contrastive rhetoricians explain the variation in terms of different expectations among diverse discourse communities (Martín, 2003).

The current study adopts a similar contrastive perspective as it compares the rhetorical structure and interactional patterns between 200 research article abstracts written in English and published in prestigious international journals of education and 200 research article abstracts written in Arabic and published in prestigious journals of education in the Arab World. Conducting this cross-linguistic comparison will allow deeper understanding of the nature of academic discourse and the influence of socio-cultural factors on discourse variation, particularly because the Arabic language is relatively under-represented in the literature (Alharbi & Swales, 2011). Additionally, the current study will have important pedagogical implications, as it will help raise awareness of the rhetorical and interactional variations in academic discourse among different discourse communities. This is especially important for Arab writers who need to publish in English, the lingua franca of academia. Lack of awareness of such cross-cultural differences in text structures and reader expectations can largely undermine the Arab authors' efforts to acculturate to their international discourse community (Connor, 1996).

The focus of the current study on the examination of abstracts reflects their special status as one of the most prominent scientific genres in academia (Busch-Lauer, 2014; Skern, 2011; Swales & Feak, 2009). In fact, "the abstract is generally the reader's first encounter with a text, and is often the point at which they decide whether to continue and give the accompanying article further attention or to ignore it," (Hyland, 2002, p.63). An important article may be overlooked due to a poorly written abstract (e.g., Hartley & Betts, 2009; Piqué-Noguera, 2012). Hence, mastering the skill of abstract writing is imperative for authors to reach out to their disciplinary community and gain acceptance and recognition (Pho, 2008). This has become particularly significant recently as technological advancement has led to an overwhelming information overload (Cross & Oppenheim, 2006). Well-written abstracts can greatly save readers' time and effort through guiding them to the texts that best match their interests and are thus worthy of further reading.

Abstracts in the current study were analyzed using a genre analysis approach, which refers to "the study of situated linguistic behavior in institutionalized academic or professional settings," (Bhatia, 1997, p. 181). The term "genre" can be defined as "a type of text or discourse designed to achieve a set of communicative purposes," (Swales & Feak, 2009, p.1), and the analysis of different genres (e.g., tutorials, book reviews, business meetings, in-company memos, etc.) has largely improved our understanding of language variation as every genre has its own genre-specific features and conventions. Our improved understanding has had significant pedagogical implications, particularly in the areas of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (e.g., Brett, 1993). The current study, for example, can contribute to the design of effective academic writing programs for novice Arab authors who wish to publish internationally. The study findings can raise the awareness of program designers, instructors and students of potential areas of differences in academic writing in Arabic and English, and thus present useful recommendations to help novice Arab authors adapt to the international publication requirements in English, the current scholarly language of academia.

The current study adopts two types of genre analysis. The first is rhetorical structure of texts, which is largely dependent on the analysis of "moves." The term "move" can be defined as "a discoursal or rhetorical unit that performs a communicative function in a written or spoken discourse," (Swales, 2004, pp. 228-229). Moves largely contribute to the overall purpose of the text while simultaneously performing unique communicative functions. Quite often, researchers examine moves in terms of their frequency, combination patterns and obligatory presence. A number of models have attempted to account for the common moves of particular genres, such as Bhatia's (1993) model for job application letters and Swales's (1990) model for research article introductions. Due to the special significance attached to the genre of abstracts, analyses have followed a variety of models, including Bhatia (1993), Santos (1996) and Weissberg and Buker (1990). Of particular relevance to the current study is Hyland's (2000) five-move model, which analyzes abstracts into 1-introduction, 2-purpose, 3-method, 4-product (to be referred to as "findings" later) and 5-conclusion. The current study adopted Hyland's (2000) model, which shows some similarity with the earlier influential work of Weissberg and Buker (1990), due to its ease of implementation and wide use in the literature (see more details on Hyland's (2000) model of abstracts at the methodology section).

In addition to the rhetorical structure, the current study also analyzes abstracts from an interactive perspective. This perspective has increasingly triggered research interest over the last two decades or so due to the gradual transformation of academic writing from being objective and impersonal to becoming largely persuasive and, hence, involving interaction between writers and readers (Hyland, 2005). According to the interactive perspective, authors do not produce texts only to communicate knowledge, but they also use language to form and negotiate social relations. As Hyland (2005) puts it, "Interaction in academic writing essentially involves 'positioning' or adopting a point of view in relation to both the issues discussed in the text and to others who hold points of view on those issues," (pp. 175-176). Thus, a "writer-reader dialogue" helps to adequately situate new knowledge, establish connections between people and create relations between people and ideas. The current study examines these writer-reader interactions using Hyland's (2005) Interaction Model. The Model comprises two main categories; namely, (1) stance which refers to the ways through which writers introduce themselves and communicate their viewpoints, arguments and commitments, and (2) engagement, which refers to the ways through which writers relate to readers with respect to the positions proposed in the text (see more details on Hyland's (2005) Interaction Model at the methodology section).

The current cross-linguistic study comprises seven sections. A literature survey of earlier studies on research article abstracts follows this introduction. Then, the research questions and methodology are presented. This is followed by a description and discussion of results, leading to the article conclusion.

## Literature Review

Studies on research article abstracts have adopted different approaches, including examining the features of particular disciplines (e.g., Doró, 2013; Saeeaw & Tangkiengsirsin, 2014; Suntara & Usaha, 2013) or comparing the writing of native versus non-native speakers (e.g., Al-Khasawneh, 2017; Kafes, 2012; Liu & Huang, 2017) and novice versus expert authors (Byun, 2015; Menezes, 2013). Other significant studies have examined the special characteristics of abstract writing in flagship journals (e.g., El-Dakhs, 2018 a; Oneplee, 2008) and conducted comparisons between research article abstracts and other types of abstracts, such as thesis abstracts (e.g., El-Dakhs, 2018 b; Ren & Li, 2011). Despite the importance of these studies, they are not included in the current literature review because they are irrelevant to the current study which adopts a cross-linguistic approach. Hence, the current literature survey reviews two types of studies; (1) cross-linguistic studies on research article abstracts and (2) studies on research article abstracts written in Arabic because of the under-representation of Arabic in the literature.

### Cross-Linguistic Studies on Research Article Abstracts

A number of cross-linguistic studies on research article abstracts investigated potential differences in rhetorical structure. A case in point is Martín (2003) who examined the rhetorical variation between English and Spanish abstracts in experimental social sciences. Although the Spanish abstracts largely followed international conventions, some divergence was observed. For example, Spanish authors strongly tended to omit the results section and frequently avoided providing justification for their work in their research field as a way of creating a niche. Additionally, Spanish authors showed must less tendency to criticize the work of previous authors. Martín (2003) cited these differences as counter-evidence to the universality of scientific discourse, and interpreted some differences in terms of socio-cultural factors that may reflect the preference of the members of different scientific communities for certain rhetorical strategies. Other differences were explained in terms of the different degree of competitiveness facing Spanish versus English authors, with the latter having to exert additional efforts to secure publication space in a highly competitive publication context.

In the same vein, Li (2011) compared English and Chinese abstracts in the field of Chemistry and Linguistics. No significant differences in rhetorical structure were identified in Linguistics as all authors tended to follow the international scheme of Purpose, Method, Findings and Conclusion, although English authors included the Conclusion more frequently in their abstracts. Greater difference in move structure was observed in Chemistry with English authors producing more Purpose and Chinese authors more Findings in their abstracts. The Chinese authors also tended to structure their abstracts along the Method and Findings moves while the English authors produced more abstracts including Purpose and Method. Li (2011) explained the noted differences along a cultural dimension with reference to the long isolation of Chinese authors from the international community and the traditional Chinese values that may encourage indirect ways of writing and hinder the promotion function of abstracts. Differences in the size of the academic discourse communities addressed by Chinese and English authors were also considered as contributing factors.

Along the same lines, Ghasempour and Farnia (2017) compared English and Persian abstracts in the field of Law. While the English abstracts generally followed the 5-move model of Hyland (2000), the Persian abstracts followed only two obligatory moves; namely, Introduction and Purpose. It was also observed that English abstracts included a higher number of the moves of

Purpose, Method and Conclusion than Introduction and Findings whereas Persian abstracts included a higher number of Introduction, Purpose and Conclusion than Method and Result. Similarly, Zanina (2017) noted differences in rhetorical structure between English and Russian abstracts in the field of management. While English abstracts generally conformed to Hyland's (2000) model, Russian abstracts principally displayed a 3-move structure, including Introduction and Conclusion much less frequently. Additionally, English authors tended to provide precise or detailed indication of research methods and results whereas Russian authors preferred a briefer description. The cross-linguistic differences were explained in terms of socio-cultural factors and different discoursal expectations.

In addition to examining the rhetorical structure of abstracts, other studies placed more focus on lexico-grammatical features. For instance, Van Bonn and Swales (2007) examined differences in lexico-grammatical features between French and English abstracts. Differences were interpreted in terms of linguistic, cultural and sociological factors. For instance, the longer French sentences and the greater use of passives in English were attributed to differences in stylistic conventions and linguistic resources. As for the English preference for the pronoun "I" and the French use of "we" instead in single-authored abstracts, the authors referred to different cultural expectations between the discourse communities as to how the author should refer to him/herself. Sociological factors with reference to the size and professional maturity of the target discourse communities explained why English and French authors situated their research differently.

Another interesting study in this regard is Hu and Cao (2011) who compared English and Chinese abstracts in the field of Applied Linguistics. It was found that Chinese abstracts included a greater use of boosters and a much less frequent use of hedges. Hu and Cao (2011) highlighted that this finding is recurrent in the literature as English authors tend to adopt a more tentative stance than their counterparts in other languages. Hu and Cao (2011) explained this practice in terms of the culturally based rhetorical conventions of the Anglo-American discourse community, which are rooted in Socratic and Aristotelian philosophical traditions. These traditions value practices like questioning ideas and beliefs, critically evaluating knowledge and engaging in debate and formal argumentation. Additionally, Anglo-American intellectual communities believe in pluralism, subjectivity and the possibility of multiple interpretations of scientific research, particularly with recent advances in the Western philosophy of science.

Likewise, Mansouri, Najafabadi and Boroujen (2016) investigated the use of metadiscourse markers in English and Persian abstracts in the disciplines of Applied Linguistics and Computer

Engineering. There was a general tendency in the two languages to use more interactive than interactional markers. Hence, textual congruency was significantly more important than forming explicit interpersonal relations with the audience. Notably, however, Persian authors used a higher number of interactive markers (e.g., transitions, frame markers and evidentials) while English authors included more interactional ones (e.g., hedges, boosters and self-mentions). It seems that establishing textual coherence receives utmost priority in the Persian context while English authors remain more committed to the involvement of the reader in the text. Socio-cultural factors were also at work with the use of certain interactional markers. For instance, the English authors' inclination to avoid expressing certainty was reflected in their frequent use of hedges. Similarly, English authors used more attitude markers to indicate affective attitudes to propositions and more self-mentions to highlight their contributions. It must be noted that engagement markers were absent in the abstracts of the two languages.

Fewer studies compared abstracts along the two dimensions of rhetorical structure and metadiscourse. For instance, Çandarh (2012) compared English and Turkish abstracts in the field of education. Among the most notable differences were the English authors' stronger tendency to include the move of Conclusion and to indicate the significance of the study. This was explained in terms of Hinds's (1987) classification of languages into writer- versus reader-responsible. English was described as more writer-responsible, which means that English authors are more responsible to present their arguments clearly and explicitly to ensure readers' understanding. In contrast, Turkish authors were seen as belonging to a culture that places higher value on implicitness. It was also noted that English authors were more likely to take a critical stance and highlight the gap in the literature they address. The Turkish authors' contrary tendency to avoid taking a critical stance was viewed as a face-saving strategy or as an adequate move for publishing within a local discourse community that may not necessitate establishing a niche. Similar to earlier studies (e.g., Mansouri et al., 2016), Çandarh (2012) noted the higher use of hedges, attitude markers and self-mentions in English abstracts, which was compatible with the expectations of the Anglophone research community.

Another relevant study is Donesch-Jeżo (2016) who compared English and Polish with respect to rhetorical moves as well as metadiscourse. While the majority of English abstracts followed the conventional move structure of Purpose, Method, Findings and Conclusion, Polish abstracts showed a stronger tendency to include Purpose and Method only. This may reflect different expectations by discourse communities. Additionally, Polish authors, contrary to English authors, seemed to miss the promotional aspect of the abstract, which may show their preference not to promote their ideas. Polish authors also seemed to avoid promoting their identity in their research through using less self-mentions than English authors. As for hedges, English authors, as repeatedly found in the literature, were more willing to tone down their assertiveness in expressing their opinions.

**Studies on Research Article Abstracts in Arabic**

"Although Arabic is a language with a long scholarly tradition, relatively little is known about the rhetorical and linguistic features of contemporary Arabic prose," (Alharbi & Swales, 2011, p. 70). A few studies have so far attempted to explore the specific features of Arabic research articles abstracts from a genre perspective. An important study in this regard is Alharbi and Swales (2011) who examined 28 paired Arabic and English abstracts in language sciences. All abstracts were written by Arab authors for publication in Arab journals that require Arabic and English abstracts for research articles. Among the most important findings is that Arabic abstracts tended to adopt a less rhetorically interactive style than English ones. This rhetorical protocol was interpreted in terms the Arab culture's focus on the message, rather than the format. In contrast, the English abstracts employed a variety of devices to involve the reader and engage their attention. This more interactive and reader-friendly rhetoric of English abstracts was reflected in their use of shorter sentences and ample rhetorical clues and structural devices, such as hedges and self-mentions. Arabic abstracts, however, were considerably more definitive in their claims, a preference that was attributed to the Arab culture's long tradition of commentary and textual exegesis. Arabic abstracts also employed fewer first persons, reflecting the Arab cultural perceptions that research writing should sound formal. The English tendency to emphasize the promotional aspect of abstracts led to an increasing use of Introduction and Conclusion, which seek to construct a context that highlights the significance and value of the research articles (Hyland, 2000).

In the same vein, Alhuqbani (2012, 2013, 2015) attempted to examine the specific features of Arabic abstracts. In his studies in 2012 and 2015, he compared Arabic and English abstracts in the fields of police and security. He noted that the majority of Arabic and English abstracts included Purpose, Method and Results as the main moves of abstracts and mostly omitted Conclusion. For the majority of Arabic abstracts, Method seemed optional while it was obligatory for most English abstracts. More variation was noted in the combination patterns of moves since English abstracts included much more patterns of moves. In 2013, Alhuqbani examined the rhetorical structure of 40 Arabic abstracts in the disciplines of Law, Linguistics, Medicine and Police, and noted great disciplinary variation. For example, while medical abstracts tended to follow Hyland's (2000) five-move model, abstracts in the three other disciplines did not have a conventional move structure. This was attributed to the publication policy of Arab journals which does not specify clear requirements for abstract writing.

Likewise, Alotaibi (2013; 2015) attempted to examine the rhetorical structure and metadiscourse of Arabic abstracts. In his 2013 study on the rhetorical structure of abstracts in the disciplines of educational psychology and sociology, Alotaibi noted significant variations between the Arabic and English abstracts with reference to Hyland's (2000) model. He mainly highlighted the more frequent inclusion of Introduction and Conclusion in English abstracts. In his 2015 study, Alotaibi focused on the use of metadiscourse through examining 44 Arabic and English paired abstracts by Arab scholars. He noted a general tendency for all abstracts to include more interactive than interactional markers. However, Arabic abstracts included more transitions while English abstracts used more frame markers and glosses. It was also observed that English abstracts adopted a more interactive attitude through a higher use of hedges, boosters and attitude markers. This was explained in terms of the Arab authors' preference for a less interactive approach. As for the rare use of self-mentions in Arabic abstracts, to the contrary of English ones, it was viewed as reflecting the expectations of the Arab discourse community for more formal and objective research reports. It must be noted that engagement markers were absent from all abstracts, which was thought to reflect the Arab authors' preference to avoid adopting a conversational or informal tone in research writing and their disregard to readers' engagement.

Another interesting study is Fallatah (2016) which mainly aimed to investigate the Saudi authors' writing of abstracts in English. The study corpus consisted of 37 Saudi English abstracts, 20 international abstracts in English and 27 Arabic abstracts. Among the differences she noted between the Arabic and English abstracts was the more frequent use of Introduction and Conclusion in English abstracts. According to her, this reflected the English authors' preference for a writer-responsible approach and the Arab authors' tendency to depend on the reader (i.e., reader-responsible approach) to predict such information. Fallatah (2016) also highlighted the stronger tendency for English authors to establish a niche through considering prior research and identifying a gap. This was particularly clear in their stronger highlights of the significance of the topic. Fallatah (2016) proposed that English writers feel more at ease establishing a niche for their research studies because they write in English to the English academic community. This allows for much shared knowledge about the topic for the authors and readers and removes the pressure from the authors to justify what can be considered as common knowledge.

It must be clear that more research needs to examine the rhetorical structure and interaction features in Arabic abstracts in comparison to English ones as very few attempts have been made in this direction. This need is further highlighted due to the small number of abstracts earlier studies used (e.g., Alharbi & Swales, 2011; Alhuqbani, 2013; Alotaibi, 2015; Fallatah, 2016) and that some of these studies relied on paired abstracts written by Arab authors (e.g., Alharbi & Swales, 2011; Alotaibi, 2015), which may not adequately reflect how English abstracts are actually written in international journals. Additionally, English is increasingly becoming the scholarly language of academia in all disciplines. Arab authors thus need to be well-informed of the writing norms and conventions of the international academic discourse community as lack of conformity to these norms and conventions will greatly undermine Arab authors' efforts to contribute to the development of science and to advance their academic careers.

## Research Questions

The current study addresses two questions:

1. To what extent are the rhetorical moves in research article abstracts in Arabic different from those in English?
2. To what extent is interaction in research article abstracts in Arabic different from those in English?

## Methodology

### *Data Collection*

A total of 400 abstracts were collected for the study purpose. Half the abstracts were randomly drawn from prestigious international journals in the field of education (i.e., American Educational Research, Journal of Education for Teaching, International Journal of Educational Research and The Journal of Educational Research). All the journals were indexed in Web of Science and the abstracts used in the study were drawn from issues published between the years of 2011 and 2017. The other half of abstracts were randomly drawn from prestigious journals of education in the Arab World (i.e., The Jordanian Journal of Educational Sciences, The Journal of Educational and Psychological Sciences of the University of Bahrain, the Educational Journal of Kuwait University and The Educational and Psychological Research and Studies Journal of the Open Jerusalem University). The journals were produced by Arab universities in four countries; namely, Jordan, Bahrain, Kuwait and Palestine, and the study abstracts were part of articles published between 2009 and 2017. The abstracts were thus equally divided into English and Arabic ones. In order to set a valid criterion of comparison, all abstracts were extracted from empirical articles.

The study abstracts were collected by the author from the website of the designed journals, and were copied and pasted in separate word documents for analysis. The identity of the authors, whether native/non-native or novice/expert did not prove relevant to the study context since the abstracts were all selected from prestigious journals and were thus approved by distinguished gatekeepers in the education discipline. This approval means that the abstracts conform to the quality norms and conventions of publication as stipulated and expected by the disciplinary community.

*Data Coding*

The current study included coding of rhetorical moves and interactional features. The analysis of moves relied on an adapted version of Hyland's (2000) five-move model as shown in Table (1). Hyland's (2000) model was selected for the study purpose due to its ease of implementation and wide use in the literature, which should allow for cross-study comparisons. The model originally consisted of five moves; namely, Introduction, Purpose, Method, Findings and Conclusion. However, the author added further subcategories to some moves to allow for in-depth analysis and comparison. It is worth noting that the author used the adapted model in two previous studies published in 2018 (El-Dakhs, 2018 a & b).

Table (1): Adapted version of Hyland's (2000) model for the rhetorical structure of RA abstracts

| **(1) Introduction** | **Establishes context of the paper and motivates the research** |
|---|---|
| World Context | Situates the study within its world context that is not research-based |
| Research Context | Situates the study within its research context in light of earlier studies |
| Significance of Topic | Highlights the importance of the study |
| **(2) Purpose** | **Indicates purpose, outlines the aim behind the paper** |
| Description of Objectives | States the purpose of the study through describing its objectives |
| Research Questions | States the purpose of the study in terms of research questions |
| **(3) Method** | **Provides information on design, procedures, data analysis, etc.** |
| Data Collection | Includes information on the study participants, materials and procedure |
| Data Analysis | Includes information on the analysis of collected data |

| | |
|---|---|
| **(4) Finding** | **Indicates results** |
| **(5) Conclusion** | **Points to application, or wider implications and interpretation** |
| Study Contribution | Highlights the contributions the study presents |
| Implications | Highlights the theoretical and/or practical implications the study presents |
| Research Directions | Proposes directions for future research in relation to the study |
| Limitations | States the study limitations which may influence the findings |

The coding of moves included two steps. First, the author read through the abstracts and highlighted each move in a different color. The length of each move was measured through the word count feature of Microsoft Word and the number of words was inserted in an Excel file for analysis. Due to differences in the length of abstracts, data were normalized before running statistical tests. This means that comparisons were made between the ratios of the total number of words for moves and the total number of words of abstracts. Second, combination patterns of moves were examined. This was done through assigning a number to each move (e.g., 1 for introduction, 2 for purpose, etc.) and inserting the order of the combinations into an excel sheet. For instance, an abstract may be coded as 1, 2, 3 & 4 if it consists of Introduction, Purpose, Method and Findings.

The coding of interactional features relied on Hyland's (2005) model of interaction as shown in Table (2). The model was again selected for its ease of implementation and wide use in the literature. The model consisted of two main categories; namely, stance, representing the author's voice, and engagement, reflecting the reader's involvement. The stance category comprised the use of hedges, boosters, attitude markers and self-mentions while the engagement category included the use of reader pronouns, personal asides, appeal to shared knowledge, directives and questions. Definitions of the categories and subcategories are provided in Table (2).

Table (2): Hyland's (2005) model of interaction

| | |
|---|---|
| **(1) Stance** | **Expresses a textual 'voice' or community recognized personality** |
| Hedges | Devices which indicate the writer's decision to withhold complete commitment to a proposition (e.g., possible, might, perhaps) |
| Boosters | Words which allow writers to express their certainty in what they say (e.g., clearly, obviously, demonstrate) |

| | |
|---|---|
| Attitude Markers | Indicate the writer’s effective attitude to propositions (e.g., extraordinary, fascinating, should, important) |
| Self-mentions | Refer to the use of first person pronouns & possessive adjectives to present propositional, affective and interpersonal information (e.g., I, our, we) |
| **(2) Engagement** | **Relates writers to readers with respect to the positions advanced in the text** |
| Reader Pronouns | Refer to the use of second person pronouns and possessive adjectives to acknowledge the reader’s presence (e.g., you, your) |
| Personal Asides | Allow writers to address readers directly by briefly interrupting the argument to offer a comment on what has been said |
| Appeal to Shared Knowledge | Refers to the presence of explicit markers where readers are asked to recognize something as familiar or accepted |
| Directives | Instruct the reader to perform an action or to see things in a way determined by the writer (e.g., consider, it is important to note, see) |
| Questions | The use of questions to invite engagement and bring the interlocutor into an area where they can be led to the writer’s viewpoint |

Similar to the coding of rhetorical moves, the coding of interactional features involved two steps. Initially, the author read the abstracts and highlighted the examples representing international features (e.g., may, could and possible for hedges). This was followed by counting the number of instances of each interactional feature within every rhetorical move and inserting the numbers on an excel sheet according to moves. Examining the interactional features in light of moves would allow for a thorough analysis as the study will not only show the total number of a particular feature, but will also specify which move included the highest or lowest representation of each feature. The data were again normalized before running statistical tests.

**Results & Discussion**

This section will consist of two subsections as per the study research questions.

**To what extent are the rhetorical moves in the research article abstracts in Arabic different from those in English?**

In terms of percentages, Table (3) shows that Arabic abstracts mainly include the moves of Findings (45%), Method (29%) and Purpose (18%) while English abstracts show a more balanced distribution for the five moves outlined in Hyland (2000). Notably, English abstracts include much more Introduction than Arabic ones. Additionally, while Arabic abstracts include more Findings and Method, English abstracts include more Purpose and Conclusion. When the move length was compared statistically (see Table 4), Arabic abstracts showed lengthier Method, particularly in terms of data collection (Example 1), Findings (Example 2) and Implications (Example 3). English abstracts, however, showed significantly lengthier Introduction (Example 4), including its three subcategories, and Conclusion in terms of Contribution (Example 5).

Table (3): Percentage of moves

| Category | Introduction | Purpose | Method | Findings | Conclusion | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arabic Abstracts | 1% | 18% | 29% | 45% | 7% | 100% |
| English Abstracts | 15% | 21% | 17% | 36% | 11% | 100% |

Table (4): T-test comparisons of the rhetorical structure

| Move | Category | Mean | SD | T | Sig (2-tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| World context | Arabic Abstracts | .62 | 6.10 | -5.814 | .000 |
| | English Abstracts | 7.78 | 16.31 | | |
| Research Context | Arabic Abstracts | .08 | 1.06 | -7.418 | .000 |
| | English Abstracts | 9.43 | 17.80 | | |
| Significance of Topic | Arabic Abstracts | .53 | 3.48 | -4.638 | .000 |
| | English Abstracts | 3.48 | 8.30 | | |
| **Introduction** | **Arabic Abstracts** | **1.22** | **8.37** | **-10.544** | **.000** |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **English Abstracts** | **20.69** | **24.73** | | |
| **Purpose** | **Arabic Abstracts** | **28.32** | **11.22** | **-.904** | **.367** |
| | **English Abstracts** | **29.75** | **19.37** | | |
| Data Collection | Arabic Abstracts | 42.81 | 23.92 | 10.254 | .000 |
| | English Abstracts | 21.40 | 17.30 | | |
| **Method** | **Arabic Abstracts** | **46.70** | **24.32** | **10.046** | **.000** |
| | **English Abstracts** | **24.60** | **19.39** | | |
| **Findings** | **Arabic Abstracts** | **72.31** | **35.56** | **6.725** | **.000** |
| | **English Abstracts** | **51.39** | **25.90** | | |
| Contribution | Arabic Abstracts | 1.67 | 7.79 | -5.859 | .000 |
| | English Abstracts | 8.09 | 13.40 | | |
| Implications | Arabic Abstracts | 9.57 | 14.43 | 2.170 | .031 |
| | English Abstracts | 6.64 | 12.45 | | |
| **Conclusion** | **Arabic Abstracts** | 11.82 | 16.21 | -1.963 | .050 |
| | **English Abstracts** | 14.91 | 15.26 | | |

Example 1. Sample Method (Data Collection) in Arabic abstract

ولتحقيق هذا الهدف تم تطبيق استبانة تكونت من محورين رئيسين: العوامل الشخصية التي ارتبطت بالأسباب المتعلقة بالميول ورغبات الطلبة، والعوامل الاجتماعية التي ارتبطت بالأسباب المتعلقة بالأسرة والأصدقاء والمجتمع. وطبقت استبانة على عينة الدراسة والمكونة من ١٠٤٧ طالباً وطالبة من كلية التربية بجامعة الكويت و١٠٩٧ طالباً وطالبة من كلية التربية الأساسية التابعة للهيئة العامة للتعليم التطبيقي والتدريب (الصويلان والكندري، 2017)

In order to achieve this goal, a questionnaire was administered. The questionnaire consisted of two parts; namely, personal factors, which dealt with the causes relevant to the students' preferences and wants, and social factors, which addressed the causes related to the family, friends and society. The questionnaire was completed by the study sample which consisted of 1047 male and female students from the College of Education, Kuwait University, and 1097 male and female students from the College of Basic Education which is affiliated to the General Authority for Applicable Education and Training.

Example 2. Sample Findings in Arabic abstract

أشارت النتائج بأن البرامج التدريبية قد ساهمت في تمكين اللاجئة السورية بدرجة تمكين كبيرة، كما أشارت إلى أن الصعوبات التي تواجه اللاجئات خلال التحاقهن بالبرامج التدريبية من وجهة نظر كل من اللاجئات والعاملات في هذه البرامج جاءت بدرجة صعوبة متوسطة، حيث جاءت الصعوبات: بُعد المركز عن مكان إقامة اللاجئات، والنظرة السلبية تجاه اللاجئ كأكثر صعوبات تواجهها اللاجئات، بالإضافة لعدم توفر أماكن مخصصة للأطفال أثناء انعقاد الدورة (نزال والعلاونة، 2017)

The results showed that the training programs have greatly contributed to the empowerment of the Syrian refugee. The results also showed that the refugees and workers rated the difficulties faced by refugees at a medium level. Additionally, it was found that the difficulties that refugees face most are the far distance between the center and the refugees' place of residence, the negative outlook to refugees and the unavailability of children's care centers during the training.

Example 3. Sample Conclusion (Implications) in Arabic abstract

وأوصت الدراسة بضرورة تشجيع تبادل الخبرات بين الجامعات، وتفعيل الأنشطة الطلابية، والعمل الجماعي، وإقامة المحاضرات وورش العمل لزيادة إدراك الطلاب لأهمية الأنشطة الطلابية لإكسابهم المهارات القيادية (الوذيناني، 2017).

The study recommends that it is necessary to encourage the exchange of expertise among universities, the activation of student activities, teamwork and holding lectures and workshops to raise the students' awareness of the importance of student activities to equip them with leadership skills.

Example 4. Sample Introduction in English abstract

The for-profit college sector is arguably the most controversial and least understood sector of higher education today. The past decade has ushered in a wealth of public concern and scrutiny as to whether for-profit colleges and universities are providing a quality education to underserved student populations. While their politicization has captured immense attention, there is far less empirical research on student experiences at for-profit institutions to better inform conceptual, institutional, and practical understanding of this sector of postsecondary education, (IIoh, 2016, p. 427)

Example 5. Sample Conclusion (Contribution) in English abstract

This article contributes to the literatures on the structural antecedents of school success and failure, the ways that many positive desegregation effects are undermined by tracking, and how first- and second-generation segregation contributes to maintaining the race gap in school outcomes, (Mickelson, 2015, p. 657).

The variation in rhetorical structure across the two languages comes in line with the findings of a number of earlier studies between English and other languages (e.g., Ghasempour & Farnia, 2017; Zanina, 2017). Particularly relevant are Çandarh (2012), Donesch-Jeżo (2016) and Zanina (2017) which compared English abstracts with Turkish, Polish and Russian ones respectively. English abstracts in the three studies included more Introduction and Conclusion, similar to the finding in the current study. A similar result was found when English and Arabic abstracts were compared in Alotaibi (2013) and Fallatah (2016). Hence, the findings seem to support that English authors adopt a writer-responsible approach whereby authors are responsible to make the context of the study and its important contributions clear to readers. In contrast, Arabic authors, similar to their Turkish, Polish and Russian counterparts, follow a more reader-responsible approach which expects readers to predict the context and deduce the conclusion. The findings may also be attributable to the English authors' stronger tendency to promote their work through establishing a niche for their study and highlighting their contributions to the discipline. This promotional emphasis reflects the high competition in the international journal publishing industry.

What might have further contributed to the reader-responsible approach in the Arabic abstracts is the Arab authors' expectation of readers, whether students or scholars, to play an active role in developing their own knowledge. This comes in line with the teachings of Islam that regard learning and acquiring new knowledge a duty for every Muslim and grant an especially high status for scientists as indicated in the following verses from the Holy Quran and Hadiths (= Prophet Muhammed's sayings):

Quranic Verses

Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degrees. And Allah is Acquainted with what you do. (Almujadilah 58: 11)

Are those who know equal to those who know not?” It is only men of understanding who will remember (i.e. get a lesson from Allah’s Signs and Verses) (AzZumor 39:9)

Those truly fear Allah, among His Servants, who have knowledge: for Allah is Exalted in Might, Oft-Forgiving. (Fatir 35: 28)

Hadiths

Seeking knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim.

Allah makes the way to Jannah [=heaven] easy for him who treads the path in search of knowledge.

When a man dies, his deeds come to an end except for three things: Sadaqah Jariyah (ceaseless charity); a knowledge which is beneficial, or a virtuous descendant who prays for him (for the deceased).

In addition to the length of moves, the rhetorical structure of English and Arabic abstracts was examined in terms of the combination patterns of moves as shown in Table (5). Two main observations can be made. First, English abstracts showed much more variation in combination patterns as they displayed 37 patterns while Arabic abstracts included 11 patterns only. This finding, which is similar to Alhuqbani (2015), may reflect the English authors’ increasing ease manipulating Hyland’s (2000) moves to serve their purposes. This should not come as a surprise since English authors conventionally follow Hyland’s (2000) five moves more frequently than authors of other languages. Second, Arabic abstracts have two prominent combination patterns (i.e., PMF and PMFC) while English abstracts show a more balanced distribution across different combination patterns. This may again reflect the English authors’ better ability to make use of all the conventional moves.

Table (5): Percentages of move combination patterns

| Category | Pattern (1) | Pattern (2) | Pattern (3) | Pattern (4) | Pattern (5) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arabic Abstracts (11) | PMF 49% | PMFC 45% | IPMFC 1% | PIMF 1% | PMC 1% |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| English Abstracts (37) | PMFC 16.5% | PMF 15.5% | IPMFC 14% | IPMF 7.5% | IMFC 5% |

*I=Introduction, P=Purpose, M=Method, F=Findings & C=Conclusion

**To what extent is interaction in research article abstracts in Arabic different from those in English?**

As shown in Table (6), differences were noted in the use of stance devices in English and Arabic abstracts. Boosters were the most frequently used by English and Arab authors. This was followed by attitude markers in the second place and hedges in the third place in Arabic abstracts whereas hedges came in second place and attitude markers in third place for English abstracts. The use of self-mentions were the least frequently used in the two types of abstracts. Comparing the two types of abstracts statistically as shown in Table (7) shows a significant advantage for English abstracts in the use of hedges and self-mentions while Arabic abstracts included significantly more boosters. More in-depth analysis per moves showed that English authors used significantly more hedges and self-mentions than Arab authors in the five moves of Hyland (2000). Arab authors, however, included more boosters only in Method and Findings whereas English authors produced significantly more boosters in Introduction. As for attitude markers, which did not show a significant difference overall, they were actually used significantly more frequently by English authors in Introduction, Purpose and Findings and by Arab authors only in Conclusion.

Table (6): Total number of stance subcategories

| Abstract | Hedges | Boosters | Attitude Markers | Self-Mention |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arabic | 123 | 678 | 174 | 2 |
| English | 305 | 456 | 210 | 76 |

Table (7): T-test results for stance

| Category | Abstract | Mean | SD | t | Sig(2-tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hedges | Arabic | .62 | .95 | -7.214 | .000 |
| | English | 1.53 | 1.51 | | |
| Boosters | Arabic | 3.39 | 2.02 | 6.036 | .000 |
| | English | 2.28 | 1.64 | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Attitude Markers | Arabic | .87 | 1.05 | -1.639 | .102 |
| | English | 1.05 | 1.14 | | |
| Self-Mention | Arabic | .01 | .10 | -5.889 | .000 |
| | English | .38 | .88 | | |

These results come in line with the frequently reported finding in the literature that English abstracts tend to be more interactive (e.g., Çandarh, 2012; Hu & Cao, 2011; Mansouri et al., 2016). In this regard, Arabic abstracts adopted a less interactive rhetorical protocol similar to Chinese (Hu & Cao, 2011), Turkish (Çandarh, 2012) and Persian (Mansouri et al., 2016). This protocol was also highlighted by Alharbi and Swales (2011) and Alotaibi (2015) in their comparisons between English and Arabic abstracts. It is thus obvious that English authors avoid expressing certainty in line with the practices of the Anglo-American discourse culture that values questioning, debate and multiple interpretations. They also prefer to express their affective attitudes to propositions and to highlight their voice and contributions. Arab authors, on the contrary, are more definitive in their claims, leave more room for authors to deduce the authors' attitudes and adopt a more objective and formal tone in research writing.

In addition to stance, the current study also compared English and Arabic abstracts with reference to Hyland's (2005) engagement. Table (8) shows that Arabic abstracts did not include any engagement markers while English ones included very few markers, particularly considering that 200 abstracts were examined. This finding match the results of Mansouri et al. (2016) which found no use of engagement markers in English and Persian abstracts, and Alotaibi (2015) who noted the absence of engagement markers in Arabic abstracts and attributed this finding to the Arab authors' tendency to avoid having a conversational or informal tone in research writing. Considering that engagement markers were generally absent in the two languages, I suggest that this absence can be attributed to the word limit restriction in abstract writing. Engagement markers were found in other parts of research articles (e.g., Curry & Chambers, 2017; Lafuente-Millán, 2013; McGrath & Kuteeva, 2012; Sahragard & Yazdanpanahi, 2017), but authors may find it difficult to accommodate both stance and engagement within the limited length of abstracts. Instead, abstract writers set their priority to convey the message and express their voice.

Table (8): Total number of engagement subcategories

| Abstract | Reader Pronouns | Personal Asides | Appeal to Shared Knowledge | Directives | Questions |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Arabic | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| English | 0 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 7 |

**Conclusion**

The current study shows that Arabic and English abstracts of research articles are different in terms of rhetorical structure and interaction. While English abstracts tend to follow the five moves outlined in Hyland (2000), Arabic abstracts show a stronger tendency to include Purpose Method Findings. Another notable difference is that Arabic abstracts tend to have lengthier Method (data collection), Findings and Implications whereas English abstracts include lengthier Introduction and Conclusion (contribution). It was also noted that English abstracts demonstrate much more variation in terms of combination patterns of moves. As for interaction, English abstracts showed more interactivity with their more frequent use of hedges, attitude markers and self-mentions while Arabic abstracts tended to be more definitive and objective.

The study findings can be interpreted in terms of a variety of factors. One important concept is writer-responsible versus reader-responsible preferences (Hinds, 1987). English authors are generally known to be writer-responsible in terms of attempting to facilitate readers' understanding through providing the necessary contextual information and highlighting the conclusion of the study. In contrast, Arab authors adopt a more reader-responsible approach which expects readers to be familiar with the study context and to deduce the writer's attitude to propositions. This socio-cultural distinction may also be related to the English authors' stronger tendency to capitalize on the promotional aspect of abstracts. English authors generally face much fiercer competition to publish in reputed English journals, which may explain why they show more keenness to promote their work.

Another important tradition to consider is the Anglo-American culture's scientific values of questioning, debating and accepting multiple interpretations. Following this tradition, English authors tend to express their propositions more tentatively. In contrast, Arab authors tend to be more definitive in their scientific writing. Additionally, English authors attempt to establish some dialogic space with their readers through expressing their own voice clearly and highlighting their affective attitudes towards propositions. The expectations of the Arab discourse community may be different as they seem to expect a more objective and formal tone of writing.

The current study highlights the importance of raising Arab scholars' awareness of the cross-linguistic and cross-cultural differences between writing in Arabic and in English, the global scholarly language in the academia. As Hyland (2007) puts it, they "must now gain fluency in the conventions of academic writing in English to understand their disciplines and establish their careers or to successfully navigate their learning," (p.1). Awareness of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural differences in research writing is an imperative for Arab scholars to produce publishable work in international journals. EAP course designers and instructors must find adequate means to help Arab authors acquire mastery of the international scientific discourse conventions. The current study also calls for further cross-linguistic and cross-cultural studies of genre in research writing. Future studies can target other parts of the research article than the abstract and other forms of research writing (e.g., theses) and can also address other languages.

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# Fostering Collaborative Activities in Vocabulary Learning: Thai EFL Lower-Proficiency Undergraduate Students

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**Abstract**

Vocabulary has been the most difficult aspect of English for foreign learners. Although they have mastered and passed several English courses, they have still been unable to strengthen their English language competence as they should be. Particularly, Thai undergraduates' vocabulary sizes appear to be notably less than 2,500 general words that seems to be under the standard of word families at 8,000. Importantly, collaboration is considered as one of the 21st-century learning skills which has been brought into EFL English language classes to stimulate students' vocabulary learning. The current mixed-method study ultimately aimed to investigate students' perceptions, productive classroom activities, and potential difficulties in the collaborative process. Participants were one hundred fifty-four first-year undergraduate students from six majors who were studying at Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna

Tak (RMUTL Tak), Thailand. Tools consisted of a 20-item questionnaire used to gather quantitative data and an in-depth focus group interview to collect participants' point of views qualitatively. A checklist was quantitatively transcribed and tabulated for means and standard deviation. Additionally, all spoken data were categorized thematically. Results indicated that participants believed that collaborative small group work has been constructive and practical in many aspects. Most of them admitted that they could gradually memorize and retain more new lexical items. Similarly, enlarging more unfamiliar words and phrases while working with their classmates benefited hugely rather than working individually. In particular, it was noticeable that small collaborative group works provided significant contributions to EFL vocabulary learning in the classroom.

**Keywords:** *Collaborative activities, English vocabulary learning, Lower-proficiency, EFL students*

## Introduction

### *Background of the Study*

Since Thailand has been one of the developing countries where people learned English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Thais are likely to use English to communicate and negotiate in international commerce, trading, and other business or even education. Concerning English language teaching, Alqahtani (2015) and Cameron (2001) claim that the role of vocabulary has been vital and essential in language learning. It is not only an ultimate item for reading and writing but also listening and speaking skills in the EFL classroom as well (Chou, 2017). Additionally, learners are not able to transmit their messages without vocabulary, even for those who have solid grammatical knowledge (Wilkins, 1972). In other words, insufficient vocabulary would be the main obstacle in English language learning. Vocabulary appears to be the core of EFL language learning as learners eventually express their thoughts and needs to convey their message to others through a wide range of communication channels.

According to pedagogical approaches in the EFL environment, many teaching methods facilitate practical mediums in the classroom. Learners could not be taught using only the teacher's talk and individual assignments alone. On the other hand, they often tackle all classroom tasks with their group members as well. Collaboration is considered as 21st-century learning skill as the other three essential innovative competencies: communication, critical thinking, and creativity (Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2014). Collaborative learning is an active interaction with either two students or a small group of no more than six of them in sharing and expressing their individual thoughts in group discussion, and it is as crucial as the right answer to provide them greater opportunities to create personal information to group (Udvari-Solner, 2012). Wigglesworth and Storch (2009) emphasize that working in groups tremendously manipulates not only in early education but also in undergraduate classrooms. Language learning motivation, academic language development, and problem-solving skills can be promoted by a collaborative language process (Chen, 2017). Small group-based learning has considerable advantages. Correspondingly, Strauss and U (2007) note that working with classmates could eliminate some foreign language difficulties, as well as significantly provides several chances for learners to share their thoughts and particular ideas among group members. Besides, getting rid of stress on target language learning is another benefit of participating in small groups collaboratively in a university classroom (Mutch, 1998). It could conclude that collaborative learning is one of the fundamental concepts adopted to the language learning environment to pedagogically strengthen students' constructive outcomes (Arifin & Asad, 2019).

### *Statement of the Problem*

Thailand has encountered diverse problems in teaching and learning English over the past several decades (Noom-Ura, 2013). Shelby (2015) suggests the most difficult aspect of English for foreign learners is vocabulary. Learners need to focus on mastering the most frequent words as well as the most important English vocabulary to their everyday communication. Regarding CEFR (the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) wordlist has divided set of vocabulary into three tiers including Basic, Intermediate and Advanced levels. Basic level requires 4,795 words, 6,395 words and 7,675 words for Intermediate and Advanced levels respectively (Zhao, Wang, Coniam, & Xie, 2017). Although students have continuously taken many different English courses, they are still unable to enhance their English language competence. Furthermore, Yunus, Mohamad & Waelateh, (2016) emphasize that Thai first-year undergraduate students approximately reach the lower mean of receptive vocabulary size at about 2,000-word families. In other words, the vocabulary size of Thai undergraduates was relatively under the standard of word families at 8,000, which mostly appear in general texts (Laufer & Ravenhorst-Kalovski, 2010).

Accordingly, The Twelfth National Economic and Social Development Plan mentions that the improvement of learning processes in the 21st century could be accomplished by raising the effectiveness of the educational management system at all levels (Ministry of Education, Thailand, 2017). This national plan is inevitably related to the 2017-2036 National Scheme of

Education of Thailand which mainly emphasizes that Thai learners are supposed to be developed and achieved a high qualification of underlying 8Cs 21st skills: Collaboration, Teamwork and Leadership, Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, Creativity and Innovation, Cross-cultural Understanding, Communications, Information, and Media Literacy, Computing and ICT Literacy, Career and Learning Skills, and Compassion (Office of the Education Council, 2017). It, therefore, confirms that collaborative learning would be one of the salient skills which have to be promoted and contributed in the EFL classroom to cultivate foreign language learning. Regarding Thai students who are currently studying at Rajamangala University of Technology Tak (RMUTL Tak), their English abilities seem to be merely lower than those who study in well-known universities in urban areas. Specifically, RMUTL Tak first-year undergraduate students who come from many distinctive institutes, they have experienced vocabulary difficulties and language learning obstacles in target language learning. According to the CEFR, scores of Thai undergraduates who had their English proficiency assessed by TOEIC notably appeared to be in A1 to A2 level, with vocabulary size less than 1,500 – 2,500 words (Milton & Alexiou, 2009). English language teachers are gradually attempting to identify troubles, focusing on some potential pedagogical approaches that associate with small group activities in the classroom as well as any other assignments to broaden lexical knowledge after class. It might probably be because of some earlier teaching methods, and individual success has not been encouraged to assist those who are poorly weak in English and fairly demotivated by a stronger one. Collaborative learning and mastering of the foreign language, therefore, may enhance and foster learners' vocabulary learning. The present study consequently investigated perceptions of small-group collaborative work of first-year undergraduate students at RMUTL Tak, Thailand, in order to promote collaborative activities in vocabulary learning.

**Literature review**

Collaborative learning has been conspicuously utilized in the classroom (Webb & Mastergeorge, 2003) and crucially scaffold learning a target language over the past decades (Storch, 2002). Concerning previous studies, there appear to be many studies on working in groups or even in pairs. Dobao (2014) investigated a comparison between vocabulary learning in small groups and, in pairs, focused primarily on lexical language-related episodes (LREs). The findings revealed that working in small groups generated more lexical LREs than in pair interaction.

Additionally, one previous study revealed that working in groups was more effective, not only in individual activity but also in pairs on writing tasks (Dobao, 2012). Apart from this, Kim (2008) pointed out a comparative study on both collaborative and individual tasks related to L2 vocabulary acquisition. The findings of the collaborative task showed relatively similar numbers of language-related episodes as learners individually dealt with tasks provided. Those who worked collaboratively had significantly better scores on vocabulary tests. Regarding collaborative learning in ESL or EFL classroom, several prior pieces of research had been conducted in terms of writing skills (Sajedi, 2014; Wigglesworth & Storch, 2009). The study mainly figured out a comparison between working in pairs and coping by themselves. Likewise, an experimental study was conducted on collaborative writing, and results had eventually met a significant and positive development of ESL writing. Another language competence investigated in terms of the collaborative dialogue was associated with learner's language use on a pursuit of assignment goals (Zeng & Takatsuka, 2009). It was found that learners relied on each other to deal with dialogue that further empowered their target language learning.

It could be seen that several prior studies are likely to compare individual works and collaborative works. Those findings reveal outstanding and practical outcomes; in other words, working in pairs and groups could enable learners to attain their objectives of vocabulary learning. Previous studies were mostly directed to students who have diverted individual English proficiency and investigated only one particular language skill. The current study, therefore, aimed to study how well collaborative activities triggered the lower-proficiency undergraduate students in vocabulary learning through four fundamental English skills: speaking, reading, writing, and listening. Additionally, the perceptions of probable difficulties while participating in a collaborative process are also investigated in order to assure the appropriateness of productive classroom tasks.

**Research Questions**

1. To what extent do collaborative small group activities support lower-proficiency students learning
   vocabulary?
2. What collaborative classroom activities broaden students' lexical items?
3. What feasible difficulties do students undergo while participating in small group activities?

## Research Methodology

### *Population*

The population of the present study was first undergraduate students from Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna Tak (RMUTL Tak) studying in six majors: Accounting (35 students), Marketing (30 students), English for International Communication (35 students), Computer Engineering (25 students), Electronics Engineering (25 students), and Industrial Design (15 students). All had enrolled in English for Everyday Communication course in the first semester of the academic year 2019. The population size was a total of 165 students, ascertained with the formula to calculate sample size designed by Krejcie & Morgan, (1970). The sample size was selected by simple random sampling:

| | **Major** | **Population** | **Sample Size** |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Accounting | 35 | 32 |
| 2. | Marketing | 30 | 28 |
| 3. | English for International Communication | 35 | 32 |
| 4. | Computer Engineering | 25 | 24 |
| 5. | Electronics Engineering | 25 | 24 |
| 6. | Industrial Design | 15 | 14 |
| | **Overall** | **165** | **154** |

All 154 participants consisted of both male and female, who turned out to be between 18-19 years of age. They had already taken the Mock TOEIC test before the beginning of the first semester. Their English proficiency reached average range scores of Mock TOEIC test from 210 to 375, converted to between A1 to A2 level of CEFR standard (Milton & Alexiou, 2009). Also, they had all signed the consent of participating in the present study in order to ensure that they intentionally took part in all research procedures.

## Data Collection

### *The questionnaire*

The collaborative activities and vocabulary learning 20-item questionnaire was divided into three parts: Part (1) Students' perceptions of small collaborative group works consisted of 9 statements to elicit how well collaborative process enriched vocabulary learning. Part (2) Activated classroom activities contained six items relating to six classroom activities, principally focused on activated activities that could work in a group of three to four students. These activities could enhance students' vocabulary knowledge, spelling, pronunciation, and create sentences through four language skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing (see figure 1). Part (3) Difficulties while participating in a collaborative process comprised of five items associated with potential barriers found during small collaborative group works.

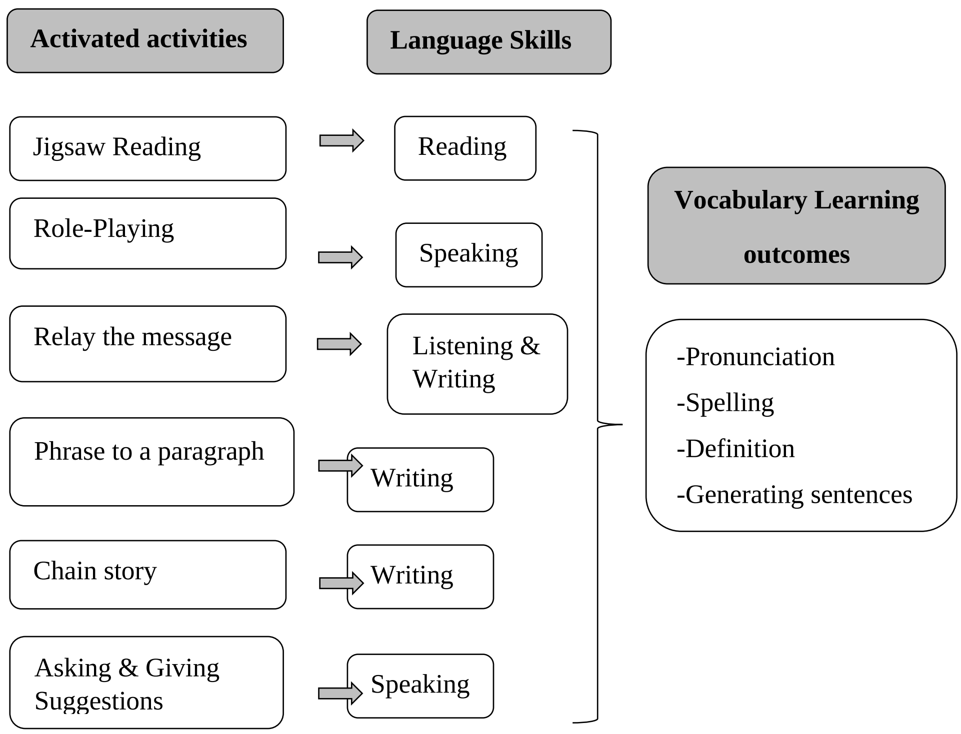


Figure 1. Six classroom activities fostering vocabulary learning

All items in the questionnaire were designed to employ a Likert's scale response, using a five-interval scale of "strongly disagree," "disagree," "undecided," "agree" and "strongly agree" based on numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 where "strongly disagree" corresponded to 1 while "strongly agree" corresponded to 5, respectively. To measure the validity of the questionnaire, contents were evaluated by five experts in English language teaching and research methodology. Therefore, all questionnaire items were determined by the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) (Tuntavanitch & Jindasri, 2018). The experts have considered all items according to the rating scale:

+1 means the item is appropriate and related to the research objectives.

0 means the item is undecided.

-1 means the item is inappropriate and unrelated to the research objectives.

The questionnaire was later piloted to 20 RMUTL Tak students who speak English as a foreign language and Thai as a mother tongue. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was significant at 0.92.

### *Interview*

To elicit participants' perceptions of collaborative small group activities, a face-to-face structured focus-group interview was manipulated. As for 154 participants, four from each major (24 participants) were randomly chosen to be interviewed in a small focus group.

It meant that participants in every group were asked with four structured questions: (1) In what way(s) collaborative group works could be able to enlarge their lexical items? (2) What collaborative activities do they like? Why? (3) How well do they participate in this process? (4) What are their possible difficulties while engaging in collaborative group works? The IOC rating scale was used to measure all questions systematically. To gather accurate responses and better insight, participants shared their points of view in Thai to the questions.

## Data Analysis

The questionnaires were quantitatively analyzed by utilizing Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS-Version 24.0), using a descriptive statistic of mean ($\overline{x}$) and standard deviation (SD). Each item of the questionnaire contained the level of participants' perceptions towards vocabulary learning through collaborative group works, which was abbreviated as (LPVC).

Regarding responses from small focus-group structured interview, data were qualitatively categorized into four perspectives related to four main questions which consisted of: (1) collaborative group works fostering lexical items, (2) challenging and practical collaborative activities, (3) self-evaluation while participating in a small group, and (4) potential drawbacks of collaborative process on vocabulary learning.

## Results

### *Quantitative Results*

The objectives of the study were to determine students' perception and reflection of collaborative small group activities that enhanced their vocabulary knowledge, as well as difficulties occurred. Findings in Table 1, 2 and 3 were quantitatively transformed into mean scores (Basöz, 2016) of perceptions on small collaborative groups and interpreted into three primary categories of low (strongly disagree & disagree), moderate (undecided), and high (agree & strongly agree) as follows:

| **Rate** | **Meaning** |
|---|---|
| Lower than 2.59 | low |
| 2.6 to 3.39 | moderate |

| | |
|---|---|
| Higher than 3.40 | high |

**Table 1 Perceptions of small collaborative group works on vocabulary learning**

| Items | Statements | $\bar{x}$ | SD | LPVC |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | I gradually gain more unfamiliar words. | 4.21 | 0.583 | high |
| 2 | I slightly memorize new vocabulary than usual. | 4.24 | 0.657 | high |
| 3 | I decrease anxiety while learning new words. | 3.94 | 0.838 | high |
| 4 | I repeatedly recognize those target words. | 3.80 | 0.94 | high |
| 5 | I accurately spell every single word. | 4.07 | 0.856 | high |
| 6 | I pronounce unfamiliar words correctly | 4.07 | 0.908 | high |
| 7 | I learn new vocabulary more rapidly and efficiently | 4.08 | 0.710 | high |
| 8 | I reinforce self-motivation on new lexical knowledge | 3.87 | 0.781 | high |
| 9 | I write some simple sentences in various contexts. | 3.87 | 0.729 | high |
| | **Average** | **4.02** | **0.776** | **high** |

*$\bar{x}$ = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation*

Table 1 displays the results on small collaborative group works that assisted participants in learning English vocabulary in several ways. It can be seen that participants had positive responses at an averagely high rating ($\bar{x}$ = 4.02; SD = 0.776). The findings revealed that Item 2 got the highest mean score, which related to collaborative small group work enabled participants to continuously recognize more new vocabulary ($\bar{x}$ = 4.24; SD = 0.657). Furthermore, they mostly believed that small group works could help them gradually increase a lot of words and phrases than working individually in Item 1 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.21; SD = 0.583). Most importantly, collaborative process supported them in learning vocabulary more quickly ($\bar{x}$ = 4.08; SD = 0.710), and lastly they realized that they could spell and pronounce target words more accurately at high rating in Item 5 and 6 ($\bar{x}$ = 4.07; SD = 0.5856 and $\bar{x}$ = 4.07; SD = 0.908), respectively.

**Table 2 Six classroom activities enhancing vocabulary**

| Items | Statements | $\bar{x}$ | SD | LPVC |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 10 | Jigsaw reading | 3.99 | 0.719 | high |
| 11 | Role-playing | 4.02 | 0.680 | high |
| 12 | Phrases to a paragraph | 4.21 | 0.615 | high |
| 13 | Relay the message | 4.23 | 0.746 | high |
| 14 | Chain story | 3.99 | 0.775 | high |
| 15 | Asking and giving suggestions | 4.20 | 0.553 | high |
| | **Average** | **4.11** | **0.681** | **high** |

*$\bar{x}$ = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation*

Table 2 presents six classroom activities, enhancing participants' vocabulary, including Jigsaw reading, Role-playing, Phrases to a paragraph, Relay the message, Chain story, and Asking and giving suggestions. The results showed that all activities were useful and practical with an overall high rating ($\bar{x}$ = 4.11; SD = 0.681). According to table 2, most participants firmly agreed that Relay the message was the most practical classroom activity at the highest rating ($\bar{x}$ = 4.23; SD = 0.746). Apart from this, they significantly believed that Phrases to a paragraph was another satisfying group work ($\bar{x}$ = 4.21; SD = 0.615). As clearly seen above, asking and giving suggestions was also an acceptable activity to broaden their lexical knowledge ($\bar{x}$ = 4.20; SD = 0.553).

**Table 3 potential difficulties while participating in collaborative group activities**

| Items | Statements | $\bar{x}$ | SD | LPVC |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16 | I feel more anxious and uncomfortable. | 3.04 | 1.247 | moderate |
| 17 | I need more time to engage in group activities. | 3.25 | 1.201 | moderate |
| 18 | Working in a group of 3-4 seems to be ineffective. | 2.97 | 1.212 | moderate |
| 19 | I always have done all group tasks myself. | 3.14 | 1.353 | moderate |
| 20 | I get confused about activity instructions. | 2.77 | 1.303 | moderate |
| | **Average** | **3.03** | **1.263** | **moderate** |

*$\bar{x}$ =Mean, SD = Standard Deviation*

Table 3 illustrates the obstacles participants encountered while participating in a small collaborative group. The overall result affirmed that most participants were unsure and undecided about the troubles that occurred at averagely moderate rating ($\overline{x}$ = 3.03; SD = 1.263). Additionally, statistical results indicated that time constraint was possibly an obstacle dealing with group activities at ($\overline{x}$ = 3.25; SD = 1.201). Besides the limited time provided, some participants thought that they were the only one who handled all group tasks. In other words, the rest of their group members were not enthusiastic about coping with group works consistently ($\overline{x}$ = 3.14; SD = 1.353), and finally, they determined they felt stressful to handle group tasks with their friends ($\overline{x}$ = 3.04; SD = 1.247).

***Qualitative Results***

In the qualitative analysis method, the current study employed face-to-face structured focus-group interviews as a research instrument that emphasized four questions: (1) In what way(s) collaborative group works could be able to foster their lexical items? (2) What collaborative activities do they like? (3) How well do they participate in this process? (4) What are their possible difficulties while engaging in collaborative group works? The overall findings revealed below were thematically grouped according to the four questions above.

**1. Collaborative group works fostering lexical items**

After four consecutive months (15 weeks) of participating in collaborative group assignments, twenty-four participants expressed their opinions through a small focus-group interview (six groups in total, and each group comprised of four participants). The findings supported that questionnaire results; that is, participants agreed that collaborative small group work enabled them to memorize more vocabulary than usual, as they expressed that:

*"I gained more numbers of vocabulary when I worked in a group." (Group 3, Participant 2)*

Additionally, the collaborative process directly promoted vocabulary learning in terms of accurate pronunciation and correct spelling, as some participants exposed that:

*"My friends usually demonstrated how to pronounce and spell target words accurately."*

(*Group 5, Participant 1)*

Apart from this, participant 3 in group 4 indicated that:

*"I often got plenty of lexical items to generate various sentences since composing a short story in Phrases to a paragraph was assigned to work with my teammates in order to generate our own story using words provided."*

Correspondingly, they had a better understanding of the target vocabulary definitions when joining in collaborative group work, as some of them reported their views that:

*"I understood more unfamiliar words than working alone. I collaboratively look up some unfamiliar words with friends". (Group 1, Participant 4)*

**2. Challenging and practical collaborative activities**

The six collaborative activities were both challenging and scaffolding to enlarge participants' lexical knowledge. They were capable of supporting participants' vocabulary learning through collaborative tasks. The findings revealed as participant 1 in group 2 said, that:

*"I appreciated Relay the message as my engaging and interesting activities because I could attempt to memorize the sentence given. I later conveyed the message to other friends in a limited time. I, therefore, have to ensure especially English pronunciation to avoid any misunderstanding among group members. It made me so enthusiastic than ever".*

Meanwhile, other participants shared their point of view that:

*"Asking and giving suggestions as well as Phrase to a paragraph were my preferable one because I was able to create and contribute my ideas independently as well as it shed light on unfamiliar words. I enlarged plenty of English vocabulary as well" (Group 5, Participant 2)*

Over and above that, Role-playing was another acceptable assigned task. One participant emphasized that:

*"While I was participating in a group of role-playing, it was so incredible acting like someone I have never been before. I spent much more time pronouncing every single word correctly. I could retain more English words and their definitions". (Group 6, Participant 4)*

It could be noticeable that six collaborative activities were supposed to be valuable pedagogical tools enhancing vocabulary learning in the EFL classroom.

### 3. Self-evaluation while participating in small group

To determine how well participants manipulated in collaborative group works, self-evaluation on this process could expose practical outcomes. The results emphasized that participants have been vigilant to deal with group tasks, as they exposed that:

> *"I did my share of the work to complete the task and helped the group to revise the final draft importantly, and I contributed relevant ideas while I handle Phrases to a paragraph with my team." (Group 2, Participant 3)*

Similarly, they revealed that they had assisted the group to reach a satisfying outcome of the task, for example:

> *"I occasionally encouraged the group to stay on task while coping with something difficult. Moreover, when there were plenty of ideas on role-playing, I tried to concur with group members' distinctive opinions to avoid any argument. (Group 4, Participant 5)*

The collaborative process was meaningful to stimulate participants to work as a team. It could also contribute as well as accept some diverted personal thoughts among their friends. Additionally, they had more significant opportunities to master and exchange how to adjust themselves to be part of their group appropriately and timely.

### 4. Potential drawbacks of collaborative process on vocabulary learning

Regarding probable difficulties in the process, participants reflected their point of views in terms of insufficient time provided during engaging in group work. They exposed in the focus-group interview that:

> *"Time provided in the classroom was not enough, especially when group members and I were initiating our plot of a short story. We were thinking of the setting of place and characters. If the teacher provided more time, we would have a better outcome". (Group 4, Participant 5)*
>
> *"I could not properly allocate time to handle group task after class, owing to the fact that some of my friends have other working schedules on other courses. We therefore never had proper time to be together even on the weekend". (Group 2, Participant 6)*

Likewise, they would not be keen on getting involved in their group task because of a lack of self-confidence in English learning and less individual intention in a small group assignment. For example, they indicated that:

> *"I believed that I was not good at English, and I did not have sufficient vocabulary knowledge to cope with group work, so I did not intentionally participate in group work." (Group 1, Participant 3)*

Regarding the results of some groups of participants, there were specific contrasting ideas on a particular task, which could cause arguments and conflict among group members. In addition to this, they did not equally distribute an assignment to their friends. They revealed that:

> *"Certain friends insisted on their distinctive personal opinions on the task, especially when we were planning to deal with writing assignments. Consequently, I sometimes did all group work by myself". (Group 3, Participant 2)*

**Discussion**

The findings of the study could be concluded in three primary topics: perceptions of small collaborative group works, six classroom activities, and potential difficulties that emerged during participation in small groups.

***Collaborative small group activities support lower-proficiency students learning vocabulary***

Participants believed that collaborative small group work has been practical in vocabulary learning, which supported previous research (Dobao, 2014; Kim, 2008). Most of them thought that they were gradually able to memorize more new lexical items when working in small groups. In addition, enlarging more unfamiliar words and phrases while working with their classmates were a hugely beneficial result of collaboration rather than working individually (Strauss & U, 2007). Likewise, small group activities facilitated them to spell some single English words more correctly (Shehadeh, 2011), primarily when they worked on collaborative writing tasks. Furthermore, they agreed that they had mastered more successfully, and they have been less anxious and more confident in working in small groups (Wigglesworth & Storch, 2009; Yang, 2012). It might be because small group tasks allow participants to spend more time on working with three to four friends, so they felt more confident to tackle the tasks assigned. Additionally, they have fairly not only pronounced single words correctly (Pi-hua, 2015) but have also been able to write plenty of simple sentences accurately (Dobao, 2012). Since they have had many opportunities to elicit ideas from their friends, they eventually have more excellent grammatical knowledge and vocabulary accuracy. Apart from this, small group work enabled participants to reinforce self-motivation and heighten lexical knowledge (Brown, 2008), as collaborative learning obviously empowered the motivated learning environment. With regards to unfamiliar words, working in small groups also helped to gradually retain lexical items as well (Dobao, 2014).

***Collaborative classroom activities broaden students' lexical items***

Besides several beneficial findings, students could gain a large number of lexical items while working in small groups, and classroom activities have a substantial and vital role that directly affects participants' vocabulary learning. In addition, it could be seen that they have been firmly confident that six diverse small group tasks (Jigsaw Reading, Role-Playing, Phrase to a Paragraph, Relay the Message, Chain Story, and Asking & Giving Suggestions) could effectively foster them to learn lexical items. Apparently, these fundamentally emphasized four primary English language skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. In addition, Aydın & Yıldız (2014) stresses that collaboration provides a scaffold to improve learner's cognitive abilities and exchange feedback, promoting unrestricted language use and elaborated ideas. Regarding writing skills, it is no longer an individual task but an interactive process among partners (Biria & Jafari, 2013). The collaborative group works on writing gradually provide learners opportunities to focus on accurate grammar, organization, content, and word choice (Kim, 2008; Sajedi, 2014; Storch, 2002). With respect to speaking, the present study promotes Role-Playing and Asking & Giving Suggestions as collaborative classroom tasks. Role-Playing becomes challenging and exciting activities and meaningful drills in a relaxed environment in the classroom (Wu, 2008). While participants are dealing with collaborative speaking group activity, they are helping each other in terms of language form and then slightly improving language accuracy and attaining their language learning goals (Zeng & Takatsuka, 2009).

***Potential difficulties while participating in small group activities***

There might probably be some difficulties occurred while getting involved in small group activities. Although collaborative small group works have been an effective teaching method in the English language classroom, some results revealed that participants still encountered problems when they handled the tasks with their friends. Based on quantitative findings, they mostly felt indifferent and undecided in terms of barriers in collaborative tasks. Correspondingly, qualitative results of group interview could be supported by quantitative findings. Some participants expressed that they could not tackle the assignments on time since some group members were irresponsible and unwillingly to share their thoughts. Therefore, more influential participants were left to tackle most of the assignments. In addition, the time provided in class was inadequate, so they were not able to handle classroom activities completely.

## Conclusion

The current mixed-method study has investigated the perceptions towards collaborative small group works, six classroom activities, and possible difficulties that occurred during the collaborative process. Overall, it could be seen that collaborative small group works provided significant contributions to EFL vocabulary learning in the classroom. Regarding the quantitative and qualitative results, they highly perceived that working in a small group could encourage them memorize and gain more new lexical items more easily. When participating in collaborative small groups, it can be noted that all six activities efficiently broaden unfamiliar words, particularly “Relay the message”, Phrases to a paragraph” and “Role-playing” would be possible ultimate small group tasks to lower-proficient students. Importantly, most of students felt unsure in terms of barriers in collaborative group activities accordance with quantitative finding. Nevertheless, they expressed their opinions through focus- group interview that time constraint handling activities assigned, lacking of self-confidence in English and group disagreement were their difficulties while manipulating group activities collaboratively. It could shed light on six classroom activities that they would possibly be some other alternative scaffolding techniques to strengthen students’ vocabulary competence as their target language through collaborative small group works especially among ESL and/or EFL less proficient students in Thailand and other Asian countries.

## Pedagogical Implication

EFL teachers should administer collaborative procedures in their EFL classes in order to assist lower- proficiency students to share and exchange their thoughts to their groups. Thus, they will master how to work collaboratively with others and concur with distinctive views. Additionally, it would be better to allow less proficient students to have opportunities to improve their English pronunciation, spelling, and definitions of target words together with group members. Thus, they will be less stressful and more confident to deal with group assignments. It also provides a more relaxed atmosphere to learn something difficult, especially unfamiliar lexical items. Furthermore, EFL teachers should employ productive and enjoyable collaborative group tasks as an effective scaffolding to enlarge and increase low-proficiency students' vocabulary in a language classroom. One more pivotal teaching implementations, Bao (2019), suggests that teachers are supposed to administer more time on tasks, and more challenging tasks to students as word retention relies on what activities and procedures directly attract their attention to the unfamiliar new words. One more fruitful benefit of the collaborative process is, while students are working in groups, some more energetic students could contribute their right answers or even more excellent ideas to their friends. In other words, collaborative learning seems not to leave poor students alone and neglect them. Finally, working in small groups facilitate students to establish social skills and assist each other in coping with EFL classroom tasks. Undoubtedly, less proficient students would be able to eliminate foreign language anxiety and slightly build up positive attitudes towards English language learning. It also enhances their English vocabulary through a wide range of English skills effectively. It could acknowledge that vocabulary learning through collaborative activities could probably one of constructive pedagogical approaches to foster lower-proficiency students' target lexical items in EFL classroom or online learning. Leaving low proficient students to handle some particular tasks alone, they might not eventually reach the lesson objectives. Hence, collaboration supports and encourages poor students keen on the task rather than ignore all activities assigned.

**Limitation and Further Study**

As for the limitations of the present study, it only generally explored the perceptions of collaborative work in quite a small sample size and in only six classroom activities that were intentionally chosen for the EFL classroom. Further study should directly focus on a comparison between more proficient learners and incapable ones to investigate their attitudes when they collaboratively engage in small group works. Moreover, it should look through a comparative study of individual, pair, and group work in vocabulary learning as well. So, it could eventually provide a better insight into the pedagogical approach to master the target English language.

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# Explicit Instruction of Phrasal Verbs: Examining the Effectiveness of Traditional and Video-Based Modes on English Majors

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**Abstract**

The current quasi-experimental study aims to address the issue of learning English phrasal verbs as challenging language constructs. It reports findings associated with the potential of intentional/direct instruction by utilizing two different modes (traditional and video-based). Using a quantitative approach to data collection, two instruments were developed and utilized that consist of a phrasal verbs recognition pre-/post-test and an attitude questionnaire. The sample comprises 48 Arabic speaking English majors at a Saudi public university who were equally divided into control and treatment groups. The findings of four administered instructional sessions reveal significant differences for both groups, evidenced by the statistically significant differences in the post-test mean scores. Therefore, there are gains in phrasal verbs knowledge for both groups, indicating that the aspect of explicitness in both forms of instruction is a key ingredient to more effective learning of phrasal verbs. Although significant improvement for both groups is evidenced, the findings do not reveal statistically significant differences between the groups in the post-test, suggesting no evidence of a potential superiority of video-based explicit instruction mode over a traditional face-to-face mode. However, the findings suggest that using videos for explicit instruction of phrasal verbs is, to say the least, equally effective, compared to the traditional mode. Furthermore, the

participants' positively perceive instruction through video as motivating, more enjoyable, and supportive which reflects learners' predisposition toward employing new technological tools to facilitate vocabulary learning.

**Keywords:** *CALL, phrasal verbs, video-based instruction, explicit instruction, vocabulary learning, EFL learners*

## Introduction

Research in the domain of phrasal verbs teaching and learning has indicated that this language construct poses an extreme challenge to English learners. Researchers and teachers have endeavored to overcome this obstacle through investigating and examining several tools, materials, and methods that might lead to effective instructional outcomes. Mart (2012) noted that the most fruitful and productive approach to teaching this construct is, to some extent, still contentious. Pedagogical attention to phrasal verbs has not provided evidence of optimal outcomes associated with a particular approach to teaching and learning of phrasal verbs. Moreover, implicit instruction and learning of this construct might be less effective since phrasal verbs meanings are less discernible than other one-word lexical items. It is mainly due to learners' inability to differentiate between the functions of a verb + particle forming a phrasal verb and that of a verb + adverb/preposition (Garnier & Schmitt, 2016). Such complexity of this construct calls for pedagogical intervention to support learning.

According to Norris and Ortega (2001), intentional language teaching has been found to be highly supportive and more productive than mere exposure to the target language. Although research has not signified the most effective approach to vocabulary learning (Schmitt, 2008); however, Schmitt pointed out that evidence from research has suggested that direct/explicit teaching of vocabulary items is crucial and conducive to positive outcomes. Therefore, explicit instruction might facilitate successful learning and recognition of phrasal verbs and their constituents. Nonetheless, research on the potential of explicit teaching for vocabulary learning has not come to a conclusion of which direct teaching mode can serve optimal learning.

Adding the digital component to explicit instruction might render more positive outcomes as it is perceived to be a motivating and engaging vehicle for delivering information. Thus, increasing the level of learners' engagement should be a priority for language teachers as it is conducive to fruitful vocabulary learning (Schmitt, 2008). The use of technology, including watching videos, has been an integrative aspect of daily activities of most learners of the new generations (Baker, 2010). A number of recent studies have shown that utilizing video technology in ESL teaching can lead to increasing levels of motivation (e.g., Joseph & Baskaran, 2011). One of the resources that provides video-based explicit instruction and is commonly used worldwide is YouTube in which L2 learners can easily find accessible contents where a multitude of English language points are explicated by either native or non-native English speakers. The present study used available contents on phrasal verbs found on YouTube for teaching several combinations of this construct.

Phrasal verbs are indispensable constituents of English language (Gardner & Davies, 2007). Yet, they are extremely difficult to learn and master as constructs of multiword items. The crux of the matter is that the difficulty of learning phrasal verbs warrants examining new approaches, resources, and tools to support learning. Few studies have examined the utility of intentional instruction on phrasal verbs learning. Moreover, research on the effects of video-based explicit instruction on learning of phrasal verbs is scarce. Therefore, this study addresses this gap and seeks to contribute insight into the existing literature on phrasal verbs learning through examining and comparing the potential of the aforesaid two modes of explicit instruction. Additionally, it explores L2 learners' attitudes toward the utility of video-based instruction on phrasal verbs learning. The underlying assumption is that explicit teaching of this construct can be advantageous. Furthermore, it can be even more effective when using video technology, as it might spark learners' attention and stimulate further concentration on what is being taught.

## Literature review

One of the fundamental principles in language learning and teaching is that vocabulary knowledge in terms of quantity (breadth) and quality (depth) plays a principal role in the improvement of language skills. Phrasal verbs are constituents of vocabulary items, of which L2 learners have to increase their knowledge. Due to the pivotal role of vocabulary development in L2 learning, comprehension, and production, a large number of studies have examined various non-technological and technological tools that are potentially supportive of vocabulary learning and acquisition (e.g., Abraham, 2008; Oberg 2011; Yun, 2011). Research has also sought to explore different approaches and examine their potential for vocabulary learning. For instance, examining the effects of two approaches on vocabulary learning and acquisition, Sonbul and Schmitt (2010) compared incidental vocabulary learning while reading and explicit instruction of vocabulary meanings after reading. The findings showed that the latter approach rendered more positive outcomes than the former approach. Schmitt (2008) pointed out that intentional attention to vocabulary is productive and fruitful and is associated with more positive outcomes in terms of learning and retention compared to incidental learning.

Schmitt added that vocabulary learning through incidental exposure might not transfer into learners' productive knowledge and that the explicitness component in explicit teaching might be necessary for effective learning beyond mere receptive knowledge. Several researchers have advocated explicit instruction and direct attention to academic vocabulary items (e.g., Chou, 2017; Nagy & Townsend, 2012). Moreover, Folse (2010) and Agustín-Llach (2017) contended that explicit teaching of vocabulary is necessary. Other researchers have also accentuated intentional teaching of complicated constructs such as multiword items (e.g., Coady, 1997).

Although some other studies have shown that implicit and explicit approaches of teaching are similar in terms of their impact on acquiring collocations (e.g., Zarei & Tondaki, 2015); however, several other studies in this area have indicated the effectiveness of intentional teaching of collocations compared to the implicit approach (e.g., Keshavarz & Taherian, 2018; Norris & Ortega, 2000; Spada & Tomita, 2010). Lin and Liou (2009) investigated the impact of explicit teaching of single academic vocabulary items on vocabulary gains and writing competence. Although the researchers did not find evidence of increased vocabulary breadth; however, they reported an increase in vocabulary depth as well as a positive influence of explicit vocabulary instruction on writing tasks that followed the treatment. Khatib and Ghannadi (2011) conducted a study to examine the influence of direct instruction and noticing compared to implicit learning of phrasal verbs. Their findings indicated that direct instruction resulted in significant positive outcomes at both levels of phrasal verbs recognition and production.

Several studies have scrutinized a phenomenon that they labeled *phrasal verbs avoidance*; a term used to describe English learners' tendency to avoid the use of phrasal verbs in general and the idiomatic/figurative ones in particular (e.g., Liao & Fukuya, 2004; Siyanova & Schmitt, 2007). Such a phenomenon might strongly signify ineffective learning of phrasal verbs combinations. For English learners, among the several challenging aspects of the constructs of phrasal verbs are their ubiquity (see (Gardner & Davies, 2007) for estimates of frequency), polysemy, inexistence of similar constructs in learners' first language (Garnier & Schmitt, 2016), different types (literal, aspectual, and idiomatic), and transitivity, intransitivity, separability, and inseparability. Although the field of cognitive linguistics proposed and contended that the meanings (sense) of phrasal verbs can be detected and identified through the use of conceptual metaphors; nevertheless, a common notion in the literature suggests that phrasal verbs meanings are unpredictable. Therefore, combining the complexity of unpredictability and the aforementioned perplexing factors suggests that phrasal verbs is one of the most challenging constructs for English learners. Coady (1997) mentioned that it is evident that typical language experience does not provide effective learning of multiword items.

Prensky (2001) pointed out that learners in the present time are different from those in the past in which current curricula, tools, and methods have not lived up to their changes and expectations. Crawford (2002) argued that the use of technology in education can be adjusted to meet learners' particular needs. Research has shown that utilizing technology in L2 learning and teaching has provided evidence of effectiveness on language learning, and advanced solutions to several language learning issues and obstacles. For instance, Grgurović, Chapelle, and Shelley (2013) analyzed the findings from 37 studies that have examined computer-assisted language learning and concluded that technology-enhanced L2 teaching is equally effective compared to L2 teaching without technology. Moreover, the findings of some studies included in their meta-analysis have shown that technology-enhanced L2 teaching have resulted in better outcomes than L2 teaching without technology.

Research has suggested positive impact of video technology on L2 learners' vocabulary development (e.g., Smidt & Hegelheimer, 2004; Vidal, 2011). Ilin, Kutlu, and Kutluay (2013) utilized video technology to teach grammar points to learners of English for specific purposes, finding that videos stimulated learners' engagement, motivated them to seek independent learning, and positively influenced long-term learning. In addition, Washang (2014) investigated possible positive outcomes associated with technical vocabulary retention through the integration of video, finding that employing videos significantly improved learners' retention of the learned items. Furthermore, Kabooha and Elyas (2015) looked into the potential of utilizing YouTube videos for improving vocabulary recognition and comprehension and explored learners' attitudes toward the use of this tool. Their findings reported better gains associated with the use of YouTube videos. Additionally, learners' perceived using YouTube as helpful indicating a supportive role of videos to enhance learning of the target vocabulary.

Research has accentuated the impact of attention in L2 learning (Ellis, 2015). Similarly, Schmitt (2008) noted that research has suggested a number of factors that foster learning of vocabulary including attention devoted to learning. Thus, it might be assumed that instruction through videos might increase the level of attention compared to face-to-face instruction. In terms of phrasal verbs instruction, teaching complicated language constructs by engaging learners in watching instructional videos, as motivational and interesting materials, might increase the level of attention resulting in improved internalizing of what is being taught. According to Chun and Plass (1996), videos and images that accompany the teaching/learning of idioms and other vocabulary items enhance learners' retention of those items.

Educational videos such as the ones used in the current study can be seen as both entertaining and educational that can foster effective learning of the contents shown in the videos. Such an assumption is supported by theories explaining how this form of entertainment can support and foster learning. Seels, Berry, Fullerton, and Horn (1996) noted how learning from entertainment is grounded in Arousal theory, Short-Term Gratification theory, and Interest Stimulation theory. Marshall (2002) pointed out that the aforementioned theories can explicate how interesting types of media can potentially draw learners' attention, spark curiosity, trigger emotions and feelings, and enable cognitive processing and assimilation of the content.

**Purpose of the study and research questions**

The extreme challenge that phrasal verbs pose to EFL learners demands investigating possible effective approaches to learning and teaching of those complicated language constructs. This study is motivated by the potential of different explicit instructional (traditional and video-based) modes that can enhance phrasal verbs learning. It is an area that has not received thorough investigation and due attention. For instance, the majority of studies that have been conducted on the use of video to teach vocabulary in general and phrasal verbs in particular have employed educational and non-educational videos where the contents usually lacked explicit/direct instruction of the target lexical units. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by means of comparing the effects of face-to-face and video-based intentional instruction on learning and retention of phrasal verbs. To achieve this goal, this study attempts to test the following two hypotheses:

Hypothesis (1): Traditional face-to-face and video-based explicit modes of instruction are effective for learning English phrasal verbs.

Hypothesis (2): Explicit instruction of phrasal verbs by utilizing videos is more effective than traditional face-to-face instruction of the same constructs.

Moreover, this study aims to explore learners' attitudes toward the mode of video-based explicit instruction, and whether they perceive it as engaging, productive, and supportive. Therefore, three research questions are formed as follows:

1. Do traditional and video-based modes of explicit instruction facilitate learning of English phrasal verbs?
2. Is video-based explicit instruction of English phrasal verbs more effective than traditional explicit instruction?
3. What are EFL learners' attitudes toward video-based explicit instruction of English phrasal verbs?

## Method

### *Research design*

To answer the three research questions, this study employs a quantitative approach to data collection that consists of two instruments that were developed by the researcher and administered online to the participants (a phrasal verbs recognition test and an attitude questionnaire). To answer the first and second research questions, a quasi-experimental design was utilized in order to test the proposed hypotheses. The design included two tests that were administered as pre- and post-tests. To elicit responses for the third research question, an attitude questionnaire was administered to the treatment group after the experiment was conducted.

### *Participants*

The sample of this study consists of 48 students who were equally divided between the control and experimental groups. All the participants were male Arabic speaking English majors at a Saudi public university whose age ranged from 20-27 ($M$ = 22.31, $SD$ = 1.93). All the participants have been enrolled in a four-year English language and translation bachelor program that is preceded by a mandatory intensive English program for one semester. Each group of students (control and treatment) attended a 2-hour and 30-minute once-a-week core class taught by the researcher in a language lab. The lab was equipped with a large interactive white board, computers, and access to the internet. A portion of each of the two classes was allocated to explicit instruction of phrasal verbs using one of the two modes of instruction (traditional and video-based). The participants voluntarily participated in the sessions, took the tests, and those in the treatment group completed the questionnaire.

### *Procedures*

Instructional sessions lasted for 4 weeks, and the entire data collection time lasted for 6 weeks from pre-test to post-test. In the first week, all participants in both groups took a pre-test that measured their recognition knowledge of 20 phrasal verbs (hold, carry, back, and kick + several associated particles).Then, from the second until the fifth week, the participants received a four-session of explicit instruction on 33 target phrasal verbs combinations associated with the aforesaid verbs (Appendix B). Each session was designed for teaching and practicing a particular verb + commonly associated particles. During the sixth week, a post-test was administered to the participants to examine any gains form the instructional sessions in both groups, and the treatment group completed an attitude questionnaire (Appendix A). To minimize any effect of re-studying the taught phrasal verbs in out-of-class time on the results of post-tests, the students in both groups were instructed not to deliberately study the taught phrasal verbs during weeks 2-5. In addition, post-instruction worksheets that provided exercises for the taught phrasal verbs were collected by the instructor after the post-instruction activities. Furthermore, to minimize any effect of the students preparing for the tests on the results of the post-test, the students in both groups were not informed in advance of the post-test. Additionally, the students were not provided with the correct answers after the pre-test. The instructional sessions in both groups were conducted only once, and there were neither additional review of the taught phrasal verbs nor production tasks assigned to the participants. This was done for the purposes of: (1) controlling the effect of possible repeated exposure, (2) confirming accurate comparison of the outcomes of one-attempt instructional input through the two instructional modes, and (3) examining the effect of one-attempt of explicit instruction on learning and retention.

***Traditional (face-to face) explicit instruction (control group)***

In each session, the verb-particles combinations for a particular verb were identified for the students once the session begins. Then, the instructor (the researcher) taught and explained the meanings of the intended phrasal verbs and provided examples of their usage.

***Video-based explicit instruction (experimental group)***

In each session, the treatment was administered through watching the videos that were played on the large screen in the language lab. The videos started with a teacher familiarizing students with the particular to-be-taught verb and a number of commonly used particles. Then, the teacher in the selected videos taught and explained the meanings of the intended phrasal verbs and provided examples of their usage. To control for the impact of repetition of instruction on the results, videos were shown only once, and the taught and practiced phrasal verbs were not reviewed again in the subsequent sessions.

***Criteria for instructional videos***

Four videos were selected by the researcher from *YouTube* (Appendix C) that met the criteria for inclusion in this study. The criteria were based on the following: (1) videos should include explicit teaching of English phrasal verbs that are syntactically organized around one verb and a number of commonly accompanied particles; (2) teaching should be accompanied with examples; (3) videos should be relatively short in time (around 10 minutes); and (4) the instructor in the videos should be a native speaker of English or an advanced (native-like) speaker whose English can be easily understood.

***Post-instruction activity (worksheet)***

Following each instructional session, the students in both groups were provided with worksheets for in-class practice of the newly learned phrasal verbs. The worksheets involved the students in a retrieval activity of the taught phrasal verbs combinations that took the form of recognition exercises of verbs + particles through multiple-choice and true/false questions. The students worked on the exercises in groups, followed by class discussion of the correct answers.

***Instrument (1) pre- and post-tests***

All administered tests took the form of a multiple choice cloze test. The test comprised 20 items that tested the students' knowledge of 4 particular verbs (hold, carry, back, and kick) with several commonly associated particles. Each item consisted of a statement that was missing a particle, and four choices of particles accompanied each statement. To ascertain the validity of the test items, a pool of experts were consulted, and their suggestions were carefully taken into consideration. Moreover, the test was piloted and its internal consistency reliability was measured (Cronbach alpha, $\alpha = 0.72$), indicating that the tests items are reliable to use in this study. Pre- and post-tests were exactly the same with the same order of questions. The online tests were developed and administered utilizing the platform *Google Forms*, and the links for the two tests were accessible via *Blackboard* (a virtual learning environment) to which the students had direct access. The students submitted their answers using the computers in the language lab.

***Instrument (2) learners' attitudes toward video-based explicit instruction***

After the administration of the post-test for both groups, the students in the treatment group were provided with an attitude questionnaire that consisted of 10 items. Responses to the questionnaire items consisted of a four-point Likert scale with (strongly agree = 4), (agree = 3), (disagree = 2), and (strongly disagree = 1) respectively. The purpose of the questionnaire was to elicit students' responses regarding their attitudes toward explicit instruction of phrasal verbs through videos (e.g., effectiveness, difficulties encountered, satisfaction, and motivation). To ascertain the validity of the questionnaire, a pool of experts reviewed the questionnaire items, and their feedback was taken into account and all necessary modifications were made. The internal consistency reliability of the questionnaire was measured, suggesting adequate reliability (Cronbach alpha, $\alpha = 0.71$), of the questionnaire items to be used in this study. The online questionnaire was developed and administered utilizing *Google Forms* platform, and the link for the questionnaire was accessible via *Blackboard*. The students completed the questionnaire using the computers in the language lab.

## Results

### ***Pre-test and post-test scores (control and treatment groups)***

To answer the first and second research questions regarding the effectiveness of the two modes of explicit instruction, analysis for the obtained data utilized descriptive statistics, paired-samples t-test, and independent-samples t-test. The descriptive statistics, as shown in Table 1, indicates that the mean scores of the pre-test for both groups were relatively similar (7.29 and 7.50). In the post-test, the mean scores increased to 8.88 and 10.42 for the control and treatment groups respectively, with an increase in the mean scores of 1.59 for the control group and 2.92 for the treatment group.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Control and Treatment Groups Results

| | | Pre-Test | | Post-Test | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Groups | *N* | *M* | *SD* | *M* | *SD* |
| Control | 24 | 7.29 | 2.694 | 8.88 | 3.234 |
| Treatment | 24 | 7.50 | 2.396 | 10.42 | 2.781 |

Shapiro-Wilk test was used to test the assumption of normality of scores distribution. Analysis suggests normal distribution of scores ($p > .05$) with ($p = .965$) and ($p = .121$) for the control and treatment groups respectively. In order to test the two proposed hypotheses of the potential effects of both modes of explicit instruction and a possible higher effect of video-based over traditional instruction on phrasal verbs learning, paired- and independent-samples t-tests were conducted to examine a possibility of a statistically significant difference in the mean scores of the two groups. As Table 2 shows, the paired-samples t-test results suggests a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of the pre- and post-tests for the control group; $t(23) = 2.35$, ($p < .05$), with a medium effect size ($d = .53$), based on the suggestion of Cohen (1988) for the magnitude of effect size. By the same token, the difference between the pre- and post-tests mean scores for the treatment group is statistically significant; $t(23) = 4.75$, ($p < .05$), with a large effect size ($d = 1.12$), based on Cohen (1988) for the magnitude of effect size. Therefore, the results suggest the acceptance of the first study hypothesis and rejection of the null hypothesis.

Table 2. Paired-Samples t-Test Results

| | *M* | *SD* | *t* | *p* | *df* | *d* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control | 1.583 | 3.296 | 2.354 | .028 | 23 | .53 |
| Treatment | 2.917 | 3.006 | 4.753 | .000 | 23 | 1.12 |

The pre-test mean scores in the two groups are relatively similar (Table 1), and the results of the independent-samples t-test as shown in Table 3 indicate that there is no statistically significant difference in the mean scores between the two groups, $t(46) = -.283$, ($p > .05$); thus, validating the assumption of homogeneity between the two groups. On the other hand, a difference in the post-test mean scores between the two groups is identified (Table 1); however, the aforesaid difference is statistically insignificant; $t(46) = -1.771$, ($p > .05$), with a medium effect size ($d = .51$), based on the suggestion of Cohen (1988) for the magnitude of effect size. Consequently, the results suggest the rejection of the second study hypothesis and acceptance of the null hypothesis.

Table 3. Independent-Samples t-Test Results

| | *F* | *Sig.* | *t* | *p* | *df* | *d* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-Test | .159 | .692 | − .283 | .778 | 46 | .08 |
| Post-Test | .728 | .398 | − 1.771 | .083 | 46 | .51 |

**Learners' attitudes toward video-based explicit instruction of Phrasal Verbs**

To answer the third research question that aims to explore learners' attitudes toward video-based explicit instruction, descriptive statistics were utilized. The results, as illustrated in Table 4, reveal that the learners perceive this mode positively with an overall mean score of ($M$ = 3.12, $SD$ = .34). In particular, item 2 received the highest agreement with the highest mean score of 3.61 showing that videos supported the learners in learning the target phrasal verbs, followed by 3.39 for item 4 indicating that using video motivated the learners to utilize this technology to learn phrasal verbs in the future. In contrast, item 8 received the lowest mean score of 2.71 which shows that almost a third of the participants perceive instructional videos to be equally or less interesting than traditional teaching of vocabulary. Moreover, the mean score of 2.90 for item 7 suggests that some participants did not perceive watching teachers in videos to be conducive to enhanced retention of teacher's instruction.

Table 4. Learners' Attitudes Toward Video-Based Explicit Instruction of Phrasal Verbs

| Items | SA *n* (%) | A *n* (%) | D *n* (%) | SD *n* (%) | *M* | *SD* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The videos were interesting and fun to watch. | 13(42) | 16(52) | 2(6) | 0(0) | 3.35 | .60 |
| 2. In general, the videos helped me learn phrasal verbs. | 19(61) | 12(39) | 0(0) | 0(0) | 3.61 | .49 |
| 3. The videos can help me become more independent learner; I can learn phrasal verbs easily by myself through watching similar videos. | 11(35) | 18(58) | 1(3) | 1(3) | 3.26 | .68 |
| 4. Learning phrasal verbs through videos motivates me to use video technology more in the future to learn other phrasal verbs. | 15(48) | 13(42) | 3(10) | 0(0) | 3.39 | .66 |
| 5. The videos are good as supplementary; but they are not enough by themselves. | 4(13) | 24(77) | 3(10) | 0(0) | 3.03 | .48 |
| 6. I can remember many phrasal verbs I learned because I watched them in the videos. | 6(19) | 20(64) | 5(16) | 0(0) | 3.03 | .60 |
| 7. I can remember many things that the teacher said in the videos. | 6(19) | 17(55) | 7(23) | 1(3) | 2.90 | .74 |
| 8. Videos like the ones I watched are more interesting and engaging than traditional (face-to-face) ways of teaching vocabulary. | 3(10) | 17(55) | 10(32) | 1(3) | 2.71 | .69 |
| 9. Compared to my previous experiences with teachers teaching me vocabulary, teaching phrasal verbs through videos makes learning easier and more successful. | 8(26) | 13(42) | 10(32) | 0(0) | 2.94 | .77 |
| 10. Because watching videos is interesting, the videos caught my attention and made me focus more on the different phrasal verbs taught by the teacher. | 6(19) | 21(68) | 3(10) | 1(3) | 3.03 | .65 |
| Total | | | | | 3.12 | .34 |

## Discussion

This study reports findings on potential effects of two modes (traditional and video-based) of explicit instruction on phrasal verbs learning. The findings reveal that the scores of both groups significantly increased in the post-test. This improvement of phrasal verbs knowledge can be attributed to the explicitness aspect in both modes of instruction. Explicit instruction might have provided the learners with support represented by increased attention to forms and meanings of the phrasal verbs combinations. This is in line with what Schmitt (2008) emphasized regarding the strong potential of explicit teaching of vocabulary for successful learning and retention. Furthermore, the findings are in harmony with the those of Barcroft (2009) and Sonbul and Schmitt (2010) that suggested the effectiveness of explicit vocabulary teaching on students' vocabulary acquisition.

The findings are in line with researchers who have advocated direct teaching of complicated constructs including multiword items (e.g., Coady, 1997). Moreover, the findings are in line with several other studies that have found positive effects of explicit teaching of formulaic sequences (AlHassan & Wood, 2015; Liou & Chen, 2018; Peters & Pauwels, 2015), collocations (Chan & Liou, 2005), and single vocabulary items (Lin & Liou, 2009). The significance of these main findings in the present study stem from the fact that the learners were provided with only *one-attempt* of direct teaching and post-instruction activity without repeated review or more exposure to the target phrasal verbs. That is, despite the lack of repeated exposure, the learners were able to remarkably score higher in the post-test. Thus, these finding accentuate the significant effect of explicit teaching on learning and retention of phrasal verbs.

In spite of the significant increase that is indicated in the post-test mean scores for both groups, and for the experimental group in particular, the findings suggest that this difference is not statistically significant between the groups results. However, the significant increase in the post-test scores is congruent with findings in previous studies such as Khatib and Ghannadi's (2011) that examined the effect of explicit instruction on phrasal verbs learning. The present study shows that exposure to phrasal verbs through explicit teaching in the two modes resulted in higher gains for both groups. Insignificant difference between the control and treatment groups suggests no potential eminence of one form of instruction over the other, and it can be concluded that both forms of instruction are equally effective for teaching phrasal verbs.

Despite that the findings do not reveal a superior effect of video-based over face-to-face traditional explicit instruction, the higher gains in the treatment group might be explained by increased motivation for phrasal verbs learning as the constructs were taught using video technology. Many studies have shown that using videos in ESL teaching can result in increased motivation for learning (Joseph & Baskaran, 2011). Moreover, the explicitness aspect of instruction associated with the digital environment of the instructional sessions, compared to the traditional mode, might have triggered learners' attention. Attention is an indispensable component for effective language learning (Ellis, 2015), as well as for successful vocabulary learning in particular (Schmitt, 2008). If explicit instruction of phrasal verbs through videos can be seen as both an educational and enjoyable form of instruction; then, Arousal theory, Short-Term Gratification theory, and Interest Stimulation theory can explain the relative difference in the post-test mean scores between the two groups. Marshall (2002) pointed out that these theories can portray how engaging types of media can potentially draw learners' attention, spark curiosity, trigger emotions and feelings, and enable cognitive processing and assimilation of the content.

Another aim of this study is to explore how learners who experienced video-based explicit instruction perceive its effectiveness and potential. The findings suggest that learners might be intrigued by the integration of new technological tools into vocabulary learning, such as utilizing video technology to learn phrasal verbs in the classroom. By and large, the findings from the attitude questionnaire indicate that learners have positive attitudes toward the video-based mode as reflected in the overall high mean score, drawing on their interest, engagement, increased motivation, and the language learning support that this mode can offer. These findings are in harmony with Kabooha and Elyas's (2015) findings that learners perceived utilizing YouTube as advantageous and supportive in improving the target vocabulary learning. Bearing in mind that the participants in the treatment group might have different types of motivation for learning L2. However, possible different types of motivation did not impact their overall positive perceptions of utilizing videos from YouTube to teach phrasal verbs. Alimemaj (2010) argued that YouTube can intrigue learners with different types of motivation due to the fact that this tool is a component of a trending popular culture. Hidayat, Septiawan, and Sufyan (2020) noted that videos in YouTube have the potential to increase learners' enjoyment and involvement in English learning. Thus, learners in this study show a high level of satisfaction at the support provided by videos for successful learning of phrasal verbs. Videos might have increased the level of learners' concentration on what has been taught by the video-based instructor. According to Köksal (2004), videos can direct learners' attention and make them engage in what is being instructed. Moreover, the findings suggest that the videos used in the instructional sessions motivate the learners to use the same technology to learn phrasal verbs in the future. In addition to the fact that videos are elements of current popular culture, learners might have successfully learned many of the taught phrasal verbs and that made them perceive such instructional videos as effective.

On the other hand, the items that received the lowest mean scores indicate that almost a third of the participants perceive videos to be equally or less interesting than face-to-face teaching of vocabulary. These findings might be ascribed to the fact that although instruction was delivered by means of videos, it is still a form of presentation that is teacher-centered. As a result, some learners might perceive it as not highly distinguishable from a traditional form of instruction. These findings partially confirms the findings of the second research question, as video-based and traditional modes rendered relatively similar effects on phrasal verbs learning. By the same token, some learners do not show a high level of agreement on the effectiveness of watching teachers in videos on retention of the teacher's instruction. This might be attributed to the high number of phrasal verbs taught in the four sessions and the different examples mentioned by the teacher for each combination of the target phrasal verbs. That is, due to receiving much information pertaining to several phrasal verbs within one session, some learners might have been prone to confusion and or relatively high cognitive load resulting in low level of retention.

## Conclusion

The current study provides evidence supporting the potential effect of explicit instruction of English phrasal verbs by using two different instructional modes (video-based and traditional face-to-face). The potential of the explicitness aspect of instruction in supporting learners' recognition knowledge of phrasal verbs is indicated as a positively influential factor that enhanced learners' performance in the post-test. Despite the fact that learners who viewed videos gained higher level of recognition knowledge compared to those who were taught by utilizing traditional instruction, no evidence is found to support the notion that one of the aforesaid modes renders more positive outcomes than the other. Nonetheless, this study shows that employing videos for explicit instruction of phrasal verbs is, to put it mildly, equally effective compared to traditional face-to-face instructional mode. Furthermore, learners have positive attitudes toward video-based explicit teaching of phrasal verbs, indicating a positive and successful experience with this mode of instruction.

## Implications

Some pedagogical implications can be derived from the present study. Firstly, phrasal verbs demand language teachers to exert efforts to increase learners' attention to those challenging constructs through considering direct/explicit instruction. Secondly, the similar effects of intentional instruction of phrasal verbs through videos and traditional modes contribute to the notion that L2 learners can receive similar successful direct instruction in and out of class time by using instructional videos. Wagener (2006) emphasized the potential of available video resources for learners, as providing continuous access to audiovisual materials through YouTube and other resources. Repeated exposure to instruction can occur multiple times with relatively similar outcomes of in-class-instruction beyond the restricted class time. Thirdly, as this study suggests, traditional and video-based instruction modes have similar effects on learners; therefore, flipped L2 classrooms, blended L2 learning classes, and L2 online classes can exploit the potential of explicit teaching of multiword items and similar constructs through videos. In so doing, learners would have sufficient instructional resources to support their learning that are similar to a real class situation. Finally, instructional videos can be utilized in the classroom to change the language classroom culture toward more engaging and supportive learning environment when teaching complex constructs of L2.

In this regard, it is crucial to note some limitations of this study. First, the sample comprises male students only. Future research might include female participants and compare the effect of intentional teaching of phrasal verbs through different modes on males and females. Secondly, this study examines learners' recognition knowledge of phrasal verbs. Future studies might explore how direct teaching of phrasal verbs through traditional and video-based modes can contribute to learners' productive knowledge of phrasal verbs. Lastly, future research might also look into the obtained recognition knowledge through explicit instruction and examine whether possible transfer into productive knowledge can be more apparent in L2 oral or written production.

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## Appendix A

**Questionnaire: Attitude Toward Video-Based Explicit Instruction of Phrasal Verbs**

| Items | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The videos were interesting and fun to watch. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 2. In general, the videos helped me learn phrasal verbs. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 3. The videos can help me become more independent learner; I can learn phrasal verbs easily by myself through watching similar videos. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 4. Learning phrasal verbs through videos motivates me to use video technology more in the future to learn other phrasal verbs. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 5. The videos are good as supplementary; but they are not enough by themselves. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 6. I can remember many phrasal verbs I learned because I watched them in the videos. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 7. I can remember many things that the teacher said in the videos. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 8. Videos like the ones I watched are more interesting and engaging than traditional (face-to-face) teaching of vocabulary. | SA | A | D | SD |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9. Compared to my previous experiences with teachers teaching me vocabulary, teaching phrasal verbs through videos makes learning easier and more successful. | SA | A | D | SD |
| 10. Because watching videos is interesting, the videos caught my attention and made me focus more on the different phrasal verbs taught by the teacher. | SA | A | D | SD |

## Appendix B

## Phrasal Verbs Combinations Used in This Study

| **Verb** | **Particles** |
|---|---|
| hold | on / off / up / out / over / against / onto / back / down / to |
| carry | on (with) / over / back / around / off / out / forward / carried away |
| back | up / away / down / off / in / into / out |
| kick | in / back / out / off / about/around / up / over |

## Appendix C

## Links to The Videos Used from YouTube

1. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PKdUDsBOXnc
2. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V6gsxYI8TXo
3. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SdtKDRn1S9E
4. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JbO86r9SnlI

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# The Role of Government in Utilizing Information Technology to Build Innovation in Student Learning at Ibn Khaldun University in the Midst of the Covid-19 Pandemic

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this research was to enforce online learning policies to slow the spread of COVID-19, the pattern demanded the role of lecturers. This article aims to review how lecturers as teaching staff in the Covid-19 pandemic era are focused on aspects of online learning (implementation, challenges, and solutions). The writing of this article uses the study method of literature. Authors search online for primary literature, which has valid and reputable criteria. Data analysis uses the content analysis paradigm. Review results show that lecturers are implementing government policy through online learning. Various flatforms are used in online learning. A variety of positive responses delivered by learners related to online learning. Nevertheless, the implementation of online learning has challenges, both from aspects of human resources, Sarana-prasarana, and technical implementation. As a forward recommendation, public partnerships and ongoing involvement of many parties are needed. Competence and lecturers ' skills must continue to be enriched, supported by school policies that encourage lecturers to continue to learn. Related parties also need to evaluate these online learning so that the learning objectives can be achieved optimally. Student learning expenses must be taken into account, measured, both in material and time. Lecturers should not solely give assignments, but should take into account the maturity. Lecturers should not forget to appreciate the achievement of learners. A flexible and ready-to-face curriculum is also needed

**Keywords:** *Pandemic covid-19, Inovation, Technology Informationn, Learning*

## Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) has established the Corona virus or COVID-19 as a pandemic because it has spread to more than 100 countries in the world. The WHO himself defines a pandemic as a situation when the worldwide population is likely to be exposed to this infection and potentially some of them fall ill. Quoted from the Great Dictionary of Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI), pandemic is a plague that is infectious in unison or covering a wide geography.

The pandemic COVID-19 will have an impact on various sectors of life such as economics, social, as well as education. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on Thursday (5/3) states that the corona virus outbreak has impacted the education sector as a result. Nearly 300 million students interrupted their school activities around the world and threatened to have an impact on their future education rights. In Indonesia, the educational world also feels its impact. If such conditions continue to increase, then it is certain that the impact on the education sector will also increase. The most perceived impact is the students in education service organizers, such as schools at all levels, non-formal education institutions and high-impact.

Coronavirus Disease 2019 or COVID-19 has infected millions of people in more than 200 countries in the world and caused many deaths (Khan, Kazmi, Bashir, & Siddique, 2020). The disease caused by Severe Acute Resviratory SyndromeCoronavirus 2 or SARS-CoV-2 was first reported in the Wuhan city of Hubei Province, China. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has established the COVID-19 as a global pandemic (Cucinotta & Vanelli, 2020).

The pandemic COVID-19 affects almost all aspects of life, with no exception aspects of education (Domenico, Pullano, Coletti, Hens, & Colizza, 2020). In the condition of pandemic the role and position of aspects of education is very crucial (Bakhtiar, 2016). To break the chain of COVID-19-where students can act as a carrier and dispersive illness without symptoms-almost all countries negate activities in the school. As of April 2020, more than 400 million students in the world are required to study at home (UNESCO, 2020).

During the Covid-19 pandemic, educators/lecturers must ensure that learning is running even though students are at home, learning innovation is a solution to be designed and implemented by lecturers by maximizing existing media such as online media. Lecturers can study using E-Learning method, which is learning to utilize information and communication technology. study is to look at the role of meeting zoom applications in improving productivity and health management of students in the midst of the corona or covid-19 virus pandemic in Bogor City. The study was conducted with a study population of 260 and a sample selection of 160 students spreading across several universities (Endin & Ending, 2020). This particular result asserted that EFL lecturers were aware of their role to engage the student participate actively in the classroom (Devi, 2020). One of the advances of technology in online communication can be seen in terms of the use of social media network, in which one of them is the use of WhatsApp. This application is so popular among students, especially because they need to communicate freely and easily for their needs in campus and in their daily life (Mahmud, 2020). This study, however, has not touched the form of students participation in instructional technology . The learning system is carried out through a computer device (PC) or a laptop connected with an Internet connection, lecturers can do the same learning at the same time using groups in social media such as Whatsapp (WA), Telegram, Zoom application or other social media as a means of learning so as to ensure that students are studying at the same time while in different place. Lecturers can also provide measurable tasks but still ensure that every day the learner's learning is accomplished step by step of the task. Many more innovations can be done by educators to ensure learning is ongoing and students get the knowledge according to the curriculum that has been compiled by the government.

The work would also contribute to the current literature on teaching in Saudi Arabia in particular and the world, in general, focusing on rhymes in the preparatory education level (Ahmed, 2020). The leadership must also innovate in conducting supervision or coaching functions to the lecturers to ensure that the teaching and learning activities have been conducted by lecturers and students despite using remote methods (online). Leaders can also provide solutions and motivation to lecturers on campus, so lecturers who are not ready to utilize online media can be supervised and given solutions. For private supervisor under LLDIKTI IV, West Java province can innovate to keep the supervision and the aim of its supervision can run well even though it does not have to be faced face.

## Literature Review

The consequences of the physical closure of the institution and replacing it by studying in/out of the home as government policy is a change in teaching learning System (Arora & Srinivasan, 2020). Campus Managers, moststudents, parents, and of course lecturers must migrate to a digital or online learning system, better known as e-Learning (Aderholt, 2020) or known as in-network learning or "online learning" in Indonesia.

In unison, the majority of educational institutions select the online learning options (Azzi-Huck & Shmis, 2020). The country of Indonesia is also relatively different from other countries. Despite realizing that there is disparity towards the access of learning technology and the diverse background of parents, the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia firmly enforce the online learning policy (Irawan, 2020). Changes in the pattern of study and teaching will never be detached from the teaching role (Collie, 2011), for changes in online learning patterns.

Lecturers must be prepared with various learning conditions and conditions of students, including the development of life in the community (Abdullah, 2016). In this regard, this article aims to review about how to become professional lecturer in the pandemic period, which is focused on reviewing aspects of digitisation demands in education, especially in the learning activities. The reviews will be focused on how the implementation of COVID-19 pandemic learning in various countries and learning in Indonesia during the pandemic COVID19, challenges faced and the strategic solutions ahead. This study is very important and necessary to do, as an effort to anticipate education-the school and Lecturers, and at the same time as the basis of policy-making ahead (futuristic). In line with (Anugrah, 2020), pandemic COVID-19 could be the gateway to changing the sensitive learning of the era, SCIENCE and contextual developments. However, all parties must be aware, as has been asserted by Cluver et al (2020) that COVID-19 is not the first or first pandemic virus that threatens or affects the activity of mankind, and it may be that it is not the last.

As according to (Contreras, 2020) in the twentieth century, the world has undergone several new ailments and even disease-level pandemic. Therefore, this nation needs to learn from the conditions and learn from the history to utilize effective strategies to strengthen all sectors of life, and Volume 1 No. 1 year 2020 53 The Journal of Education profession Lecturers especially the education sector in responding to the pandemic forward (as the saying goes, ready umbrellas before the rain).

**Methods**

This method of research is using the study method of literature and content analysis. A comparative literature is conducted to uncover theories and information relevant to the topics being studied. Comparative studies of the literature are conducted by searching for online primary literature, such as journals, research reports, activity reports, books, magazines, news media, and other literary sources, which have valid and reputable criteria. The journals, Proceedings, and books used are prioritized from the Scopus (https://www.scopus.com/home.uri) database, and the ERIC Institute of Education (https://eric.ed.gov/). Literature is also derived from Google scholar (https://scholar.google.co.id/), specialized in Indonesian literature, literature published in Indonesia, and literature written by Indonesian author.

Other literature is traced using Google's search engine. The keywords used to study the literature are in English, namely COVID-19, COVID and education, pandemic and education, outbreak and learning, teaching in pandemic, outbreak and education, and learning technology and pandemic era. The keywords used to study literature are in Bahasa Indonesia, namely COVID-19 in Indonesia, education and COVID, the education of disasters, epidemic education, lecturers and COVID, future education challenges, and online learning and COVID.

The stages in comparative studies of the literature used in the preparation of this article refer to (Khatibah, 2011). There are four steps to take, namely (1) Preparing equipment for reviewing: In pencil/ballpoint form, notebook, and computer/laptop connected to the internal network; (2) drafting a selected or appropriate bibliography (which is actually used); (3) Regulate time and focus on activities thereby reducing or even avoiding bias; and (4) read carefully, record, and write results.

Data analysis uses the content analysis paradigm. Data presentation using informal presentation methods. Informal presentation method is a method of presenting data in the form of formulations with regular words/phrases that correspond to the linguistic rules. In presenting the data, the author includes excerpts from the various references used, in the form of analysis results, mentioning the source and illustrated based on the summary or essence of the information (which could have been a different paraphrase but still the same meaning) for each topic analyzed. It is done with the context of critical thinking and deep analysis of information

**Results and Discussion**

The world's COVID-19 pandemic learning is struggling against the COVID-19, an educational institution should quickly do anticipation (Snelling & Hincal, 2020). As done in the influenza pandemic, the practice most commonly applied by schools is to cancel or delay learning activities at school, cancel classes or activities with a high level of mixing/contact that occurs in study hours, and reduce physical interactions during the use of transportation equipment (Uscher-Pines, 2018). The educational institutions in the world must be temporarily closed, following government instruction in their respective countries, thereby affecting the academic system. They have to find new alternatives to implement learning, and virtual classes/online learning is the most likely way to do (Arora & Srinivasan, 2020). In the United States, for example the state of Arizona has issued a "Pandemic Preparedness" guide that incorporates online learning as a solution for educational institutions. According to the (Education, 2020) The sub-section of the "Continuity of Education Instruction" has been affirmed that it is important to maintain learning, and to engage students in constructive activities when they are not in school. Involving learners at any level will give them a normal feel during the crisis, as well as Wahyono, et.al. 2020.

Professional lecturers in… 54 10.22219 / jppg.v1i1.12462 provide a constructive solution related to learning interactions. Maintaining normal or routine activities during an emergency is a positive response step that helps speed recovery after a crisis. Continuity of education during a pandemic will depend on various factors, such as the level of school preparation, the readiness of parents / families, and the readiness of lecturers. Consideration must be given to the need for all students to continue providing education during a pandemic. In addition to using copies of instructional materials, such as books, workbooks, and other documents sent by post or courier, schools can use various technology-based solutions to increase the likelihood that students can continue their learning activities. He further explained that the level of continuity and possible educational interventions includes: (1) Exposure to content: Students will be able to see a broad range of content related to the material being taught, such as literacy and numeracy. Skills development that is too focused tends to be undesirable because it will make students bored. The materials used may include textbooks, workbooks, worksheets, e-mail, television (eg, DVD, cable, streaming), and Internet content (eg websites and games), but this will depend on grade level and school abilities. (2) Additional content: Students will be able to see and participate in activities that are directly related to skills, but it is better if there is no need for job assessments or evaluations, this is more of an enrichment. It is hoped that there will be progress for students even though it is limited. In addition to the materials listed above, more specific subject matter can be provided via downloadable content (eg using laptops and smartphones) and telephone communication (eg video conferencing and one-on-one video call communications). (3) Separate continuation: Students can also access content and other subject matter. If instructional support (including job appraisals and evaluations) is provided through other media, continuing learning may be necessary. In this regard, student progress may be measured. The teaching materials and methods used may include all of the above as well as synchronous online learning (eg chat, streaming, video, instant messaging and / or web conferencing). (4) Full continuation: Students can access content and course material. Instructional support is provided, including job appraisals and evaluations. Measurable student progress is expected. The teaching materials and methods used may include everything listed above as well as asynchronous online learning with capabilities for remote communication and assessment (for example, e-mail, learning management systems, tracking, and class or project management). (5) Assessment: statewide exam schedules will open as scheduled; Education agencies work with vendors if exam time needs to be extended. Schools are required to take exams scheduled according to plan. If there is a closure, schools may need to postpone exams and regroup during the opening. If there is a closure, the exam time will be extended.

LLDIKTI IV West Java Province cooperates with the State Education Council to resolve any issues that arise when exams and impacts may occur related to accountability. Schools in Indonesia have attempted to run online or distance learning. One such example is in Figure 1, where thestudents of Ibn Khaldun University held teaching activities online. Lecturers and students are getting to know the technology used for online learning. The applications used are WhatsApp Group, Zoom Cloud Meeting, Google Classroom, Google Form, and e-mail. Lecturers and students use various locations according to their respective conditions and abilities. The development of technology was utilized by the school to get around the unexpected circumstances affecting teaching and learning activities, including the COVID-19 pandemic (Tim Kompas, 2020).

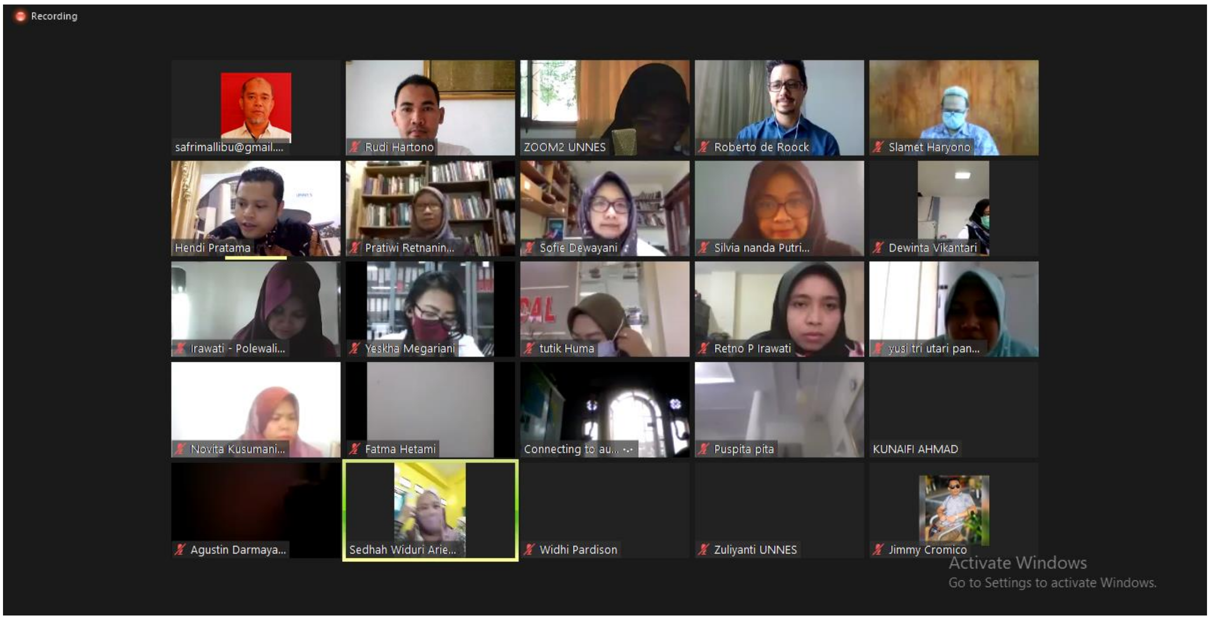


**Figure 1. The learning process amid the covid-19 pandemic**

(Melania, 2020) has conducted a survey of students conducting online learning activities. Results show that some students receive online learning on the grounds that online learning is more relaxed, enjoyable, flexible, efficient, concise, practical, fast, precise, secure, easy, time-saving, and energy-efficient. It can also be done remotely without gathering in the same place. In addition, other benefits of online learning are parents can supervise their children learn, make students or lecturers become technological literacy, accelerate the era of 5.0, and improve skills in the field of SCIENCE.

Mahasiswa also says that they become more creative in completing assignments and can be as comfortable as possible to learn without formal rules. They recognise that utilizing the existing technology for usability may be one of the good innovations and need to be improved in the digital process considering the need to be mastered technology information systems in developing IPTEK in an advanced era. Online learning challenges and solutions cope with learning using new technology has been running for decades. However, it can be said that the transformational impact as expected has not been achieved (Trucano, 2014). Therefore, the transition to online learning is certainly not a truly perfect solution.

In developed countries such as The United States alone, many professors have never taught online, while technical support is often less fulfilling. Some criticism arises about whether it needs such a change without adequate insititution involvement. Others question whether a model that only uses online will punish students who may not have digital access or The Internet (The Chronicle of Higher Education, 2020). The implementation of online learning is not without problems. In some countries, it is reported that among those who adopt online learning, the average benefit is much smaller than expected. Network problems, lack of training, and lack of awareness are expressed as the main challenges faced by educators. Lack of awareness is expressed as the most important reason by those who do not adopt online learning followed by a lack of interest and doubts about the usability of online learning. Lacking attendance, lack of personal touch, and lack of interaction due to connectivity problems were found to be a significant weakness of online learning (Arora & Srinivasan, 2020).

According to (Wahyudi, 2020) Facts on the field, the obligation to study at home became a serious constraint especially learners from the less fortunate among. They often complain of endless internet quota packets. In addition, technology is considered to be able to build an instant attitude for its users. According to (Team, 2020), reports from a number of regions in Indonesia showed that the application of online learning has not been optimal, especially in remote areas with technology and limited Internet network. Figure 2 shows that in 2018 only nationally only 39.90% of the population accessing the Internet. Readiness of school infrastructure, ability to teach online lecturers, and availability of smartphone to be another problem in the application of online learning in Indonesia.


Figure 2. Percentage of population accessing the Internet (Tim Kompas, 2020)

This is in line with the results of (Purwanto & all, 2020) research, namely that there are several obstacles experienced by students, lecturers and parents in online teaching and learning activities, namely the mastery of technology is still lacking, additional internet quota costs, additional work for parents in accompanying them. Children learn, communication and socialization between students, lecturers, and parents are reduced and working hours are not limited for lecturers because they have to communicate and coordinate with parents, other lecturers, and leaders. In addition, according to Anugrah (2020), over time, many problems arise in the implementation of online learning. Among the problems were the lecturer's too many assignments and complaints about quotas and the limited internet network. This condition is in line with the research results of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection in March 2020 with the subject of students aged 14-17 years (69% women and 31% men) totaling 717 from 29 provinces throughout Indonesia. The results showed that 58% of students did not like to undergo the learning from home program. The contributing factor is that participants consider that communication with friends is limited, they experience technological limitations: in the form of internet facilities, devices, and electronic books. They also think that the school does not have a good program for the home learning system. Schools and lecturers only give assignments in a row according to lesson plans and subject matter in non-pandemic / ordinary conditions (Satriawan, 2020).

The Indonesian Children Protection Commission also reported that it has received as many as 213 student complaints and parents in various areas related to online learning. Most students report on the daily tasks given by lecturers who are considered to be heavy while short-term recative work. The online learning process feels Volume 1 No. 1 year 2020 57 The Journal of Professional education lecturers are increasingly heavy for learners who do not have internet quota, or even they do not have a computer (Madrim, 2020). However, it is assumed that there is one thing that is a positive supporter or driver, that is, the higher the number of smartphone users-causing this technology to be the primary necessity-pushing the ease of accessing the Internet in a large and wider area. According to (Mila, 2018), many people who use smartphones are causing this technology to be the most widely used to access the Internet. In 2014 alone, internet access in Indonesia amounted to 85% using a smartphone.

Strategic considerations to the front of the emergence of the COVID-19 serve to remind us in all different cross disciplines that we always have to be prepared by following an all-hazards approach. The importance of sustainable public and private partnerships is not sufficiently emphasized. We will pass the COVID-19 by implementing good communication, collaboration, cooperation, and Coordination (Contreras, 2020). However, lecturers ' competence is a major determinant of the success of learning process, including in Indonesia. Lecturers will strive to be able to make the learning activities successful. Lecturers act as organization of learning environment and as well as learning facilitator. To fulfill that, the lecturer must fulfill the aspect that lecturers as: model, planner, Fortune Teller, leader, and guide or mentor towards learning centers. Lecturers are instrumental in directing and providing learning facilities to students (directing and facilitating the learning) so that the learning process runs adequately, not solely providing information (Zein, 2016). How and whatever form of strategy, model, and media learning used by lecturers, is actually orientated on one main condition, which is interesting so that foster learning interest of students (Abdullah, 2016).

This also applies during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the context of online learning, of course appreciation deserves to be given to lecturers, schools, students, and even parents / guardians of students because they are able to adapt quickly. However, over time all parties need to evaluate online learning so that its goals can be achieved optimally. The learning load of students must be logical and measurable. The number of assignments or bills given by lecturers is a common complaint in online learning. The learning load of students, of course, must be calculated, measured, both materially and in time. Lecturers can provide more challenging and interesting ones, for example observing, experimenting, and analyzing. Even in online learning - even though it is done remotely - greetings, responses, feedback, and appreciation for the results of the participants' work cannot be forgotten. Do not let the assumption that students are being deceived because of the large number of tasks, which are illogical, and without feedback. Do not let the students do the work that has been done maximally, but the lecturer does not correct (Anugrah, 2020). Furthermore, according to Anugrah (2020), an appreciation for student achievement needs to be given by lecturers so that learning objectives can be achieved. One of the learning objectives, including in this case online learning, is the achievement of student competencies known as 4C, namely (1) critical thinking which directs students to be able to solve problems (problem solving); (2) creativity thinking (creative thinking) can be interpreted as a lecturer to assist students who have high creativity able to think and see a problem from various sides or perspectives; (3) collaboration (working together or collaborating) so that students are able and ready to work together with anyone in their future lives; and (4) communication (communication) can be interpreted as the ability of students to convey ideas and thoughts quickly, clearly, and effectively.

Online learning is developed to create an integrated education system that can build connectivity between existing components in education. Therefore education becomes more dynamic and flexible move for educational development. Of course all this should be followed by the readiness of all resources component Wahyono, et.al. 2020. Professional lecturers in the... 58 10.22219/JPPG. v1i 1.12462 human beings in a way of thinking, orientation, behavior, attitudes, and value systems that support the utilization of online learning for the benefit of mankind. In addition, access to the Internet network must also be provided. A user can get in touch with the Internet by accessing a computer at an institution that has been connected to the Internet or need to be a subscriber of an ISP (Internet service provider). ISPS are commercial organizations engaged in the provision of access to Internet services. Can also access the Internet stalls (Munir, 2017). This is what education organizers should think of, especially the government. With regard to online learning, convincing learners and parents is a vital element of institutional response (lecturers and schools). As an effort to increase capacity for online learning, schools must utilize asynchronous conditions.

As with normal class lessons, online learning should include a variety of tasks and jobs that put COVID-19 in a global and historical context. When deciding on an online learning implementation, it should be designed assessments that help lecturers to focus on. This point of view suggests flexible ways to cover the lack of a learning system until the pandemic ends (Daniel, 2020). (Peyravi, Marzaleh, & Shamspour, 2020) offer practical and pragmatic guidance to lecturers, leaders and state officials who must manage the educational consequences of this crisis. A variety of simple, functional and free online courses must be broadly available. In addition, user comments related to training yng aims to improve the effectiveness of the training methods need to be a consideration. Educational content in different media formats can be developed and brushed according to individual age levels to improve the effectiveness of online learning. Accordingly, according to (Moorhouse, 2020), training should be given to online course tutors, so they are ready to provide courses online in case of a pandemic or a health emergency.

(Snelling & Fingal, 2020) explained that the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) in the United States has attempted to identify the main practices for successful online learning. Here are some of the best ideas from educators from around the world, many of whom have been teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. First, "prepare and practice". There are five things that must be considered, namely (1) ensure digital equity. Equality is the biggest obstacle to preparing for online learning, and it is the first thing lecturers should think about. Lecturers and schools need to ensure that all participants involved have the tools. That is why it is necessary to conduct a survey or data collection of lecturers and families to find out who will need online devices and data packages (bandwidth). During school closures, parents may also work from home, which means several people can compete for one or two computers or online platforms. Therefore, make sure all online applications work on the mobile device in case the laptop is not available. For lecturers or students who don't have Wi-Fi at home, the government should actually find a way to buy or rent Wi-Fi hotspots and then have plans to distribute online devices and hotspots. (2) Practice. Schools that are accustomed to implementing online learning, of course, no longer go through connectivity problems with students at home and problems with devices. But for schools that have no experience or are still at the elementary level, this momentum should be considered as an opportunity. Lecturers have not used the learning management system regularly, they need to learn now and quickly so that there will be no disruption in communication after the policy of closing activities at school. Lecturers must train themselves and their students in the applications and technologies they may need to use when studying at / from home. Practice in class / school and then ask students to try using tools from home. (3) Give staff and parents clear expectations. During online learning activities, communication between administrators, staff, parents and students is more important than ever. For big image communication, prepare an FAQ outlining all the details of how the school will operate during closure so that staff and parents can access the same website or online facility. For big picture communication, prepare an FAQ outlining all the details of how the school will operate Volume 1 No 1 Year 2020 59 Journal of Lecturer Professional Education during closure so staff and parents are on the same page. In addition to posting and distributing FAQs, schools should organize community-wide SMS to communicate quickly and then notify people where to find follow-up messages via e-mail or website. Next, prepare a step-by-step guide on how to access and use online learning tools and curricula. Make sure you present this information in multiple formats including video and text and include screenshots and tutorials. Ask parents to make sure all students - especially children - know how to log into the app and know their passwords. Lecturers need to know how to log in and use the facilities. Provide extra technical support and make sure parents and teachers know how to ask for help when needed. (4) Take time to plan. If a school closure occurs before all the lecturers are ready to undertake online learning, then take the time - even if it's only a day or two - to prepare before launching an online learning system with students. The temporary delay in starting online learning will pay off in the long run. (5) Prepare personal needs, complete facilities and infrastructure. Make sure you have access to everything you need from home if you can't go back to school or take your school's frequently used computer home and move your files to the Cloud. Second, implementation.

There are five things that must be considered, namely (1) set a daily schedule. It is hoped that there will be clarity about when lecturers and students carry out online learning. It should be remembered that a whole day in front of screens for children and teachers, especially for families who might share one device would be very ineffective / unkind. Many schools choose two-time options, check-in at morning meetings and check-in at evening meetings - and then give families flexibility in how they organize their schedules at home. Other schools can rearrange school schedules, by spreading one full school day one day off. Students attend three classes in the morning and have the afternoon to work independently and interact with lecturers during "office hours." The next day, they attend the rest of their classes online in the morning and then have a schedule with the lecturers in the afternoon. (2) Provide strong learning. In extreme circumstances such as an impromptu closure, lecturers may be interested in uploading worksheets for students to complete and return. But online learning during closings - especially during extended closings - should be at least as exciting as the classroom experience (if not more), otherwise students will suffer. Therefore, for the ISTE leadership the main recommendations are: Make online learning into small activities. Clarify the targets for online participation. Provide immediate (or at least frequent) feedback via online knowledge checks, comments on collaborative documents and chats to keep students motivated and constructive. Include virtual meetings, live chats, or video tutorials to maintain human connections. (3) Design of independent learning. Remember that your parents may be working or working from home and not be of much help. It's important to design lessons that don't require a lot of support from parents, who may already be overwhelmed. (4) Pay attention to emotional conditions. Check with students and colleagues, especially those who are less comfortable with digital tools to see if they need help or someone to talk to so they can help. Feeling alienated at home can make matters worse, even exacerbating fears of facing the global crisis. Taking the time to ask how students feel (especially perhaps feelings of anxiety) is as important as examining students' academic work. While working at home may feel good, it's still difficult to stick to a regular schedule. Some things that can help include taking regular breaks, taking time to exercise, maintaining a regular sleep schedule, and limiting distractions where possible (for example, temporarily turning off social media notifications). Set daily and weekly goals. Take time to socialize, With family. (4) Choose the right tool and keep using it. A wide variety of technology tools, many of which are free, are available to aid in online learning. With so many facilities, lecturers can be tempted to try to use them all. Instead, limit the number of tools, apps and platforms so students and their parents don't get overwhelmed. Video conferencing can be done, Wahyono, et.al. 2020. Professional lecturers in the period… 60 10.22219 / jppg.v1i1.12462 but consider the privacy aspects of students and lecturers at home. Dress how you want to attend school and expect students to do the same. Online learning also presents a great opportunity to emphasize online ethics and instill the rules of wise and responsible citizens in using online media.

In line with that, (Miller, 2020) provides six suggestions for lecturers who carry out online learning, with two main objectives, namely maintaining as much continuity of teaching as possible and completing the semester well. (1) Start by studying assignments for the next few weeks. Can the material be accessed online, so students can find the instructions and materials they need? Is it clear how learners will change in their work? Have the deadlines been changed, and were all of those deadlines clearly posted? (2) How will the lecturer provide feedback on the progress of students? Consider how learners will be able to practice key skills and objectives - things they usually do in class? How will lecturers give students opportunities for practice and feedback, for small and high-risk assignments? No doubt that opportunity will be different from before before the lecturer moved the class online. Make sure that it is very clear how students can access these opportunities. And if lecturers don't spend a lot of time in class training students and getting feedback, now is a good time to improve this aspect of learning - remembering that lecturers won't be presenting content directly. (3) switch to online classroom experiences. Try to determine what the lecturer is doing in class at a higher level, more goal-oriented (eg content presentation, checking understanding, collaborative project work - instead of just the usual "lectures," "quizzes," "discussion"). If the teacher keeps these goals in mind, the teacher will have a better idea of how to achieve them online, as well as what aspects of the classroom experience to focus on simulating. (4) Decide what to do about high-risk assessments, especially exams. It is best not to have questions with easy answers, especially if the lecturer plans to have most of the student's grades depending on what will be a live test, programmed directly. Also use several types of projects and various online activity data processors that can be used. (5) Consider the material to be provided. Chances are, the reading and other material is in digital form, and the lecturer may have posted it. But lecturers should double-check whether readings, videos, problem sets, quizzes, and the like are accessible, along with key documents such as syllabus and timetable. (6) After the lecturer checks these matters, make sure everything is well communicated. Lecturers need to explain in as much detail as possible what can be expected from students about online learning in the next few weeks. Be sure to discuss what it is that learners are responsible for doing, how they can find the things they need to fulfill that responsibility, and what they should do first. Also ensure a two-way line of communication, offering more ways to communicate with lecturers (eg WhatsApp, e-mail, video calls). Another thing that is no less important is that at this time a curriculum that is flexible and ready to face a pandemic is needed.

According to (Wangi, 2020) curriculum 2013 that is currently in Indonesia is not formulated to face a COVID-19 pandemic in the year 2020. But this nation needs a flexible curriculum. Indonesia also requires flexible learning scenarios (syllabus, lesson plan), and multi-learning scenarios. Indonesia also needs a flexible pedagogy, a kind of multimodal pedal-or whatever its name is. In addition, it requires flexible asessmen without compromising the quality, so that at certain times when the unexpected/unpredictable things arise (disaster, conflict, riots), the world of education will still be ongoing. Of course all that is prepared with the emphasis on the "human" aspect above the curriculum, methods, media, and technical asessmen.

## Conclusion

The campus and lecturers are implementing government policies to study from home in an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19 while at the same time ensuring students in constructive activities through online learning. Various platforms are used in online learning, while lecturers, students, and parents are expected to continue to make adjustments over time. Various positive responses were conveyed by students regarding online learning because they felt more relaxed, fun, flexible, efficient, short, practical, fast, precise, safe, easy, time-saving, and energy efficient. Learning can be done remotely, parents can supervise their children learning, make students technology literate, and more creative. However, the implementation of online learning has obstacles / constraints both in terms of human resources and infrastructure. Network limitations, lack of training, lack of awareness and interest were cited as the main challenges faced. The obligation to study online is a serious obstacle, especially for students from economically weak circles. Online learning in a number of regions in Indonesia is not running optimally, especially in remote areas with limited internet technology and networks. The readiness of school infrastructure, the ability of lecturers to teach, and the availability of smartphone facilities are other problems in the application of online learning in Indonesia. Students also perceive that the school does not have a good program for the home learning system. Schools and lecturers only give assignments in a row according to the lesson plan and subject matter in non-pandemic / ordinary conditions. As a recommendation for the future, what is needed is a sustainable public partnership and many parties. Good communication, collaboration, cooperation and coordination are needed. Lecturer competence is the main determinant of the success of the online learning process so that they must continue to enrich their competencies and skills and be supported by school policies that encourage them to continue learning. Related parties also need to evaluate this online learning so that its objectives can be achieved optimally. The learning load of students must be logical and measurable. The learning load of students, of course, must be calculated, measured, both materially and in time. Lecturers should not only give assignments, but must carefully consider them. Lecturers must not forget to appreciate the achievements of students, the lecturers need to give them so that the learning objectives can be achieved. Another thing that is no less important in online learning in the future is the existence of a flexible curriculum that is ready to face a pandemic.

## Implications

The implication of this research is that the learning process for students in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic has become very difficult and the role of the government and academics is currently needed in providing the best solutions. One of them is by providing and utilizing existing technology such as zoom, edmodo, google classroom and supporting infrastructure, which are very important in addition to the role of human resources that must be fulfilled immediately because good resources and management are needed to be able to run learning in the midst of the current covid-19 pandemic

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THE ASIAN ESP JOURNAL

# An Investigation into Plagiarism among Saudi EFL Students in Writing Research Projects

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**Abstract**
Plagiarism is a pervasive issue among university students all over the world. Concerns about plagiarism are salient for improving the academic writing of learners of English as a foreign language (EFL). There are intertwined contextual and situational factors influencing students' plagiaristic behaviors, but the amount and intensity of these factors can vary across cultures and communities (Maloshonok & Shmeleva, 2019). However, the literature on Arab EFL students' issues with plagiarism is still scarce especially in the context of Saudi EFL students (AL-Dossary, 2017). To this end, the present study aims to diagnose the extent of plagiarism in Saudi EFL students' research projects by implementing a plagiarism-detection system, explore their knowledge of what constitutes plagiarism, and thereupon identify the principal causes prompting plagiarism among them. Employing qualitative and quantitative methods, the data of the study were collected from one hundred sixty-eight (n=168) EFL senior students over one academic year at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia. The results demonstrated a general tendency toward plagiarism, given the high levels of textual plagiarism

(57%) in EFL students' research projects. Despite having a conceptual understanding of what constitutes plagiarism, students pointed out several factors that prompted them to plagiarize intentionally, mainly due to the availability of information and communication technology (79%), lack of self-competency (51%), positive attitudes toward plagiarism (48%), and lack of control over plagiaristic behaviors (46%). Qualitative analyses of students' interviews further supported the quantitative findings. Several practical implications are presented for the field of foreign language teaching.

**Keywords:** *Plagiarism, knowledge of plagiarism, causes of plagiarism, EFL students, Saudi EFL students*

## Introduction

Writing is one of the long-standing challenges faced by language learners in general and EFL learners in particular. It is a complex production process in which learners are expected to follow several steps to express their ideas and feelings in an organized manner considering certain writing aspects, such as content, accuracy, coherence, and vocabulary in a language that they have not fully mastered. Academic writing is yet a further demanding task that requires students to develop critical approaches, organize information, combine resources, summarize, quote, and paraphrase others' views and ideas accurately. This process involves the preparation of several rough drafts to produce a genuine, high-quality piece of writing eventually. Failure to do so may lead learners to fall into the trap of plagiarism (Nurhajati, 2018). More importantly, academic writing is an indicator of students' academic success in almost all fields of study (Bruton & Childers, 2016; Naibaho, 2018). It is the most commonly used skill in assessing student performance, through which they are expected to carry out different writing tasks, such as assignments, reports, theses, and research projects, in an appropriate academic manner (Husain, Shaibani & Mahfoodh, 2017). Students often struggle to figure out ways to gain proficiency in academic writing to advance their academic achievement. Still, for many, writing is a daunting task that they do not have the skills to fulfill, especially when correlated with teachers' evaluation (Šprajc, Urh, Jerebic, Trivan, & Jereb, 2017). As a consequence, students' frustration and anxiety over getting their coursework done appropriately, meeting instructors' deadlines, and striving for high grades can prompt them to violate ethics and plagiarize (Fatima, Abbas, Ming, Hosseini, & Zhu, 2019; Bruton & Childers, 2016; Stander, 2020).

Plagiarism is a severe academic issue that has received significant attention in the 21st century due to its prevalence among university students, affecting education quality and career outcomes negatively (Díaz, Montoliu, & Becerra, 2018; Muhammad, Shaikh, Naveed, & Qureshi, 2020). Although there is no consensus on a standard definition of plagiarism, most definitions agree that plagiarism is based on the incorrect use of others' words and/or ideas (Ellis, Zucker, & Randall, 2018). Plagiaristic behaviors include inappropriate reuse of authors' words or thoughts without acknowledgment or paraphrasing, quoting a text without attribution, inserting parts of others' writings into the plagiarist's work without citation, and stealing others' works or ideas (Bailey, 2011; Hu & Sun, 2016; Muhammad et al., 2020; Selemani, Chawinga & Dube; 2018).

Despite the increasing awareness of the principles of academic writing among student populations, there is a corresponding accelerated reliance on text-matching technologies due to the prevalence of academic dishonesty as indicated by the growing literature on plagiarism (e.g., Löfström, Huotari, & Kupila, 2017; Shang, 2019; Engkizar, Alfurqan, Murniyetti, & Muliati, 2018; Muhammad et al., 2020). Estimates of the extent to which students depend on plagiarism in their academic coursework, based on previous research studies, ranging from 40–50% (Chang et al., 2015; Engkizar et al., 2018) to as high as 70–80% or more (Glendinning, 2014; Chuang, Craig, & Femiani, 2017). Empirical investigations have found multiple personal, environmental, and situational factors attributing to the act of plagiarism at universities. Factors include lack of awareness of what constitutes plagiarism, lack of self-competence, writing deficiencies, poor time management skills, laziness, and pressure. Modern technological advances, internet access, and moving toward e-learning have further made the battle with plagiarism difficult without the help of plagiarism detection tools (Maloshonok & Shmeleva, 2019; Selemani et al., 2018; Šprajc et al., 2017; Stander, 2020; Muhammad et al., 2020). However, the proliferation of plagiaristic behaviors, as well as the reasons behind them, are likely to vary given the different cultural backgrounds of students who are likely to conceptualize plagiarism differently (Maloshonok & Shmeleva, 2019; Shang, 2019).

While a substantial amount of literature has been produced to date on plagiarism, most of the research has been conducted primarily in native English-speaking countries such as in the USA, the UK, Australia, and New Zealand. Far too little attention has been paid to the plagiaristic behaviors of the second language and/or foreign language (L2) contexts (for review; see Husain et al., 2017). Arab learners in general and Saudi EFL students, in particular, are no exception (AL-Dossary, 2017). With the rise of this issue in academic communities of non-native English-speaking countries, several studies have reported the existence of plagiarism in traditional and collective L2 contexts such as in the Asian communities (Chen & Chou, 2017; Chien, 2017; Thomas, Raynor, & McKinnon, 2014). However, most of these deal with students of medical sciences, while very few studies have been conducted in social sciences and other fields of study. The paucity of research is profoundly felt in the fields of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL), linguistics, and literature (Ahmadi, 2014). Besides, the bulk of the literature on plagiarism has been presented mainly from the standpoint of instructors and researchers. Limited attention has been paid to the second language and foreign-language students' voices, the actual extent of plagiarism, and the causes prompting students to commit it (Chen & Chou, 2017; Maloshonok & Shmeleva, 2019). As a result, it is vitally critical to conduct more investigations in different fields of education, and sociocultural and academic contexts as plagiarism is assumed to be differently perceived across cultures and communities (Shang, 2019; Velliaris & Breen, 2016).

To this end, the present study seeks to obtain data that will help to address this research gap. A primary goal of this study is to detect the extent of plagiarism in senior EFL students' research projects by employing a plagiarism-detection system to determine the actual amount of textual plagiarism. A second purpose is to explore students' knowledge of plagiarism and the causes behind committing it. Another secondary goal is to examine whether the adoption of anti-plagiarism software and taking a core course in research methods may help prevent or reduce students' plagiaristic behaviors in their English writing. Understanding how EFL students perceive plagiarism and what causes them to commit such actions does not only help to minimize the prevalence of this phenomenon at universities (Maloshonok & Shmeleva, 2019; Beasley, 2016; Septarini, Latief, & Suharmanto, 2020) but also ensures the validity of university degrees, professionality of graduates, and integrity of the academic institutions as a whole. This study, therefore, intends to answer the following questions:

(1) To what extent do Saudi EFL students plagiarize from the source texts in their writing projects?
(2) How knowledgeable are Saudi EFL students about plagiarism in academic writing?
(3) What factors influence Saudi EFL students' plagiaristic behaviors in writing?

**Literature review**

Plagiarism is an umbrella term that covers different various dishonest academic behaviors. These include copying text directly without proper quotation; giving incorrect or inaccurate citation or references; ghost-writing; providing or citing the secondary source as a primary source; patch-writing; purloining; contract cheating, and inaccurate paraphrasing or summarizing (Bailey, 2011; Ellis et al., 2018; Henning et al., 2015; Selemani et al., 2018; Šprajc et al., 2017; Rodhiya, Wijayati, & Bukhori, 2020;). These can be carried out either intentionally or unintentionally. Intentional plagiarism involves committing plagiarism with a comprehensive awareness of what it constitutes and ways to avoid it, while unintentional plagiarism entails plagiarizing unconsciously due to lack of knowledge about academic writing skills and research practices (Husain et al., 2017). In the present study, we will consider plagiarism as the act of using others' ideas, words, or writings claiming that they are the plagiarist's work without proper attribution to the original author.

The prevalence of plagiarism in academic settings cannot be overlooked. The literature suggested a multitude of interrelated factors that contribute to university students' decisions on whether to exercise certain plagiaristic behaviors throughout their academic studies. These factors are often classified into two categories: contextual factors and situational factors. Common contextual factors, also called external factors, include information and communication technology (ICT), instructional approaches, the improbability of being caught, and unfamiliarity with the university policies and control over plagiarism. (Fatima et al., 2019; Fatima, Sunguh, Abbas, Mannan, & Hosseini, 2020; Šprajc et al., 2017). The advent of the Internet and recent technological advances are considered to be chiefly responsible for the rise of these phenomena given that students can readily access a flood of online resources relevant to their academic tasks, mainly through their university digital online libraries, and therefore, can copy from various sources to save time for other course work (Chang, Chen, Huang, & Chou, 2015; Fatima, Abbas, Ming, Zaheer, & Akhtar, 2019). The instructor's choice of teaching methods and the learning environment are additional determining factors of students' reliance on plagiarism. In most Asian classrooms, the predominant style of instruction is a transmission style in which teachers deliver information to students who usually stay passive during the learning process (Nguyen, 2019; Husain et al., 2017) and retain knowledge through memorization. Espinoza and Najera (2015) reported that a learning style that revolves around rote memorization contributes to plagiarism. On the other hand, a learning environment that provides opportunities for self-directed learning and problem-solving strategies influences positive perceptions of learning, and therefore, increases students' level of motivation to gain competency rather than focusing on performance (Selemani et al., 2018). Digging deeper into this issue, institutional factors relevant to university policies on plagiarism, the perceived likelihood of being caught, and the severity of related penalties were also found to contribute to the extent of plagiarism among college students (Henning et al., 2015; Thompson, Bagby, Sulak, Sheets, & Trepinski, 2017).

Recent investigations have further highlighted some situational factors that college students encounter, which force them to engage in plagiarism. These situational factors, also known as personal factors, relate mostly to students' self-competencies and positive attitudes toward plagiarism (Šprajc et al., 2017; Chuang et al., 2017; Fatima et al., 2019). According to Fatima et al. (2020), poor self-competence among university students is shown in their academic writing deficiencies, lack of research skills, and improper time management, which in turn affects their ability to pursue their university tasks effectively. In several studies (Harji, Ismail, Chetty, & Letchumanan, 2017; Selemani et al., 2018; Shang, 2019), academic writing incompetency and lack of practical training have often been reported as a trigger or contributing factor for students' tendency to copy several extracts from the source into their papers. Also, lack of academic skills, including research strategies, proper citation, and paraphrasing has been proven to be another significant source for plagiarizing others' work unintentionally (Fatima et al., 2020; Díaz et al., 2018). Students may also plagiarize intentionally due to poor time management skills, laziness, fear of failure, and pressure from parents and peers to get high grades in order to compete for a better position in the job market (Šprajc et al., 2017). Personal perceptions and attitudes toward plagiarism are also viewed as a determinant cause of plagiarism, especially when this phenomenon is claimed to be defined and perceived differently across cultures and communities (Beasley, 2016; Velliaris & Breen, 2016; Shang, 2019). Arab language learners are assumed to be more traditional and collective, and thus, are likely more tolerant of what could be described as plagiarism (Thomas et al., 2014). While very few studies have been conducted on Saudi students' attitudes toward plagiarism (Muhammad et al., 2020; Alhadlaq, Dahmash, & Alshomer, 2020), major findings suggest that it is common among university students despite their belief that such behavior is unfair, unethical, and against their religious values. This fact contributes to the significance of conducting research that informs teachers of FL students' understanding of what constitutes plagiarism and the potential factors that may influence their behavioral act of plagiarism in order to pinpoint the problem to prevent it (Beasley, 2016; Septarini et al., 2020; Stander, 2020; Salemani et al., 2018; Muhammad et al., 2020).

Accordingly, the present study attempts to investigate the extent of plagiarism in Saudi EFL students' research projects by employing plagiarism detection software and assess whether they hold sufficient knowledge of what constitutes plagiarism to prevent them from committing it. Moreover, the study aims to explore the extent to which situational and contextual factors contribute to plagiarism among Saudi students. More specifically, it examines the impact of both situational factors relevant to self-competence and personal attitudes and contextual factors related to ICT and the Internet and control over plagiaristic behaviors.

## Method

### Research design

Using a mixed-method research design, a plagiarism detection tool (iThenticate) was utilized to evaluate students' English writings against any academic dishonesty as well as a closed-ended questionnaire to collect quantitative data during the 2019–2020 academic year. Meanwhile, qualitative data were obtained through follow-up interviews with some EFL students. These data were used to support each other and draw validated conclusions based on the analysis of results.

### Participants

A total of 168 Saudi female EFL students recruited from Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz university took part in the study. The choice of sampling was restricted to female students as the study was conducted on the female campus at the College of Science and Humanities. Participants were senior eight-level students studying their final year at the department of English language and literature. As per graduation requirements, participants were assigned randomly to 56 research project groups with a maximum of three members. They were required to write research projects on any topic adhering to the university's policies and under the supervision of faculty members.

The purpose of forming collaborative research groups is to allow members of the group with varying abilities to work together in producing a high-quality piece of writing. As per ethical issues, participants signed a consent letter on voluntary participation, and the researcher provided a detailed description of the objective of the study and assessment procedure.

### Instruments

Three instruments were used to gather quantitative and qualitative data. First, iThenticate software was utilized as a plagiarism detection tool for evaluating students' English writings for any academic dishonesty. The software gives feedback on plagiarism in which two consecutive similarity reports are provided. The similarity reports offer two kinds of data: (1) the aggregate amount of similarity for the manuscript under review with the overall database of texts available to iThenticate, and (2) the proportion of similarity for each text copied. Additionally, all cross-textual similarities are highlighted, using color-coding and numbering according to source texts. Given the likely overlap between plagiarized content detected in students' writings and the software database, the validity of the cross-textual similarities highlighted was checked by the researcher to determine whether the text was quoted correctly. Second, an online questionnaire (Šprajc et al., 2017; Fatima et al., 2019; Rodhiya et al., 2020) was modified and applied to determine: (1) the students' knowledge of plagiarism and (2) the influence situational and contextual factors have on their plagiaristic behaviors. Therefore, the questionnaire consisted of two sections which directly addressed these research questions. The first section (items 1 to 8) included eight items examining respondents' knowledge of plagiarism based on a three-point Likert scale (Yes, Uncertain and No). The second section (items 9 to 26) included 18 items with a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), and investigated the foremost causes for students committing plagiarism.

Third, follow-up interviews were conducted with 20 randomly selected EFL students to get an in-depth understanding of what influenced their decision to plagiarize from their perspective. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed thematically to find any similarities between students' answers in the questionnaire and their responses in the interview. To ensure content validity, four university experts in the field revised the content of the instrument for clarity and accuracy. The instrument was further piloted with 25 participants of the target population who were excluded from the sample of the study. Feedback was used to make corrections and modifications. Regarding reliability, Cronbach's alpha was calculated to be .827 for all items, indicating that the instrument was a reliable research tool for the purpose of the study.

**Procedure**

For this study, quantitative and qualitative data were collected over one academic year, 2019-2020, to obtain high response rates and thereby understand to what extent do Saudi English students plagiarize, their knowledge of plagiarism, and the causes influencing their plagiaristic behaviors. In the first semester, all participants had to take a three-credit course entitled Research Methods as a prerequisite to the graduation project, which is conducted in the following semester. In this course, students were given intensive 3-hour weekly instruction on research methodology and academic writing, including searching relevant information in electronic databases, citing sources properly, summarizing and paraphrasing original content into ones' own words, and understanding what constitutes plagiarism and ways to avoid it. The goal of this course is to prepare students for writing a high-quality research project paper of approximately 35 pages in length.

In the second semester, students were assigned randomly to 56 collaborative writing groups with a maximum of three members. Under the instructors' supervision, they were thoroughly guided through the process of writing their research graduation papers in planned 3-hour weekly sessions. The guidance was given in brainstorming ideas for a suitable topic, gathering and organizing information and ideas into an outline, drafting the thesis using proper academic language and vocabulary, revising, and finally editing the paper into good academic writing. They were further informed that their work would be checked for plagiarism as a post-writing task via iThenticate software.

In the twelfth week, students' papers were collected and uploaded to the plagiarism detection system in which cross-textual similarity reports were provided. Based on the reports and calculated percentages, the writing projects were either accepted or returned for further revision. Papers that exceeded the similarity index limit of 15% were returned along with the iThenticate report to edit and resolve any academic misconduct. The study questionnaire was then distributed among participants whose papers were returned to explore whether they have sufficient knowledge of plagiarism and their reasons for committing such behavior. Additionally, a subsequent session was held for each group headed by their supervisor to address all issues relevant to their written plagiaristic behaviors and ways to paraphrase and acknowledge the source texts. Revised manuscripts were given a second check for plagiarism. If the similarity index was still high, students' marks in the graduation project were lowered. Follow-up interviews were subsequently held with some EFL students to get a deeper understanding of the causes that prompted them to plagiarize despite their earlier notice of employing an anti-plagiarism software.

**Data analysis**

The degree of textual plagiarism in students' papers was examined through the anti-plagiarism software, iThenticate. The software provides the number and percentage of plagiarized words and sentences from other sources used in writing submitted. The plagiarized words relative to the total number of words in the paper were indicated, color-coded, and counted. The validity of the cross-textual similarities highlighted was checked by the researcher to determine whether the text was quoted. If it was quoted correctly, the number of plagiarized words was deducted from the total accordingly. To use the collected data from iThenticate in answering the first question, statistical analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social

Sciences (SPSS) to compute frequencies of plagiarized words and explain them in percentages. Quantitative data collected through the questionnaire were further analyzed using SPSS to generate frequencies and percentages of each item in the survey to answer the second and third research questions of the study. Follow-up interviews with randomly selected 20 EFL students were recorded, transcribed, and then analyzed thematically to get in-depth information on what influences students' plagiaristic behaviors in writing to support the statistical analysis in answering the third research question qualitatively.

## Results

### *The extent of textual plagiarism in EFL students' writing projects*

Based on the calculated frequencies and percentages of plagiarized words, sentences, and texts found by iThenticate, the results revealed a high tendency toward plagiarism, as reflected in the percentage of cross-textual similarity in students' writings. Despite having a core course on the fundamentals of research skills and academic writing, as well as receiving consistent guidance from supervisors while conducting the research projects, the average level of similarity index, as shown in table 1, among all projects was 57% in the initial post-writing plagiarism-check. That is, on average, more than half of the students' writings consisted of words, phrases, and paragraphs copied exactly from the source text without proper citation or adequate paraphrasing. In the second check, students have exerted their utmost effort to reduce the extent of their plagiaristic practices over one week; however, the average percentage of similarity index was 30%, which is still below the level required by university policies.

**Table 1**. The average percentage of textual plagiarism in students' research projects

| **Plagiarism-check** | **Average % of textual plagiarism** |
|---|---|
| 1$^{st}$ post-writing check | 57% |
| 2$^{nd}$ post-writing check | 30% |

Table 2 shows the range of percentages of plagiarized content, with a spread from 0% to 100%. In the initial post-writing check, over 42% of students copied 41% to 60% of their entire work from several source texts claiming it as their own. That is, the majority of respondents (72) depended heavily on the copy and paste strategy in writing their research projects and plagiarized around half of their content from other sources. A number of students (25%) exerted some effort and borrowed 21 to 40% of their work. Some students, 21% and 10%, intentionally ignored research ethics and copied 61% to 80% and 81% to 100% of their entire research projects, respectively. In the second post-writing check, students were able to reduce the percentage of their textual plagiarism to some extent. The majority of participants (46%) were able to cut down the degree of plagiarism to 20% of the total text. However, the other research groups, around 33% and 19% of students, copied 21% to 40% and 41% to 60% of their entire projects, respectively.

**Table 2.** Distribution of similarity index among research projects

| **Range of cross-textual similarity** | **0-20%** | **21-40%** | **41-60%** | **61-80%** | **81-100%** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1st post-writing check | 0% | 25% | 42% | 21% | 10% |
| No. of students | 0 | 42 | 72 | 36 | 18 |
| 2nd post-writing check | 46% | 33% | 19% | 0% | 0% |
| No. of students | 78 | 57 | 33 | 0 | 0 |

***Students' knowledge of plagiarism***

In an attempt to examine the extent to which students are knowledgeable about their plagiaristic behaviors, they were asked to identify a list of the common practices of plagiarism committed in academic writing. Descriptive statistics were conducted to calculate frequencies and percentages. Results revealed that the majority of participants (79.25%) are efficiently aware of what constitutes plagiarism, as indicated in Table 3. Most respondents (88% and 80%) agree that using others' ideas without proper citation or claiming them as their own, respectively, is a type of plagiarism. Similarly, a high number of students (85%) believe that paraphrasing author's work and copying from the Internet without adequate acknowledgment are both a form of plagiarism. A large number of respondents (61%) think that the use of inaccurate sources is a sort of plagiarism, in comparison to 22% who were uncertain. In addition, 64% believe that making a few changes with words on a copied paragraph is a kind of plagiarism, in comparison to 24% who were unfamiliar with this form of academic misconduct.

**Table 3**. Students' knowledge of plagiarism

| | **Statements** | **Yes** | | **Uncertain** | | **No** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **F** | **P** | **F** | **P** | **F** | **P** |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Using others' ideas without citing the sources is plagiarism. | 148 | 88.09 % | 6 | 3.57% | 14 | 8.33% |
| 2 | Using others' ideas and claiming it as or | 136 | 80% | 13 | 7.73% | 19 | 11.30% |
| 3 | Using inaccurate sources is plagiarism | 104 | 61.90 % | 37 | 22.02 % | 27 | 16.07% |
| 4 | Paraphrasing a paragraph without citing the source is plagiarism | 144 | 85.71 % | 11 | 6.54% | 13 | 7.73% |
| 5 | Copying paragraphs by making a few changes with words that have the same meaning is plagiarism. | 108 | 64.28 % | 41 | 24.40 % | 19 | 11.30% |
| 6 | Using others' work and claiming it as one's own is plagiarism. | 149 | 88.69 % | 8 | 4.76% | 11 | 6.54% |
| 7 | Copying text from the Internet without citing the source is plagiarism. | 143 | 85.11 % | 15 | 8.92% | 10 | 5.95% |

***Factors influencing students' plagiaristic behaviors***

Despite students' awareness of the common forms of plagiarism, as indicated in the previous section, high rates of plagiarism were detected in their writing projects, and several justifications for why they commit plagiarism were presented. As shown in Table 4, the results indicate that the availability of ICT and lack of self-competence were the most common reasons for committing plagiarism. A vast majority of the respondents, 80% and 86% agree that the accessibility of information via the Internet and sharing electronic materials, respectively, allowed them to plagiarize easily. Most students, 76% and 72%, reveal that they plagiarize by copying the exact text and combining data from multiple sources, respectively. The second significant reason for plagiarism is the lack of self-competency. The majority of respondents, 73% and 75%, have difficulty in expressing their ideas and find it problematic to summarize or paraphrase a source text using appropriate academic language, respectively. This result may be due to deficiency in English competence as reported by 58% of students, as well as lack of time management skills, as indicated by 60% of students. On the other hand, only 14% and 25% of participants do not understand how to cite resources and search for online materials, respectively, which indicates that most students have a basic understanding of research skills. Another finding which deserves attention is related to positive attitudes toward plagiarism. Not only did 48% of the participants agree that they think plagiarism is not a big deal, but many respondents (35%) believe that it is necessary to plagiarize if one has more important obligations or tasks to do. Besides, 77% of students plagiarize intending to pass the course with high marks. The last cause for plagiarism, according to the students' perspective, is related to control over this academic misconduct. Over half of students reveal that there is no teacher control over plagiarism, and 38% assume that there is no university control either. In addition, half of the respondents disclose that they have never been caught before, which indicates that they have committed a plagiaristic behavior before.

**Table 4.** Factors influencing students' plagiarism

| **Statements** | | **Strongly agree** | | **Agree** | | **Neutral** | | **Disagree** | | **Strongly disagree** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Contextual factors** | | F | P | F | P | F | P | F | P | F | P |
| ICT and Internet | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | It is easy for me to copy/paste due to contemporary technology | 20 | 11.90% | 102 | 60.71% | 19 | 11.30% | 12 | 7.14% | 15 | 8.92% |
| 2 | I can easily combine material from multiple sources | 18 | 10.71% | 111 | 66.07% | 15 | 8.92% | 15 | 8.92% | 9 | 5.35% |
| 3 | It is easy to share documents, information, data | 27 | 16.07% | 119 | 70.83% | 8 | 4.76% | 10 | 5.95% | 4 | 2.38% |
| 4 | I can easily access material from the Internet | 33 | 19.64% | 103 | 61.30% | 13 | 7.73% | 12 | 7.14% | 7 | 4.16% |
| Control | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | There is no teacher control over plagiarism | 13 | 7.73% | 72 | 42.85% | 14 | 8.33% | 42 | 25% | 27 | 16.07% |
| 6 | There is no university control over plagiarism | 21 | 12.5% | 43 | 25.59% | 12 | 7.14% | 59 | 35.11% | 33 | 19.64% |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 7 | There are no penalties | 19 | 11.30% | 59 | 35.11% | 18 | 10.71% | 49 | 29.16% | 23 | 13.69% |
| 8 | I will not get caught | 17 | 10.11% | 68 | 40.47% | 16 | 9.52% | 40 | 23.80% | 27 | 16.07% |
| **Situational factors** | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Self-competency | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 9 | I do not know how to cite resources | 8 | 4.76% | 17 | 10.11% | 8 | 4.76% | 97 | 57.73% | 38 | 22.61% |
| 10 | I do not know how to search for relevant materials | 12 | 7.14% | 31 | 18.45% | 5 | 2.97% | 89 | 52.97% | 31 | 18.45% |
| 11 | I do not have a good command of English | 29 | 17.26% | 70 | 41.66% | 23 | 13.69% | 28 | 16.66% | 18 | 10.71% |
| 12 | I frequently have difficulty expressing my ideas accurately | 35 | 20.83% | 89 | 52.97% | 12 | 7.14% | 20 | 11.90% | 12 | 7.14% |
| 13 | I often find it troublesome to summarize/paraphrase a text using proper academic language and vocabulary | 48 | 28.57% | 78 | 46.42% | 13 | 7.73% | 18 | 10.71% | 11 | 6.54% |
| 14 | I find it difficult to complete tasks in the allotted time | 23 | 13.69% | 79 | 47.02% | 28 | 16.66% | 25 | 14.88% | 13 | 7.73% |
| Positive attitudes | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15 | Sometimes, it is necessary to plagiarize if I have more important obligations or tasks to do | 17 | 10.11% | 42 | 25 | 33 | 19.64% | 47 | 27.97% | 29 | 17.26% |

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16 | My priority is to pass the course with high grades | 33 | 19.64% | 98 | 58.33% | 11 | 6.54% | 19 | 11.30% | 7 | 4.16% |
| 17 | I could not write a scientific paper without plagiarizing | 15 | 8.92% | 33 | 19.64% | 21 | 12.5% | 77 | 45.83% | 22 | 13.09% |
| 18 | Plagiarism does no harm to the value of a university degree | 22 | 13.09% | 69 | 41.07% | 27 | 16.07% | 31 | 18.45% | 19 | 11.30% |
| 19 | Plagiarism is not a big deal | 19 | 11.30% | 62 | 36.90% | 18 | 10.71% | 48 | 28.57% | 21 | 12.5% |

***The interview***

To thoroughly explore the factors that influence EFL students' decision to plagiarize, 20 EFL students, randomly selected, were interviewed. The qualitative analysis revealed that respondents have multiple situational and contextual causes that encouraged them to commit plagiarism, including laziness, grades, English incompetence, workload, and coursework deadlines. For example, some students stated:

> (1) "Many students plagiarize because it is difficult to think and write in English, especially when you have a lot of assignments," (2)"Students plagiarize because they do not want to work hard and at the same time, they want high grades," (3) "I believe students fall into plagiarism because they do not know English very well and this is their big problem," (4)"I think students plagiarize unintentionally because they forgot to add the reference. However, if they know the source, then maybe they do not know how to paraphrase the relevant information. It takes much time to do that," and (5) "It is difficult to write a research project in English without the help of google."

Based on these responses, it is evident that students are aware of plagiarism and their plagiaristic behaviors were intentional acts that could be avoided through hard work, time management, and language practice.

Additionally, the majority of participants believe that lack of control and related penalties on plagiarists influence whether or not they will continue plagiarizing. For example, some students reported that:

> (6) “Teachers do not care about plagiarism and plagiarists are not usually caught. Even when they are caught, teachers give them another chance to repair their work,” and (7) “I know some students who plagiarize because they see their friends do the same without punishment.”

Moreover, students feel that plagiarism might be necessary considering certain conditions. Some of them stated:

> (8)“It is easy to plagiarize to get high grades, especially when you have personal issues that hinder your studies,” and (9)“Students plagiarize because it is important for them to get a high average for future jobs and plagiarism will not harm anyone.”

It seems that students do not take the issue of plagiarism seriously as long as it paves the way for them toward the path of success.

**Discussion**

The purpose of this study is three-fold: (1) to explore the extent to which Saudi female EFL students plagiarize in their research graduation projects, (2) to determine their knowledge of what constitutes plagiarism, and (3) to identify the contextual and situational factors that influence their plagiaristic behaviors. The results revealed several major findings. First, despite the earlier notice of adopting a plagiarism-detection software, students continued to plagiarize intentionally regardless of the university policies and prior knowledge. Although the time allotted for the project was sufficient to carry out the task efficiently, students depended primarily on copying extracts from the source text to complete their project. This result is compatible with Shang (2019), who has reported that students’ awareness of using an anti-plagiarism system did not reduce their plagiaristic behaviors due to their limited English proficiency. The fact that plagiarism occurred consciously raises questions about the legitimacy of the institutional definition of plagiarism as an ethical crime and the severity of the related penalties (Bruton & Childers, 2016). Although students were given a second chance to remedy their writings in an ethical sense, most respondents were not able to reach a satisfactory level of cross-textual similarity that is compatible with the university policies respecting graduation projects. This suggests that students were not able to summarize or paraphrase the copied texts into their own words. In other words, EFL students have been put in a situation where they are expected to produce a high-quality piece of writing in a language they have not yet managed to master. Similar findings have been reported by Hu and Sun (2016) for Taiwanese EFL learners who depended excessively on the copy and paste strategy in summarizing and paraphrasing relevant materials due to their language deficiency. Selemani et al. (2018) have further found that borrowing the exact source without quotes and a proper citation was the most common form of plagiarism among students.

Second, given that the majority of students have established a good understanding of what constitutes plagiarism due to core academic courses already taught, it is worrisome that this did not positively influence their decision of whether or not to plagiarize as evident in the high percentages of textual plagiarism in their writing projects. This finding coincides with previous studies (Kattan et al., 2017; Shang, 2019), which reported that students' understanding of various forms of plagiarism does not reduce their actual plagiaristic behaviors, even if students have received courses in academic writing and research ethics. Students need quality education at earlier stages in the term, more practice, and an understanding of the catastrophic consequences of plagiarism on the community as a whole. A general tendency for plagiarism was also recorded in Glendinning's (2014) study. The researcher found that that 70% of students occasionally commit some form of plagiarism in their course works, such as stealing the work of others, using authors' ideas, and modifying their writings, and using them as their own without including the reference source. In the same vein, Engkizar et al. (2018) have reported that copying an entire paragraph without mentioning the author and modifying some words of the source text without acknowledgment were the most common forms of plagiaristic behaviors among Indonesian EFL undergraduates.

Third, and most importantly, our study has revealed a mixture of situational and contextual factors that prompted students to engage in plagiarism. The availability of ICT and the Internet was the main reason for paving the way for plagiarism, allowing students to copy from multiple resources without adequate citation. This is matched by the absence of moral commitment and self-censorship. This result goes in line with recent studies (Al Darwish & Sadeqi, 2016; Šprajc et al., 2017), which reported that the ease of access to electronic resources encouraged students to plagiarize and save time and effort for other course works. Velliaris & Breen (2016) argue that when digital literacy is not associated with the necessary writing skills needed to search, evaluate, and reword information in an ethical academic manner, students may lean on plagiarism. This case is reflected in the second most significant cause for plagiarism, that is, lack of self-competency. According to the study results, most Saudi EFL students find it challenging to express their ideas or deliver the source text in a proper academic language. The situation is even more complicated under teachers' pressure, workload, and task deadlines. It is thereby anticipated that students who are linguistically less competent will be forced to use the copy/paste strategy to help themselves and advance their academic education (Selemani et al., 2018). This is consistent with Shang's (2019) study, indicating that low English proficiency was a contributory factor to students' plagiarism. Therefore, it is vital to prevent plagiarism by teaching EFL students the standards of academic writing skills at earlier levels and offering them more practice opportunities to quote, paraphrase, and summarize authors' work in an appropriate manner (Chien, 2017; Kattan et al., 2017).

Another finding which needs more attention is related to students' positive attitudes about plagiarism. Surprisingly, a large number of students do not see plagiarism as a serious matter and feel that it is sometimes necessary to plagiarize when the workload is unbearable, especially when it comes to achieving higher grades. This finding coincides with Husain, Shaibani & Mahfoodh's (2017) and Chien's (2017) study, which reported that achieving high grades was a critical factor for plagiarism. These attitudes are reinforced when some students assume that there is no university nor teacher control over plagiarism, and related penalties are not severe if any. This could be true when the majority of participants who committed plagiarism claim to have not been caught. Such findings pose several questions about the university's role in controlling plagiarism as an ethical issue and the severity of related penalties (Bruton & Childers, 2016). In line with the study findings, Kattan et al. (2017) have reported that students plagiarized when seeing their friends had not been caught, and instructors did not take this issue seriously. Recent studies (Al Darwish & Sadeqi, 2016; Septarini et al., 2020) have further indicated a somewhat high number of students who view the act of plagiarism as ethical if they are overloaded with duties and need grades to pass the course.

## Conclusion

This study explored the extent of plagiarism in female EFL students' graduation projects, their knowledge of plagiarism, and the intertwining contextual and situational factors that played a decisive role in their decision to plagiarize in their writing projects. Significant findings revealed a general tendency toward plagiarism. Although students have shown a fair conceptual understanding of the common forms of plagiarism, they continued to plagiarize due to intertwining contextual and situational causes that encouraged them to engage in several plagiaristic behaviors, such as the accessibility of ICT, lack of self-competence, positive attitudes toward plagiarism, and lack of control over plagiaristic behaviors among faculty members.

## Limitations

While the results of this study are meaningful and significant, the researcher recommends some areas for further investigation. First, the study focuses on students' experience with plagiarism. Future research may explore the experience of both students and faculty members to obtain an in-depth detailed investigation of this phenomenon. Second, although the study findings provide pervasive evidence on the existence of plagiarism among Saudi EFL students, there is still much research needed examining this issue in L2 and FL contexts in an attempt to provide educators and policymakers in higher education institutions with reliable data pertaining students' attitudes and knowledge of plagiarism, and the causes triggering their plagiaristic behaviors. Third, the study was confined to female students as it was carried out in a female college. Additional research may investigate the male's experience of plagiarism since gender differences concerning this issue may hold different results.

**Pedagogical implications**

The findings of this study lead to the following practical implications. First, it draws teachers' attention to the functionality of using a plagiarism detection system when correcting university students' course work. It is useful as a pedagogical approach to address students' textual borrowings, missed quotations, and inappropriate paraphrasing texts in an attempt to avoid intellectual property violations. Second, teachers should design specific instructional programs that address EFL students' English proficiency and deficiencies in academic writing such as summarizing, paraphrasing, synthesizing, and referencing. Effective academic writing entails the acquisition of a variety of linguistic abilities, self-directed learning strategies, and digital literacy skills. Training is essential in empowering language students with the academic skills necessary for accomplishing their university tasks.

Third, teachers need to be aware that raising students' conceptual knowledge of what continues plagiarism does not necessarily lead to a significant decrease in their plagiaristic behaviors unless it is accompanied by clear guidelines and strict policies against the acts of plagiarism. Teachers' compliance and strict implementation of the university policies toward plagiarism is critical to affect students' plagiaristic behaviors and acknowledge plagiarism as an unethical act. Teachers, with the help of academic institutions, should report cases of plagiarism and take serious procedures toward intellectual theft. Finally, given the advancement of technology and integration of the Internet in language learning, students should be instructed of the ethical principles of using information technology (IT) systems at earlier stages and the adverse effects of plagiarism. In the same vein, faculty members should be provided with web-based anti-plagiarism services such as Turnitin, iThenticate, CrossCheck, etc. to help them control this issue.

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# Rhetorical Analysis of Mao Zedong's Speech

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**Abstract**

This study on the rhetorical analysis of the speech of Mao Zedong utilized a descriptive research design. The rhetorical analysis in the light of Aristotle's rhetorical model used the rhetorical appeals which are the ethos, logos, and pathos. In addition, ideology, hegemony and power as rhetorical approaches corroborated to this discourse inquiry. These rhetorical underpinning led the way for the identification of advocacies as seen in the speech of the world great leader, Mao Zedong. In the light of the findings, this study concluded that ethos and pathos vis-à-vis ideology and power as mind constructs frameworks exemplified shaping the mind of the immediate and mediated audience and Mao's advocacy to language teaching is more of knowledge transmission that epitomizes value-laden concepts of cross-boundary cooperation and not a "cut-throat" competition. The pedagogy contextualizes more of the promotion of partnership for the development of human resources and sharing of the excesses of material resources since no nation is an island that possesses all endowments and amenities of natural, physical and human resources. Other advocacies mentioned are patriotism,

comradeship, unity, cooperation and self-determination by reshaping the people's mindset towards a common goal against oppressive imperialism. Further advocacy that exudes in the speech which is similar to the findings of Smith (Asian EFL Journal, Vol. 9.No.1, 2007) is the strengthening of the English education program that can raise the awareness level of the Chinese students for greater understanding of the nature of citizenship and their responsibility for promoting the good of the community at large, hence, producing a better educated workforce that is prepared to deal with the changing issues of a global world.

**Keywords:** *advocacy, great leader, rhetorical analysis, rhetorical appeals, rhetorical approaches*

## Introduction

Rhetoric evolved 2500 years ago in Ancient Greece as social-status-driven literacy among sons and daughters of royal coteries. Today, with post-renaissance and modernization, rhetoric has gained expository and substantial scholarly disciplinal interest on the use of language. To a large measure, the linguistically rhetorical competence in the speeches of the earlier world great leaders, which consist of political enthusiasts and pious religious leaders as well as social re-constructionists or socio-political reformers had manifested persuasively their mind constructs. Writers and speakers use plausible words anchored on their intellectual prowess and seasoned experiences to influence an audience who may be characteristically composed of multicultural identities and backgrounds, psychological disposition, personal and social interest, and affiliation. Scholars and scientists similarly do the same to communicate scientific findings.

Rhetorical analysis according to Nordquist (2019) is a form of criticism or close reading that employs the principles of rhetoric to examine the interactions between a text, an author, and an audience. Rhetorical Analysis is also called rhetorical criticism or pragmatic criticism.

Rhetorical analysis may be performed following certain frameworks that are relevant in the study. Some rhetorical devices may use an appeal, which is an attempt to earn an audience approval or agreement by playing the natural human tendencies or common experience. There are three kinds of appeals: (a) Pathetic appeal (*pathos*), which invokes the audience's emotion in order to gain acceptance and approval for the ideas expressed. Rhetoricians stir the emotion of the audience even if it did not exist before; (b) Ethical appeal(*ethos*), which rhetoricians use their own credibility and character, their authority and knowledge to make a case and gain approval; and (c) Logical appeal (*logos*), which uses reason to make a case. Rhetorical

Analysis does not only describe and analyze text but also evaluates it. To evaluate considers all elements of the rhetorical situation-the audience, purpose, medium, and context. (Miami University Oxford Oh, 2016)

According to Jones (2018) with a semantic feature analysis, one can examine related concepts but make distinctions according to particular criteria across which the concepts can be compared.

In addition to considering the above concept when reading rhetorically, readers should consider the rhetorical and stylistic devices that the writer/speaker uses when writing to illustrate the message. Hence, the Aristotle's Rhetorical Analysis. In "The Rhetorical Triangle: Understanding and Using Logos, Ethos, and Pathos" (Lutzke & Henggeler, 2009) from the School of Liberal Arts, Indiana University presents the importance of ethos, logos, and pathos in writing in order to create texts that appeal to readers. This part provides a brief overview of what logos, ethos, and pathos are and what are the guiding questions for recognizing and incorporating these appeals.

Aristotle taught that a speaker's ability to persuade is based on how well the speaker appeals to that audience in three different areas: logos, ethos, and pathos. The rhetoricians called these appeals as rhetorical triangle. The "logos" appeals to reason. Logos can also be thought of as the text of the argument, as well as how well a writer has argued his/her point. The "Ethos" appeals to the writer's character. Ethos can also be thought of as the role of the writer in the argument, and how credible his/her argument is. The "Pathos" appeals to the emotions and the sympathetic imagination, as well as to beliefs and values. Pathos can also be thought of as the role of the audience in the argument.

The rhetorical triangle is typically represented by an equilateral triangle, suggesting that logos, ethos, and pathos should be balanced within a text. However, analysis of the written text depends on the audience and writer. Hence, it does not follow that the three rhetorical appeals have a balance representation in the text. There are various questions that can be asked in each of the rhetorical appeals to discover how the writers used them in their speeches. For logos, the following are the questions that could be raised: Is the argument clear and specific? Is the argument supported by strong reasons and credible evidence? Is the argument logical and arranged in a well-reasoned order? For ethos, what are the writer's qualifications? How has the writer connected himself/herself to the topic being discussed? Does the writer demonstrate respect for multiple viewpoints by using sources in the text? Are sources credible? Are sources documented appropriately? Does the writer use a tone that is suitable for the audience/purpose? Is the diction (word choice) used appropriate for the audience/purpose? Is the document presented in a polished and professional manner? Questions for pathos: Are vivid examples, details and images used to engage the reader's emotions and imagination? Does the writer appeal to the values and beliefs of the reader by using examples readers can relate to or care about? While the analysis is framed on Aristotle, it is also nice to have a look at the perspective of the Jolliffe's Rhetorical Framework which likewise presents the three appeals of Aristotle.

The Jolliffe's rhetorical framework presents the rhetorical situation which are the exigence or the tension or urgency, the audience, and the purpose of the speech which will be of help in understanding the corpus or body of texts of the selected speech.

***Objective of the Study***

This study on rhetorical analysis of the speech of Mao Zedong tried to determine the dominant rhetorical appeals (ethos, logos and pathos), and advocacies exemplified in his speech.

## Methodology

### Research Design

The study utilized the descriptive research design-qualitative approach in the rhetorical analysis of the speech of Mao Zedong along rhetorical approaches (ideology, hegemony and power) and rhetorical appeals (ethos, pathos and logos). The text corpus of this study is "***We Hope the Arab Countries Will Unite***" (Mao Zhedong, 1965).

### Instrumentation

This study made use of the matrix of rhetorical approaches and rhetorical appeals as research instrument in laying the details of rhetorical analysis' findings in the speech of Mao Zedong **"We Hope the Arab Countries Will Unite".** The text corpus rhetorically analyzed served in determining the dominant rhetorical approaches and rhetorical appeals that surfaced in the speaker's rhetoric. The rhetorical appeals were analyzed based on the indicators individually specified in ethos, logos and pathos while the rhetorical approaches were analyzed based on the parameters of ideology, hegemony and power.

### Data Analysis

Rhetorical analysis was utilized in the study using specifically the rhetorical appeals which are the ethos, logos, and pathos found in both Aristotle's Rhetorical Triangle and Jolliffee's Rhetorical Framework. Then advocacies identified are subsumed in the speech.

For the introduction of the speech, the rhetorical situation which are the exigence, audience and purpose are established before the rhetorical analysis is done. The rhetorical analysis in the light of rhetorical appeals is guided by the following questions: *For Ethos:* 1. Does the writer/speaker seem trustworthy? 2. Does the writer/ speaker seem knowledgeable and reasonable? (3) What comparison does the writer/speaker make other people, places, and events within the text to establish authority? *For Pathos:* Does the writer/speaker appeal to emotions or feelings (sadness, pride, fear, anger, patriotism, love, justice)? Does the writer/speaker try to establish a relationship or common ground with the reader/audience? What circumstances can we as readers/audience relate to? *For Logos:* Is the claim in the argument of the writer/speaker relevant or valid for today? Does the writer/speaker jump into conclusion or have logical fallacies? What point does the author offer to support the idea?
The rhetorical situation is first established which is composed of exigence, audience and purpose. This is done to give the readers an understanding of the background of the speech before the analysis of the rhetorical approaches and rhetorical appeals.

**Results and Discussions**

The speech *"We Hope the Arab Countries Will Unite"* of Mao Zedong is characterized as a deliberative speech since it was delivered to persuade the Arab immediate audience who are potential to take some actions against misgivings of imperialism.

*The Rhetorical Situation*

Mao Zedong was born in Shaoshan, Hunan, China, on December 26, 1893, (www.notablebiographies.com/Lo-Ma/Mao-Zedong.html). He is a Chinese statesman and revolutionary who helped to reshape the social and political structures of his ancient and heavily populated country.
Zedong's speech titled, "We Hope the Arab Countries Will Unite" reveals that the entire Arab world is confronting imperialism. He premised that the hands of the Americans stretch very far, committing aggression everywhere. In 1958, they landed in Lebanon and British troops landed in Jordan, thus creating a tense situation. They were compelled to withdraw only under the pressure of world public opinion. This situation infers that in Mao's mind constructs and character, as advocate of communism, trustworthy ethical human norms and emotional manifestations remained the vital guiding mantra and dictum of his speech against imperialist ideology. In an editorial published in July 1919, Mao wrote: The world is

ours, the nation is ours, society is ours. If we do not speak, who will speak? If we do not act, who will act?

President Mao's mind constructs are similar with President Duterte's (Philippines) constructs (Canay & Temporal) in the sense that his rhetoric through his SONA as a President remains in force as he made use of most references and nominations in establishing a sense of identity and a sense of membership. Moreover, their use of perspectivation to frame their views strongly projected their involvement, objectivity, and transparency.

As communist party leader of China and involved in cultural revolution, he realized how China efficiently triumphed against imperialism and how cruel the blunders of his leadership was domestically. Nevertheless, with the credibility of Mao in advocating Marxism and the ability to persuade, transformation took its form as Lu (2018) posits, Mao's rhetorical ability to attract and persuade mobilized millions of Chinese people, and Mao's adaptation of the Marxist theory of class struggle, his campaigns of transforming common people into new communist advocates, his promotion of Chinese nationalism, and his stand on China's foreign policy, all contributed to and were responsible for reshaping Chinese thought patterns, culture, and communication behaviors. Lu (2018) observes that Mao's rhetorical legacy has been commoditized, culturally consumed, and politically appropriated since his death.

The audience is the leaders from the Arab countries who he has considered allies and with whom he wanted to build a closer relationship and influence. His purpose is to deliberately convince them to take his stand and prove to the world that indeed from one's struggles new learning could blossom and with determination, one could emerge victorious.

*The Rhetorical Appeals*

*Ethos*

To establish Mao's credibility, he first brought his audience to some historical facts of what he and his people did in their encounter with imperialism.

*"Sometimes imperialism educates the people through its running dogs, such as China's Chiang Kai-shek, who taught us how to fight by launching the civil war (1). A person like me was unable to fight, having never even thought of such a thing in the past (2). However, the running dogs of imperialism forced us to take up arms (3)."* - Paragraph 5, Sentences 1-3 (P5S1-3)

On paragraph 8, he further exemplified what his country underwent to prove some more of his credibility as a proponent of the change he would want the Arab people to follow:

*"Victory can be obtained through unity and struggle. ... The victory of the revolution in China was obtained by undergoing 22 years of fighting: first against domestic enemy, conducting the Long March, then against Japanese imperialism, and finally against the Chang Kai-shek reactionaries supported by the U.S." P8S3 and S5*

Chiang Kai Shek History (2019) exposed that Chiang led a successful military campaign against local warlords in northern China and consolidated control within his own party by expelling the Communists in a brutal coup in 1927. In 1928, he formed a new central government out of Nanking, with himself as head of state. Nevertheless, Mao's rhetorical legacy points their winning in waging war against Imperialism.

Another point which he stressed regarding their experience follows:

"*In resisting Japanese imperialism we stood together with the U.S., U.K. and France . After the surrender of Japan the U.S. helped Chiang Kai-shek launch the civil war to attack us. The U.K. and France were at that time powerless to bother about our affairs. The United States didn't directly participate in the war, only stationed some troops in harbors along the Chinese coast. They withdrew after we had annihilated Chiang Kai-shek's several million troops and when we were about to liberate those harbors. We later encountered them again on the Korean battlefield and fought for three years.* The Vietnamese people have also met them now. *It seems that the United States is fond of making war ."* P3S1-6 and S8

In this rhetorical excerpt, Chairman Mao in his rhetorical excellence narrates about the imperialistic warfare power plays between and among nations, with China at the epicenter. Yet, despite all those invaders, China remains in power while other countries became powerless. This shows that Mao established a great nation as exemplified in his rhetoric. It therefore built the foundation as a credible speaker because of his formidable experience as a leader.

*Logos*

On the other hand, Mao Zedong established the logicality of his proposition. The main proposition is seen in the opening statement of the first paragraph, which reads:

"*All revolutionaries and political parties in Asia should unite against imperialism*." P1S1

First is the proposition that all revolutionaries in Asia should unite against imperialism. He argued that in the statement:

"*In fact, the problems of any country can be solved only by the revolution of the local people."P7S3*.

Furthermore, he restated this point by saying:

*"External support, though necessary, is only secondary." P7S4*

To elucidate this claim, he supplies several examples from other countries where they have successfully emerged winners in their countries' revolution. They are, to wit:

*"Algeria obtained independence after fighting for eight years." P5S5*

*"... There are only 14 million people in South Vietnam, yet they are putting up a good fight."P7S5*

Moreover, he also presented their own experience in China with Chang Kai-shek and how they were able to get rid of the revolutionaries:

"*The victory of the revolution in China was obtained by undergoing 22 years of fighting: first against the domestic enemy…" P8S5*

The second proposition that in his speech is his call for unity among the Arab countries.

*"The strength of one or two countries is insufficient, but they can be a formidable force by uniting together." P1S2.*

While the call for unity is expressed, he also exemplified a common denominator in the conscious events that they endured:

*"Both our countries were subjected to colonial oppression. You were under French domination, while we were under the domination of several imperialist powers…We fought against Japanese imperialism…" P4S2&S5*

Chairman Mao's mantra in his argument places cooperation and unity as the very strength to resist the evil of imperialism, which is still relevant in principle until today to disallow exploitation of the multinational corporations of highly industrialized nations to rule the nation they invade.

Chairman Mao's experiences in his own country and immediate border neighbor has inconclusively become the basis of his unsolicited advice to the Arabs who in fact are also socially complex in terms of religious denominations and geographically separate of boarders.

*"If you unite, the imperialist conspiracy won't succeed...and victory can be obtained through unity and struggle. It's only a matter of time."S1-S4*

*Pathos*

Finally, the speech shows the different emotional appeals directed to the Arab nations whom he felt may be reluctant to join the cause of toppling down imperialism. Chairman Mao's emotional appeal to the Arabs through this two-lined feeling-driven rhetorical thoughts of Mao are depictive of his aspiration for *patriotism* among Asian countries and to take *pride* of their own culture. His initiative of influencing the Arabs is also a disguised manifestation of his *anger* to exploitative Western imperialism during his current time.

In the following lines, he appeals for the sense of oneness by shoving away religion as a hindrance to unity and cooperation but he takes the belief of a God in different forms as a common ground.

*"We are different in appearance and in religious beliefs. I should say I have no religion, but this by no means hampers our cooperation. I believed in polytheism when I was a child and abandoned it as grew up. China also has a God, but one different from yours; our god wears Chinese clothes." P6S1-4*

Chairman Mao's remarks established a relationship and common ground with his immediate and mediated audience. There is an emphasis of unity in diversity.

*"We help each other, support each other, and do not harm the other party. We won't subvert you, nor you us. We are friendly countries and share a common objective: first, to oppose imperialism and, second, to build up our own country." P6S5-7*

Chairman Mao's appeals to Arabs meant to win their sympathy were tied with compromises as he emphatically uttered the "working together" relationship with a common goal of building up their own country and opposing imperialism.

He appealed to the people and revealed the propaganda for communism to win as stated in the Constitutional Rights Foundation (2016) to wit: "The battle for China," he said, "is a battle for the hearts and minds of the peasants." So, with Mao Zedong, Communists won over Chinese revolution.

Finally, he appealed to the sense of humility by the acceptance of one's mistake to learn a lesson to overturn the needed action.

*"We also committed mistakes during this period...We won after our mistakes were corrected."P8S6-7.*

Besides, he posited further that it is humane for one to commit mistakes.

*"A man invariably commits mistakes. A political party is like a man. It is impossible not to commit any mistakes at all." P8S7-10.*

His ending statement in the paragraph 9 shows ability and positive disposition with the use of CAN BE and WILL BE respectively. They appeal to the sense of hope and determination.

"*Imperialism **can be defeated**, and revolution **will be triumphant."** P9S1*

**The Most Prevalent Rhetorical Appeals in the speech of Mao Zedong**

Among the three rhetorical appeals utilized in the speech, the most prevalent was logos since this is the core of the speech where arguments and their support are presented. Mao Zedong called for the unity of revolutionaries and political parties against imperialism. He had to establish a historical account in his arguments. He intertwined his speech with commonalities of the countries' experience and China. However, he did not elaborate more on his credibility since he was established as a successful leader. He only had to organize his arguments in such a way that it could be understood, and his points clarified. This is the reason for prevalent logos in his speech.

On the other hand, Medriano & De Vera, (2019) affirmed through their study that other nation's President such as the Philippine President Rodrigo Roa Duterte amply use rhetoric strategies that cleverly combines "ethos, logos, and pathos" (based on the Aristotelian typology of rhetoric strategies). However, rhetoric strategies that appear in his speeches reveals that PRRD uses them in different proportions. Ethos is mostly manifested, while Pathos is least manifested.

**Advocacies Underpinning the Speech of Mao Zedong**

Viewing across the rhetorical drives of the great leaders, vital advocacy underpinnings are clearly marveled as highlighted based primarily from analyzed speech excerpts. The analysis made on rhetorical appeals was based on ethos, logos and pathos; while along rhetorical approaches was based on ideology, hegemony and language power.

Specifically, ***Chairman Mao's*** profound rhetoric of ideological construct is generally anchored on socio-political reforms. Culturally, *it subscribes to people's subservience to the* *nation's self-governance and respect of other much powerful nations to the domestic societal political belief.*

Thus, Mao's advocacy to language teaching is more of knowledge transmission whose linguistics explicitly exemplify or epitomize value-laden concepts of cross-boundary cooperation and not a "cut-throat" competition. It is a pedagogy that contextualizes more of the promotion of partnership for the development of human resources and sharing of the excesses of material resources since no nation is an island that possesses all endowments and amenities of natural, physical and human resources.

Other advocacies mentioned in the piece are patriotism, comradeship, unity, cooperation and self-determination by reshaping the people's mindset towards a common goal against oppressive imperialism.

**Conclusion**

The ethical and emotional elements of rhetorical appeals and language ideology and power as rhetorical approaches are prime rhetorical drives of Mao Zedong that shaped and influenced the peoples' mind constructs on pressing issues, concerns, and problems of world peace and order.

The common advocacy of the $19^{th}$ and $20^{th}$ century is political independence from reigning domestic power and foreign external forces. Mao Zedong manifests strong political ideology.

**Recommendations**

The internationalization of pedagogies for rhetoric and linguistics in the $21^{st}$ Millennium education is proposed to necessarily cover the receptiveness of multicultural dynamics of communication – where regardless of race and orientation, world peace and order would be emphasized where people are duty-bound to resonate them across races, geography and generation.

**Pedagogical Implication**

The study has contributed more knowledge to the Chinese students in understanding the rhetorical appeals and approaches used in the speech of the known Chinese great leader, Mao Zedong. Its results are likewise significant input on the part of the language teachers who are teaching rhetorical analysis not only along speech but also of the different genres of literature.

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# Gender Differences in Refusal Speech Acts of Filipino College Students

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## Abstract

The relationship between gender and refusal strategies among men and women has been a subject of inquiry of previous studies, although results were inconclusive. This study examined the difference between male and female's refusal strategies, including comparison between same-sex and opposite-sex refusals. A total of 150 students from a university in Manila, Philippines participated by answering an online written discourse completion test adapted and modified from previous studies. The DCT was composed of ten scenarios divided into (a) refusals towards the same sex and (b) refusals towards the opposite sex. Data were analysed using a coding method adapted from Beebe et al. (1990), which provided keywords for different categories of refusal strategies. Results revealed that regardless of the gender the most commonly used refusal strategy was [statement of regret] with approximately 35% of the participants that utilized this strategy, followed by [excuse, reason, explanation], [negative willingness], and [gratitude, appreciation]. It appears that most college students are more regretful in refusing as well as empathetic to the inviter or the person being conversed with rather than being explicitly dismissive in refusing. This study also found that female college students value politeness and appearing less face threatening once refusing to achieve successful communication, whereas male college students tend to be more direct and straightforward in expressing their refusal as a mode for their communication.

**Keywords:** *gender differences, refusal strategies, speech act, discourse completion test*

## Introduction

The relationship between gender and refusal strategies in speech acts has been investigated by many scholars. Research in this area commonly focuses on the differences of refusals between men and women. By definition, a refusal is a face threatening act that tends to disrupt harmony in relationships (Umale, 1965). While previous studies have posited that there exist gender differences in responses to conflict and refusal situations, particularly that women use more indirect strategies than men (Bettencourt & Miller, 1996; Cross & Madson, 1997), such differences are not consistent (Holtgraves, 1997; Kashima et al., 1995). For sure, Shareef et al. (2018) found that gender played a significant role in both the choice and number of refusal strategies. However, others argued that social status and differences in culture have more of an effect on the choice of refusal strategies than gender (Abarghoui, 2012).

Consequently, research tended to focus more on cross-cultural comparisons and differences in social status as factors rather than gender alone. Al-Ghamdi and Alqarni (2019) compared refusal strategies of female Arabs and Americans and found that Arabs appeared to use more indirect strategies due to their collectivistic culture. Other studies compared the refusal strategies of native language speakers with those of non-native language speakers, many of which used EFL learners as a participating group. Among these, one focused on both social status and gender as contributing to refusal strategies but found that social status was more likely to prompt participants to use indirect strategies while gender had no significant effect (Fariba Hedayatnejad, Maleki, & Mehrizi, 2015). There is still ongoing debate among scholars on the effect of gender on the choice and number of refusal strategies.

Additionally, limited studies have been conducted with Filipino respondents. Boonkongsaen (2013) investigated the use of English refusal strategies between Filipinos and Thais and found Filipinos to be more direct in their choice of refusal strategies, measured through a discourse completion task. However, the author recommended using gender as a factor in future research. Little information is presented on the relationship between gender and refusal strategies, much less in a Filipino context alone.

This study was built on recommendations to contribute to this area of research in a local setting. However, gender was isolated as a significant factor that influences refusal strategies among Filipinos without regards to social class or cross-cultural factors in order to effectively test the hypotheses of the literature that there is a significant difference in the refusal strategies among men and women. Included was an additional hypothesis concerning the difference of refusal strategies among same and opposite sex refusals. This study can provide evidence of whether the findings of previous authors who claimed that women used more indirect strategies than men (Bettencourt & Miller, 1996; Cross & Madson, 1997) are also applicable in a local setting among Filipino respondents.

The findings may also contribute data to replicate studies of specific scopes such as those concerning rejection in online dating and sexual advances (Byers, Giles, & Price, 1987; Tong & Walther, 2011), buyer-seller interactions (Rosa, 2010), and other common interactions involving refusal speech acts among genders. It will provide a foothold for future researchers and encourage the replication of international studies of refusal speech acts in the Philippines.

The study involved 150 male and female college students as participants, similar to the respondents of Liu and Qian (2018), and adapted the methodologies of Çiftçi (2016), Sa'd & Qadermazi (2014), and Shishavan & Sharifian (2013). The results of the Discourse Completion Test used follows the modified version of classifying refusal strategies (Beebe et al.,1990, as cited in Sattar, Lah, & Suleiman, 2011). The Discourse Completion Test provided several scenarios in which the respondents were asked to reject the offer/request/invitation of (a) someone of the same sex and (b) someone of the opposite sex. However, participants were limited to male and female college students in Manila ranging from ages 17-22 years. The results may be unable to give larger inferences as data was gathered using a Written Discourse

Completion Test (WDCT), and therefore was not classified as natural data. Additionally, the data analysis only included the first refusal strategy used by the respondents and did not consider the subsequent strategies nor the number of repetitions of the same strategies in one refusal. The sample size may also be insufficient when serving as a basis for broad conclusions and generalizations, although the results are promising particularly as they may be useful once the study is replicated or included in a bigger meta-analysis in the future. For sure, the study is one of the few attempts to study gender differences on the refusal speech acts of Filipino students.

*Background of the Study*

Given the complexity and impact that a refusal can bring to the speaker's and hearer's face, the speech act of refusal has been the focus of many cross-cultural communication studies (Siebold & Busch, 2015). It is a given that refusals, like other speech acts, occur in all languages (Sattar et al., 2011). Nonetheless, expressing ‘no’ is rather a complex and problematic speech act. In a multicultural and gendered society such as Malaysia, for example, the speech act of refusal is carried out in multiple ways according to ethnicity and gender (Raslie & Azizan, 2019). People’s refusals differ on their expression of directness and on whether they spot indirect meanings in others’ remarks (Holtgraves, 1997).

Wang (2019) analysed the differences of refusal strategies between males and females that lie in the use of direct and indirect refusals. Most of the female students used indirect strategies to avoid face threatening situations while most of the male students used direct refusals. Moreover, Al-Mahrooqi and Al-Aghbari (2016) examined how Omani EFL college students refused in various situations and assesses the appropriateness in terms of culture and the accuracy in terms of language of the refusals.

While other studies investigated various cross-cultural communications, Beebe et al. (Beebe et al., 1990) tackled Pragmatics Transfer of ESL Refusal and analysed the results by creating a discourse completion test, interpreted with a categorization of refusal speech acts that classified these according to key words, the methodology of which was used in various literature in this area of research.

*Review of Related Literature*

*Cross-linguistic and Cross-cultural Comparisons of Refusals*

Most studies share a consensus that culture and language have a significant impact on the refusal strategies among interlocutors. Those individuals from a collectivistic culture are more inclined to pick indirect strategies than those from an individualistic culture. Morkus (2014) compared the refusal strategies of Egyptians and Americans and saw Egyptians as increasingly indirect – explaining the reasons of their dismissals in more detail – while Americans tended to use personal reasons. Another study found that compared with Americans, Saudis used the direct refusal less often than indirect (Al-Ghamdi & Alqarni, 2019). Ghazanfari, Bonyadi, and Malekzadeh (2012) also concluded that the collectivistic-individualistic differences in speech acts can clearly be seen in comparing Persian and English speakers, stating that:

Iranians were more eager to consider themselves as a community when they refused others. In other words, in refusal utterances, they tended to use the word 'we' more than 'I' to keep their conformity even in refusing or rejecting others' requests. Therefore, Persian speakers tend to be of a collectivist nature, valuing group desires, while English speakers used more sentences containing 'I' in refusing utterances (regret and self-defense) (Ghazanfari et al., 2012).

Several authors expanded the scope by including EFL learners as their respondents and comparing these with native language speakers. Allami & Naeimi (2011) indicated that executing a refusal act in a second language was a complex task as it required the speaker to deeply understand the sociocultural values of the target culture. Scholars have found that the inappropriateness of respondents' refusals in English and their English proficiency level that caused errors in sentence structure and affected meaning clarity was heavily influenced by the specific culture of non-native English speakers (Al-Mahrooqi & Al-Aghbari, 2016; Chunli & Mohd Nor, 2016; Sattar et al., 2011; Shishavan & Sharifian, 2013).

*Studies Pertaining to Social Class as a Factor Affecting Refusal Strategies*

Although the majority of literature used groups from different cultures as respondents, various studies considered that having differences in social class has a significant impact on refusal strategies of interlocutors, especially in the degree of politeness (Félix-Brasdefer, 2006). Hedayatnejad (Fariba Hedayatnejad et al., 2015) found that refusal strategies depended on the interlocutor's social status – such that more indirect strategies were applied on equal status, more direct ones on low status, and an equal application of both direct and indirect on high status interlocutors. Lee (2013) found social status to significantly affect the appropriateness scores of respondents' refusals. Direct strategies were used more often in power-low situations, while indirect strategies increased in power-high and power-equal situations (Lee, 2013).

Overall, these studies showed that factors such as cultural differences and social status affect refusal strategies. The simultaneous effect of the two are shown in Umale (Umale, 1965), wherein people used more direct strategies towards people of lower status while Omanis considered the interlocutor's feelings more often. Notwithstanding the consensus, it is still advisable to replicate these studies in individual local settings, as Chojimah (2015) found that social status only slightly contributed to the degree of politeness in refusal strategies among Indonesian students since it was an innate part of their culture.

### *Gender as a Factor affecting Refusal Strategies*

Fewer studies considered gender as a factor that contributed to refusal strategies. Among the literature, only Hedayatnejad and Rahbar (2014) compared refusal strategies using EFL learners, social status, and gender. However, only social status was found to have a significant effect. Studies that considered both gender and cross-cultural factors found their female participants to use more polite strategies than males but this varies among the selected cultures (Shams & Afghari, 2011). Others that only used gender as a factor found that women used indirect strategies significantly more often than men, leaving 20% of women to use direct strategies compared with 65% of men (Wang, 2019). Raslie & Azizan (Raslie & Azizan, 2019) also concluded this, but the degree of difference of directness among genders contradicts the former study, showing only a 2.3% difference between male and female respondents (Raslie & Azizan, 2019). Although it is generally agreed upon among the literature that females are more inclined to use indirect strategies, the inconsistency was evident in how much they use indirect strategy compared to males. Some inconsistences may have something to do with socio-cultural factors. Ismail (2018) noted the fact that male respondents were more inclined in indirect strategies than direct one, the difference in gender can be observed through the refusal acts themselves – such that the males were more polite, appreciative, and elaborative when rejecting while the females tended to be more sensitive to whom they were rejecting, making alternative offers and future promises (Che Ismail, 2018). Most of the literature had slight variations among their conclusions and made it apparent that further research is needed.

### *Synthesis and Research Gap*

The literature suggests that studies concerning refusal speech acts dealt with social status and cross-cultural perspectives. Given that, it is unclear whether the difference among genders in refusal strategies is significant. As the conclusions of studies which used gender as the sole influencing factor were inconsistent, it is necessary to replicate these investigations and eliminate other factors like social status and cultural differences as much as possible by narrowing down the respondents to that of close or equal age with a predominantly homogenous culture in order to isolate gender as a contributing factor. It may also be helpful to compare what refusal strategies males and females use when refusing those of the same and opposite sex to infer the causes of these differences from gender perspectives, giving way for further investigation. Once this type of study is conducted in multiple settings without cross-comparisons, a large meta-analysis may also be written.

Furthermore, only a limited number of studies in this area of research were found in the Philippines. One is that of Boonkongsaen (Boonkongsaen, 2013) which included both Filipino and Thai respondents for a cross-cultural analysis. There is no literature which limits the respondents to Filipinos alone. Also, it is worth noting that studies included in their recommendation to consider gender as a factor for future research (Al-Ghamdi & Alqarni, 2019; Boonkongsaen, 2013).

*Research Questions*

This paper investigated the significant differences in refusal speech acts between male and female college students. It aimed to answer the following questions:

1. What are the most commonly used refusal strategies of Filipino college students?
2. What differences can be seen between the refusal strategies of male and female participants when refusing those of the same and opposite sex?
3. What are the differences in the degree of directness/indirectness of the refusal strategies used when rejecting those of the same sex compared with those of the opposite sex?

*Theoretical/Conceptual Framework*

Applied in this study is the modified analytic method of Beebe (Beebe et al., 1990) which used a sequence of semantic formulas to categorize the different refusal strategies (Sattar et al., 2011). Through the online WDCT, the researchers determined the type of refusal strategy used by looking for certain key words. For example, if a respondent refused an invitation by saying "sorry" and "I have other plans", this, according to the categorization, is coded as [regret][excuse]; The coding was manually done, as both the key words and the contexts of each provided situation needed to be considered by the researchers. However, to disregard the repetition and multiple use of refusal strategies in a situation, the scope was limited to use the first refusal strategy per situation. The researchers utilized this method as it was the most referenced in the literature which also used discourse completion tests and discourse completion tasks as their data gathering methods (Aliakbari & Changizi, 2012; Chunli & Mohd Nor, 2016; M.Shareef et al., 2018; Raslie & Azizan, 2019; Sa'd & Qadermazi, 2014; Sattar et al., 2011; Umale, 1965) Additionally, this method made the coding process easier and quantified the different refusal strategies used by the respondents in a more efficient manner.

## Methods

*Research Design*

A descriptive research design as defined by Johnson (2001) was used as it aimed to illuminate differences in refusal speech acts of male and female Filipino college students. Previous studies followed this design in describing language phenomena using available textual data of varying nature (Malasig & Quinto, 2016; Quinto, 2014b, 2015d, 2015b; Quinto & Santos, 2016). For this study, commonly used refusal strategies and their differences with regards to gender as a contributing factor were hoped to be described. It also aimed to describe the degree of directness/indirectness of the refusal strategies used when rejecting those of the same sex compared with those of the opposite sex.

*Setting*

The investigation took place in a university in Manila, the Philippines, a country where a rich tradition of applied linguistics research exists (Quinto, 2015c). Particularly, it took place in an engineering university considered as one of the top engineering schools in the Philippines. Technical degree students have recently become a group of interest in researching applied language studies (Borlongan & Quinto, 2015; Castillo, Pinugu, Bernabe, & Pasay, 2020; Macayan & Quinto, 2015; Macayan, Quinto, Otsuka, & Cueto, 2018a, 2018b; Quinto, 2014a, 2015a; Quinto & Castillo, 2016; Quinto & Macayan, 2019, 2020). The researchers conducted an online survey through Google Forms which was distributed among college students of the university.

*Participants and Sampling Technique*

The participants included in the study were university students in Manila, aged 17 to 22 years. The 150 respondents involved in the study were gathered by purposive sampling in which they were selected based on the research requirements, that is if they were students from the university and met the desired age range during the time of the data gathering.

*Data Gathering Tools*

A series of ten situations in which the respondents were asked to provide a refusal was used in the survey to identify the most common refusal strategies used by male and female participants.

The survey was divided into two parts: the first part was composed of questions pertaining demographic characteristics of the respondent, while the second part was composed of the Discourse Completion Test that aimed to identify the respondent's refusal strategies in the given situations of rejecting either those of the same sex or those of the opposite sex.

*Research Procedures*

A Discourse Completion Test was used to gauge the responses of the sample participants, administered online and could be answered by the participants whenever they chose to do so without a time limit. To ensure that proper ethical practices were followed throughout the course of the survey, all 150 participants involved in the study provided full willingness and were neither coerced nor forced to answer. Complete discretion regarding data obtained was also ensured to protect the identities and any information that may be of sensitive nature by making it optional for the respondents to provide their names. The purpose and procedure of the study were indicated before the survey questions and it was emphasized that participating in the study was not mandatory. To ensure that confidentiality would not be violated, only the researchers were given access to view the accomplished surveys. The data gathering was done during a two-week span in October 2019.

The DCT answered contained a total of ten scenarios presented to the respondent in which they were instructed to provide their own refusal when made to hypothetically deal with the situation. The respondents were given the liberty to type their answers in any manner and language that felt comfortable to them. Data was then coded according to the categorization of refusal strategies adapted from the literature, in which the researchers considered the provided key words to identify these categories as well as relate them to the stated scenario. After such, conclusions to the research questions were stated based on the data analysis.

*Data Analysis*

The results were analysed and interpreted through the use of the Classification of Discourse Completion Test (DCT) by Beebe et al. (Beebe et al., 1990) which consists of a sequence of semantic formulas (see Appendix B for a complete list). For example, if a respondent refused an invitation of a friend for the movies, saying, "Sorry I can't cause I am tired, and I think I wouldn't enjoy it." This would be coded as: [negative willingness]. Those answers that could not stand alone and functioned as refusals were termed as "adjuncts." For example, subjects often expressed a positive feeling (e.g., "I appreciate your offer… ") before they gave their excuse (e.g., "but it would be better for me to rest"). Without the excuse, the expression of a positive feeling would sound like an acceptance. However, only the refusal strategy first used by the respondent per situation was coded, and both multiple and repeated refusal strategies were disregarded as data. If in the case that the respondent misunderstood the instructions, such as accepting the offer/invitation that they were instructed to refuse, it was coded as an error. The frequency and percentage of the refusal strategies used were calculated and presented according to the research questions.

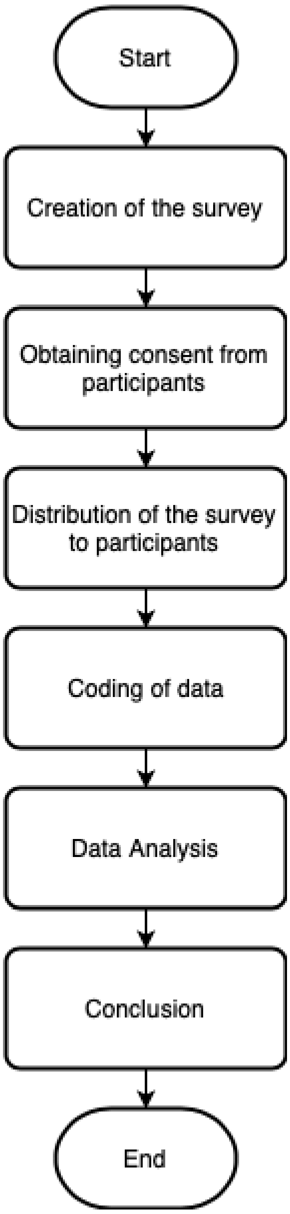



**Figure 1.** *Flowchart for Research Procedure*

**Results and Discussion**

Through the data gathering procedure, the researchers obtained results from a total of 150 respondents. The online survey provided a total of ten different scenarios, divided equally for same and opposite sex refusals, in which the respondents were asked to refuse the given offer or request. Automatically-generated pie charts illustrated the basic information the respondents were asked to provide, while a coding analysis that followed the modified version of Beebe et al.'s (Beebe et al., 1990) "Categorization of Semantic Formulas Used in the Realization of Refusals" (Sattar et al., 2011) was used. Following the three research questions, the results are presented and discussed accordingly. Among the respondents gathered, there was a slightly larger number of male respondents with a total of 83 (55.3%), compared with the female respondents of 67 (44.7%). The respondents' age varied from 17-22 years old. Among these, 4% were respondents 17 years of age, 40% were 18 years old, 11.3% were 19-year olds, 16% were 20-year olds, 20% were 21-year olds, and 8.7% were 22 years of age. As illustrated, most of the respondents belonged to the 18-year-old group, followed by the 21-year-old, 20-year-old, 19-year-old, 22-year-old, and 17-year-old groups respectively.

*3.1.What are the most commonly used refusal strategies of Filipino college students?*

Investigated foremost was the overall most commonly used refusal strategies of both male and female participants in all the refusals as differences between sexes are hypothesized in the literature. Refusal strategies that were mentioned in the adapted methodology but had zero frequency in the gathered data were omitted from the presentation of results to highlight those with high frequencies presented in the table below.

| *Modified version of Beebe et al.'s (1990) categorization of refusal strategies* | **CATEGORIES** | **FREQUENCY** | **PERCENTAGE** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **DIRECT STRATEGIES** | Explicit Refusal | 224 | 14.93% |
| | Negative Willingness | 97 | 6.47% |
| | Hedged Performatives | 61 | 4.07% |
| **INDIRECT STRATEGIES** | Statement of Regret | 534 | 35.60% |
| | Excuse, Reason, Explanation | 187 | 12.47% |
| | Gratitude/Appreciation | 92 | 6.13% |
| | Criticize offer/suggestion | 46 | 3.07% |
| | Statement of positive opinion/feeling of agreement | 43 | 2.87% |
| | Set condition for future/past acceptance | 29 | 1.93% |
| | Promise of future acceptance | 25 | 1.67% |
| | Statement of alternative | 23 | 1.53% |
| | Return suggestion/invitation | 22 | 1.47% |
| | Request for help/empathy/understanding | 11 | 0.73% |
| | Other strategies | 8 | 0.53% |
| | Pause fillers | 7 | 0.47% |
| | Hesitation | 5 | 0.33% |
| | Let interlocutor off the hook | 3 | 0.20% |
| | Error | 48 | 3.20% |

**TABLE 1.** *The Overall Most Commonly Used Refusal Strategies of the Respondents*

Table 1 shows the overall frequency of the most commonly used refusal strategies among both male and female participants according to the results of the online WDCT distributed by the researchers. The highest frequency by a significant difference was the [statement of regret] strategy, with an overall 35.60% usage among participants. [Explicit refusal] was the second most commonly used refusal strategy and encompassed 14.93% of the respondents' answers, closely followed by [excuse, reason, explanation] with 12.47%, [negative willingness] with

6.47%, and [gratitude, appreciation] with 6.13%. The rest of the refusal strategy categories appeared but were not notable.

These results are similar to those of Liu and Qian (Liu & Qian, 2018), which concluded that both males and females tended to use more indirect refusal strategies over direct ones. Raslie and Azizan (Raslie & Azizan, 2019) also found that Malay university students of both sexes predominantly used indirect refusal strategies. The data shown in Table 1 supports the hypothesis that these conclusions can also be applicable in a local setting with Filipino university students as respondents given the disparity of the frequency of [statement of regret], an indirect strategy, with the rest of the refusal strategies coded, even more than twice the frequency of [explicit refusal] which was the second most commonly used refusal strategy by the respondents. Additionally, there was a slightly high frequency of error despite the DCT's instructions to refuse all the given offers/requests – that is, the respondents often accepted these while being aware that they were told to reject them, often citing their personal values and beliefs. This consistently supports the high frequency of indirect refusal strategies compared to direct ones as shown in Table 1.

*3.2. What differences can be seen between the refusal strategies of male and female participants when refusing those of the same and opposite sex?*

After identifying the most commonly used refusal strategies of the respondents, the researchers compared the differences of these between same and opposite sex refusals. Categories that showed 0 frequency for both male-to-male and female-to-female were omitted from the data presentation. Similarly, 0 frequency categories for both male-to-female and female-to-male refusals were also omitted. Results are presented and discussed in reference to Table 2 and Table 3 below.

**TABLE 2.** *The Most Commonly Used Refusal Strategies Among Same Sex Refusals*

| ***Modified version of Beebe et al.'s (1990) categorization of refusal strategies*** | | **MALE-TO-MALE REFUSALS** | | **FEMALE-TO-FEMALE REFUSALS** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **CATEGORIES** | **FREQUENCY** | **PERCENTAGE** | **FREQUENCY** | **PERCENTAGE** |
| **DIRECT STRATEGIES** | Explicit refusal | 77 | 18.55% | 42 | 12.45% |
| | Negative Willingness | 25 | 6.02% | 28 | 8.36% |
| | Hedged Performatives | 13 | 3.13% | 5 | 1.49% |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Statement of regret | 125 | 30.12% | 110 | 32.84% |
| | Wish | 0 | 0.00% | 1 | 0.30% |
| | Excuse, Reason, Explanation | 71 | 17.11% | 45 | 13.43% |
| | Statement of alternative | 17 | 4.10% | 2 | 0.60% |
| | Set condition for future/past acceptance | 9 | 2.17% | 9 | 2.69% |
| | Promise of Future acceptance | 6 | 1.45% | 19 | 5.67% |
| | Criticize offer/s suggestion | 21 | 5.06% | 22 | 6.57% |
| | Request for help/sympathy/understanding | 3 | 0.72% | 4 | 1.19% |
| **INDIRECT STRATEGIES** | Return Suggestion/invitation | 8 | 1.93% | 9 | 2.69% |
| | Hesitation | 0 | 0.00% | 5 | 1.49% |
| | Conditional acceptance | 2 | 0.48% | 0 | 0.00% |
| | Statement of positive opinion/feeling agreement | 9 | 2.17% | 7 | 2.09% |
| | Pause fillers | 1 | 0.24% | 0 | 0.00% |
| | Gratitude appreciation | 6 | 1.45% | 9 | 2.69% |
| | Error | 22 | 5.30% | | 5.37% |

The comparison between same sex refusals is shown in Table 2. For direct strategies, both male-to-male and female-to-female used [explicit refusal] most often, followed by [negative willingness] and [hedged performatives] respectively. [Statement of regret] was also the most common indirect strategy for both same sex refusals, having almost more than twice the frequency of [excuse, reason, explanation], the second most commonly used indirect strategy. This is followed by [hedged performatives] although used by male-to-male refusals significantly more than female-to-female refusals, as well as [statement of alternative] which had a notable difference between the two same sex refusals. For female-to-female refusals, [promise of future acceptance] and [hesitation] were the categories that showed the largest disparity in frequency when compared with male-to-male refusals. Other categories did not show a notable difference in their occurrences.

**TABLE 3.** *The Most Commonly Used Refusal Strategies Among Opposite Sex Refusals*

| ***Modified version of Beebe et al.'s (1990) categorization of refusal strategies*** | | **MALE TO FEMALE REFUSALS** | | **FEMALE TO MALE REFUSALS** | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **CATEGORIES** | **FREQUENCY** | **PERCENTAGE** | **FREQUENCY** | **PERCENTAGE** |
| **DIRECT STRATEGIES** | Explicit refusal | 61 | 14.70% | 44 | 13.13% |
| | Negative Willingness | 25 | 6.02% | 19 | 4.58% |
| | Hedged Performatives | 20 | 4.82% | 23 | 6.87% |
| **INDIRECT STRATEGIES** | Statement of regret | 163 | 39.28% | 136 | 40.60% |
| | Excuse, Reason, Explanation | 41 | 9.88% | 30 | 8.96% |
| | Statement of alternative | 3 | 0.72% | 1 | 0.30% |
| | Set condition for future/past acceptance | 7 | 1.69% | 4 | 1.19% |
| | Promise of Future acceptance | 5 | 1.20% | 9 | 2.69% |
| | Criticize offer/s suggestion | 2 | 0.48% | 1 | 0.30% |
| | Request for help/sympathy/understanding | 2 | 0.48% | 2 | 0.60% |
| | Let interlocutor off the hook | 1 | 0.24% | 2 | 0.60% |
| | Removal of negativity | 0 | 0.00% | 1 | 0.30% |
| | Request for Information | 3 | 0.72% | 2 | 0.60% |
| | Conditional acceptance | 9 | 2.17% | 8 | 2.39% |
| | Statement of positive opinion/feeling agreement | 24 | 5.78% | 3 | 0.90% |
| | Pause fillers | 1 | 0.24% | 5 | 1.49% |
| | Gratitude appreciation | 35 | 8.43% | 42 | 12.54% |
| | Other strategies | 5 | 1.20% | 3 | 0.90% |
| | Error | 8 | 1.93% | 0 | 0.00% |

Contrastingly, Table 3 shows the comparison between opposite sex refusals. Among the direct refusal strategies, [explicit refusal] also held the highest frequency. Although unlike same sex refusals, [negative willingness] and [hedged performatives] held closer frequencies to one another. Among the indirect strategies, [statement of regret] also had the highest frequency count for both opposite sex refusals. [Excuse, reason, explanation] also had a notable usage for both refusals, but appeared less often in opposite sex refusals, especially for males. [Promise of future acceptance] also had a higher usage from female respondents than males, although less for opposite sex refusals than same sex ones. Additionally, [gratitude, appreciation] had a significantly higher usage in opposite sex refusals than in same sex refusals. While [criticize offer/suggestion] was often used by both males and females in same sex refusals, almost no respondents used this for opposite sex refusals. It is also notable that while [statement of positive opinion/feeling of agreement] had little difference of usage among sexes in same sex refusals, males used it eight times more than females in opposite sex refusals. Other strategies did not show significance in opposite sex refusals and many were omitted due to having a frequency of 0.

The overall higher usage of [promise of future acceptance] strategies of females and [statement of positive opinion/feeling of agreement] for males is also seen in the results of Che Ismail (Che Ismail, 2018), which found that males paid more respect by expressing their appreciation while females were more sensitive and leaned towards making promises for future acceptance. The general preference of indirect strategies by females compared to males is also mirrored in multiple literatures (Bettencourt & Miller, 1996; Cross & Madson, 1997), suggesting that the hypotheses of these studies are also applicable in a local setting.

### *3.3. What are the differences in the degree of directness/indirectness of the refusal strategies used when rejecting those of the same sex compared with those of the opposite sex?*

The third research question inquired the difference in the degree of directness/indirectness of the refusal strategy used by the participants between same and opposite sex situations. The analysis of the direct refusal strategies used by male participants revealed that the male participants have reduced degree of directness when refusing female interlocutors. This can be observed in Figure 1.

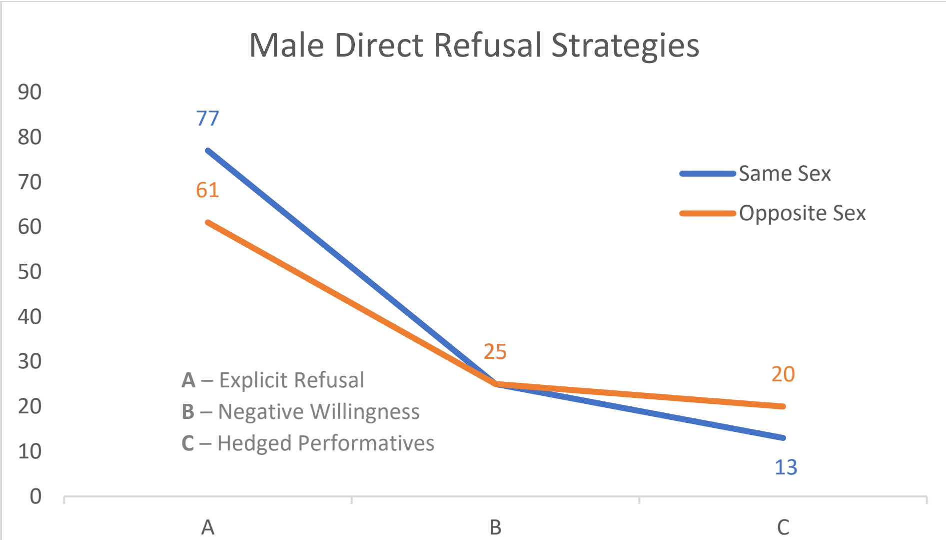



**Figure 1.** *Comparison of Same and Opposite Sex Male Direct Refusal Strategies*

Figure 1 shows that male participants use [explicit refusal] more when refusing male interlocutor. When refusing a female interlocutor, the male participants used more [hedged performatives], while the [negative willingness] strategy is equally used in same and opposite sex situations. This result shows that male participants would use a less direct way of refusal when refusing female interlocutors rather than giving it straightforward.

Contrastingly, male participants tended to be more direct when refusing male interlocutors and more favored to use [hedged performatives] when refusing female interlocutors. Liu & Qian (2018) similarly found that it takes up to 36% of total strategies in direct refusal among male groups. However, the most commonly used direct refusal strategies among male groups was not indicated in comparing gender differences in speech act of refusal among Chinese college students. Additionally, Rosa (2010) compared refusal strategies of male and female sellers and concluded that male sellers made use of direct refusal strategies more frequently, in that they used [non-performative statements] and preferred directly saying “no”.

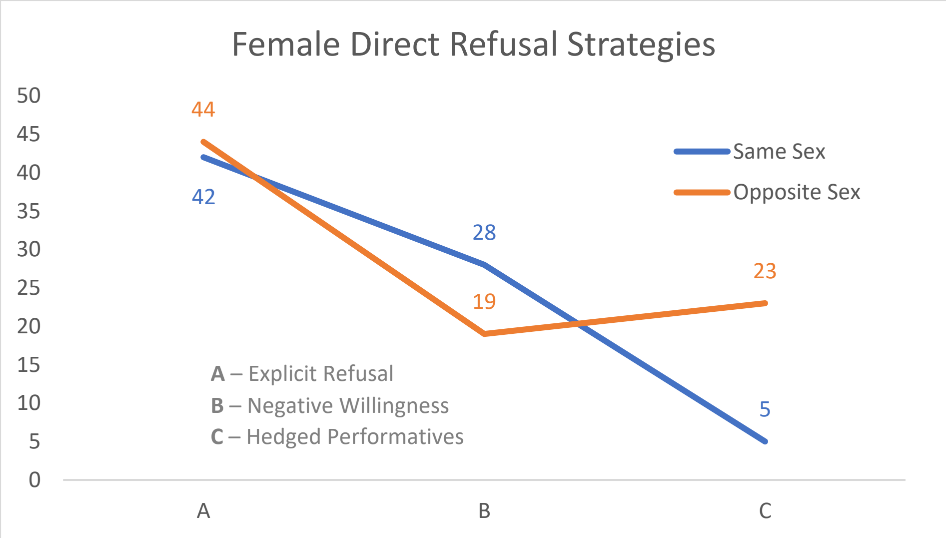


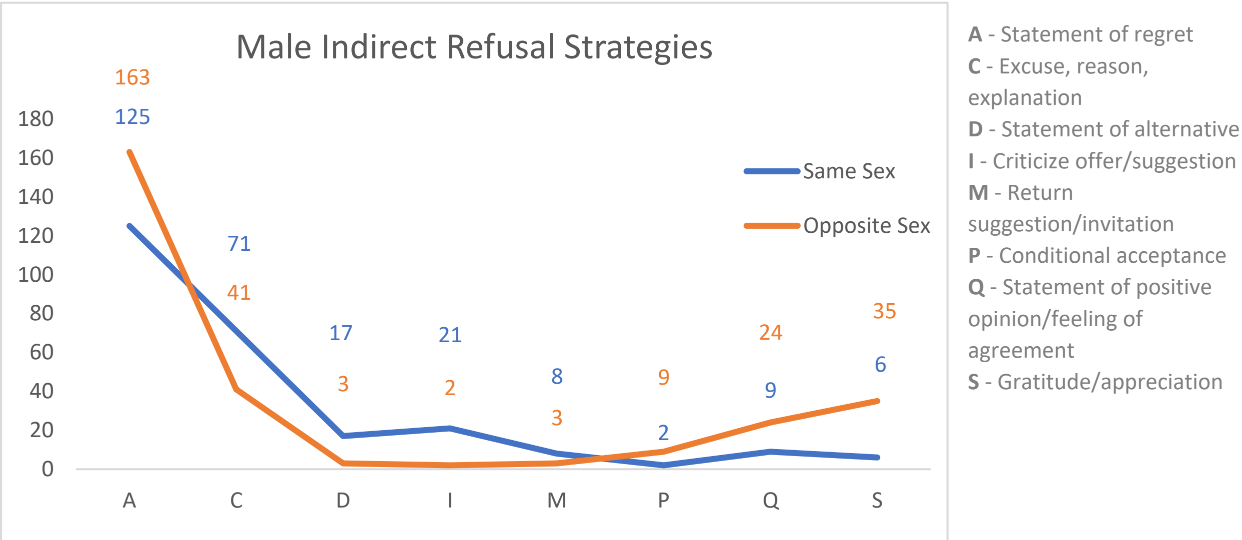

**Figure 2.** *Comparison of Same and Opposite Sex Female Direct Refusal Strategies*

The analysis of the direct refusal strategies used by female participants revealed that female Filipino college students have reduced degree of directness when refusing female interlocutors and used [hedged performatives]. This trend can also be seen in Figure 1 which illustrates male refusals for male interlocutors. However, the increase in Figure 2 was more significant. There is also an observed decrease in the use of [negative willingness] in opposite sex situations while the use of [explicit refusal] stayed relatively the same. The changes observed in the use of refusal strategies in opposite sex situations show that females would opt to be less direct in their refusal rather than saying they can't accept the invitation/request.

It was observed that females are more likely to use direct refusal strategies when refusing male interlocutors. This can also be seen in the study of Lannutti & Monahan (2004) wherein refusal strategies of women to relationships types, request persistence and alcohol consumption were determined; women were found to most frequently choose to terminate the relationship or give a flat refusal to a date whom would not hear "no" the first time. In addition to, Lannutti &

Monahan (2004) concluded that women is more favored in using direct refusal strategies on dates request than to a friend's request.

**Figure 3.** *Comparison of Same and Opposite Sex Male Indirect Refusal Strategies*




Analyzing the data for the indirect refusal strategies used by male participants demonstrate that they have increased degree of indirectness in opposite sex situations. Figure 3 shows an increase in the use of [statement of regret], [conditional acceptance], [statement of positive] and [gratitude] strategies when the refusing female interlocutors. In same sex situations, the usage of [excuse/reason/explanation], [statement of alternative], [return suggestion/invitation] and [criticize offer] strategies have increased. The usage of other strategies stayed relatively same for both situations. The results suggest that the male participants don't want to upset the female interlocutor by giving a less indirect refusal like [criticize offer/suggestion]. Thus, the use of [statement of positive opinion] and [gratitude] increased significantly.

It was analyzed that most of the males were very elaborative when making rejections indirectly. Most of them were observed to be cautious and mindful in using words when making rejections especially to female interlocutors. This can also be seen in the study of Che Ismail (2018) wherein the politeness strategies among the Malays in Malaysia were compared; Malay male students revealed to be more indirect when making rejections through giving explanations and excuses. Thus, males were more elaborative, and they paid more respect to people through explaining and expressing appreciation. In addition to that, males more frequently used [statement of regret] whereas females were very apologetic to the hearers.

The analysis of the indirect refusal strategies used by female participants revealed that the female participants have increased degree of indirectness when refusing male interlocutors. This can be observed in Figure 4.

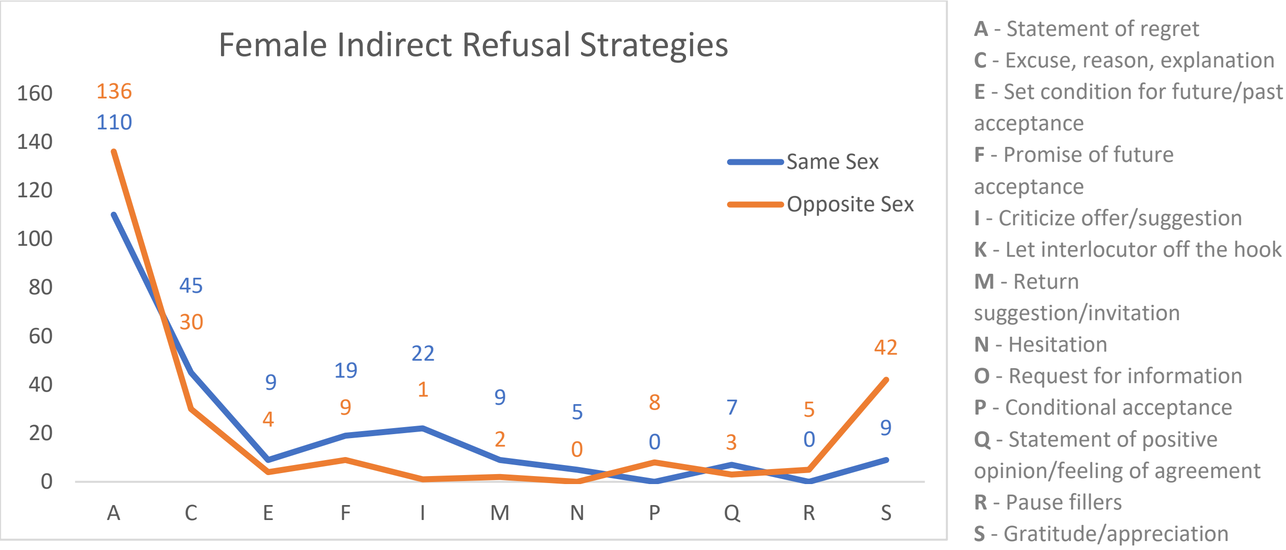



**Figure 4.** *Comparison of Same and Opposite Sex female Indirect Refusal Strategies*

The female participants adapted more indirect strategies in the two different situations. Figure 4 shows an increase in [statement of regret] and [gratitude/appreciation] strategies. It can also be noted that there were strategies that weren't used in same sex situations but were used in opposite sex situations, namely: [conditional acceptance] and [pause fillers]. The increase in [statement of regret] and [gratitude/appreciation] present in Figure 4 reveals that female participants also increase the degree of indirectness to make sure that they aren't dismissive to the male interlocutor. The most favoured indirect refusal strategies used by females are [statement of regret], [excuse, reason and explanation], and [gratitude and appreciation]. Wang (2019) found similar results. Most of the female students prefer to use indirect refusal strategies, whereas male students are likely to use either less indirect or direct refusal strategies. Female students gave many specific explanations when refusing others, often taking care to appear non-face threatening.

## Conclusion

The researchers have concluded the following results: first, the most commonly used strategies utilized by Filipino college students, regardless of gender, are [Statement of regret] with 35% of the participants utilizing this strategy, [Explicit refusal] the with 14.93% of the respondents' answers, closely followed by [excuse, reason, explanation], [negative willingness], and [gratitude, appreciation] respectively. The rest of the refusals were also used but proven incomparable to the above mentioned. This is significant as it appears most respondents were regretful in refusing as well as empathetic to the interlocutor rather than being explicitly dismissive in refusing. Secondly, the overall high usage of [promise of future acceptance] strategies by females and [statement of positive opinion/feeling of agreement] of males – also found in Che Ismail (Che Ismail, 2018) – demonstrated that males paid more respect by expressing their appreciation while females were more sensitive and leaned towards making promises to accept future requests. It was also found that women tended to be more passive in their refusals than men – a finding supported in literature (Bettencourt & Miller, 1996; Cross & Madson, 1997). Wang (2019), which also compared refusal strategies of college students, mirrors the finding in the present study of women favoring indirect refusal strategies and aiming to appear less face-threatening as well as offering explanations, while men were more direct in refusals; this result is also seen in Liu and Qian (Liu & Qian, 2018).

## Recommendations

### *Recommendations for Future Research*

The researchers recommend replicating this study with a more inclusive scope and with another set of respondents other than university students studying in Manila. Data sufficient for a meta-analysis concerning this topic in a local setting may be obtained with more respondents through further research, although the variation among cultures and social statuses must still be limited as much as possible by selecting respondents from a generally homogenous background and demography. Additionally, it is ideal to use observation without the researcher’s direct intervention as to obtain natural data. Interviews and discourse completion tests may be limiting for participants may not give honest responses to interviewers and written language is different from spoken language. If observation is difficult to execute with a large sample size due to the unpredictability of variation in the results, focus group discussions and discourse completion tasks – such as roleplay tasks – are also viable as data gathering tools. If future researchers also choose to expand the scope of the survey, they may use different or more of the categories from the methodology adapted from literature. This study limited the coding analysis of the respondents’ answers to the first refusal strategy mentioned and disregarded those statements that included a repetition and/or use of multiple refusal strategies for a single situation. If feasible, the future researchers may include this in their study. However, coding for all the refusal strategies used in every response as well as comparing the difference between refusal strategies between same-sex and opposite-sex refusals may require an extended period for data analysis. This is not strongly recommended for researchers who aim to use interviews, discourse completion tasks, and focus group discussions as data gathering tools for these will need to go through an extensive transcription process before the data can be analysed.

It is highly recommended that this study be replicated in multiple Philippine settings as the research of this topic is still not locally investigated. With this, clear conclusions can be drawn with regards to gender differences in refusal speech acts in an isolated context of Philippine culture. When enough local data has been gathered, these studies can then be compared with those mirrored internationally and therefore include both gender and cultural differences in their scopes.

*Recommendations for Practice*

The findings of this study can be applied in practice for investigating relationships between men and women and how refusal strategies affect these relationships. Once the underlying causes between the differences in refusal strategies are identified, it may be feasible to reduce the adverse effects of the findings such as the damage of refusal strategies to romantic, casual, and professional relationships.

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## APPENDIX A

**Discourse Completion Test**

**Name (optional): ________________________**

**Age: ___________________**

**Gender: _______________**

**Instructions:**

This questionnaire has been designed to gain insights into how you would respond to a set of situations. Below are 10 situations. Please read the following situations, imagine that you ***DO NOT** want to comply (=agree) with their request, invitation, etc.* and write down your response as naturally as possible and **exactly what you would say** in each situation. Please try to write in **one sentence only**. The data will be used for research purposes only.

Please take the following example to give you an idea as to how to respond.

Thank you for your participation in advance!

**Example:** You just helped your professor to finish a project. To celebrate successful completion of the project he/she invites you along with the other students involved in the project to lunch. However, your mother is sick and you have to look after her. What would you say?

**I would say:** I can't go as of the moment. My mom is sick and I have to go and look after her.

Please notice that in situations **1 to 5** you should imagine that the person you are talking to is **of the same sex as you** and in situations **6 to 10** that **he/she is of the opposite sex**.

1. You feel very tired and are not in a good mood. One of your close friends the same age as you invites you to the movies with him/her this evening to make you feel better. However, you'd prefer to stay home and rest. What would you say?

___

2. You and your friends are at the bar drinking when a random guy/gal approaches you and offers you a drink. Your friends started teasing you but you and your boyfriend/girlfriend are cooled-off. What would you say?

___

3. Your best friend invites you to their house because he/she needs someone to talk to; but you already have committed to another friend that you are going to his/her birthday party. What would you say to him/her?

___

4. You often hear your parents arguing. One day, you accidentally heard that your mom is filing a divorce. Your father says that it's okay if your mom files a divorce as long as you're staying with him. However, you don't want to stay with your father instead you want to choose to stay with your mom. What would you say?

___

5. You are eating your lunch in a fast food restaurant near your university. One of your close friends who is the same age as you puts his/her books on the table and asks you to watch them while he/she gets his/her food. But you are about to finish and will be leaving in a few minutes for a class. What would you say?

___

**Reminder:** Imagine that the person you are talking to in situations **6 to 10** that **he/she is of the opposite sex**.

6. Your neighbor is inviting you on their family dinner because they are celebrating their mom's birthday. However, you have already made plans with your friends and you really don't want to go for a dinner. What would you say?

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7. During the ball night, you are not feeling well and one of your batch mate offered you to take him/her in a slow dance. However, you feel really tired and not in a mood for dancing. What would you say?

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8. One of your classmates wants to borrow your class notes. However, you need them since you are preparing for upcoming exam next week. What would you say?

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9. He/she is offering you to be his/her prom date for the most awaited prom night in your school. However, you are already committed to someone. What would you say?

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10. One of your workmates invites you for a tea. However, you have to accomplish work papers during that time and cannot accept his/her invitation. What would you say?

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## APPENDIX B

**Modified version of Beebe et al.'s (1990) categorization of semantic formulas used in the realization of refusals**

Direct strategies

1. Explicit refusal (e.g. 'No'; 'No way'; 'It's not possible')
2. Negative willingness/ability (e.g. 'I can't'; 'I don't think so')
3. Hedged performatives: (e.g. 'I have to refuse this time'; 'I should reject it')

Indirect strategies

4. Statement of regret (e.g. 'I am sorry ...', 'I feel terrible ...', 'excuse me')
5. Wish (e.g. 'I wish I could help you ...')
6. Excuse, reason, explanation (e.g. 'My children will be home that night'; 'I have a headache')
7. Statement of alternative (e.g. 'I can buy it later')
8. (Set condition for) future or past acceptance (e.g. 'if you had asked me earlier, I would

have ...’; ‘I’ll come to see you, if I finish early’)

9. Promise of future acceptance (e.g. ‘I’ll do it next time’; ‘I promise I’ll ...’)

10. Statement of principle (e.g. ‘I never do business with friends’)

11. Threat or statement of negative consequence (e.g. ‘I won’t be any fun tonight’ to refuse an invitation)

12. Criticize the offer/suggestion (e.g. ‘That’s a terrible idea’)

13. Request for help, empathy or understanding (e.g. ‘Hope you understand my situation’)

14. Let interlocutor off the hook (e.g. ‘Don’t worry about it’; ‘That’s OK’)

15. Removal of negativity (e.g. ‘I know you always choose the best things’)

16. Return suggestion or invitation (e.g. ‘I suggest you take my food as well’)

17. Hesitation (e.g. ‘I don’t know if I’d like it or not’)

18. Request for information (e.g. ‘What other brands do you have?’)

19. Conditional acceptance ‘I accept provided that I pay the money back to you later’

20.4 Statement of positive opinion/feeling of agreement (e.g. ‘That is a good idea ...’; ‘I’d love to’, ‘You are right’)

21. Pause fillers (e.g. ‘well’, ‘uhh’, ‘uhhm’)

22. Gratitude, appreciation (e.g. ‘Thank you’)

23. Address term (e.g. ‘Mr’; ‘Professor’; ‘Darling’; ‘My dear friend’)

24. Other strategies

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# Arabic and English Phrasal Verbs in English Language News Articles: A case study of an American and a Saudi journalist

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**Abstract**

When second language learners study a target language, they tend to avoid complicated structures such as phrasal verbs, especially when they possess inadequate grammatical and lexical knowledge. As native English speakers often use phrasal verbs (combining a verb and an adverb to express a specific meaning) to enhance ideas because such verbs promote effective writing and speaking, understanding phrasal verbs can benefit English language learners. Some authors have asserted that Arabic English learners use fewer phrasal verbs than their American counterparts; thus, this research investigates whether Arabic journalists writing in English avoid phrasal verbs when composing English articles. The study included two participants: an American reporter and a Saudi reporter. By reviewing 10 English-language political news articles that the Saudi professional wrote for *Asharq Alawsat* and 10 similar style articles the American professional wrote for CNN, the researcher determined that the Arabic writer used phrasal verbs at only a slightly lower frequency than the American reporter. An analysis using

the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) also found no significant difference in the two writers' frequency of phrasal verb usage.

**Keywords**: *Phrasal verbs, English, ESL/EFL, avoidance, idiomatic*

## Introduction

People use languages to communicate, and many people extend their knowledge beyond their native tongue. When learning a new language, nonnative speakers consciously strategize to communicate effectively (Faerch & Kasper, 1980), making choices and selecting grammatical rules with which they feel comfortable while circumventing those they have not yet internalized (Tarone, 1980). The phrasal verb (PhV) exemplifies a lexical structure that English second language learners (L2s) tend to avoid. PhVs combine a verb and an adverb to generate a unique, often nontransparent, meaning (Rodríguez-Puente, 2016). The prevalence of PhVs in the Engish language, coupled with their distinctive structure and semantic usage, is challenging for English L2s (Liu & Myers, 2020). According to Dagut and Laufer (1985), the PhV structure engenders a peculiar characteristic of Germanic languages and occurs more in spoken than written language (El-Dakhs, 2016). English prepositional phrases are extremely idiomatic, particularly in PhVs (Quirk et al., 1985). As English native speakers are sometimes uncertain of the proper syntax of idiomatic expressions, English prepositions present a particular challenge for English L2s (Gethin, 1983). Hence, many scholars have illuminated the obstacles L2s from particular native languages encounter, including Turkish (Elyidirim, 2017), Egyptian (El-Dakhs, 2016), Thai (Kosolsombat & Pongpairoj, 2018), French (Gilquin, 2015), Dutch (Dagut & Laufer, 1985), Chinese (Wang, 2020), Hebrew (Dagut & Laufer, 1985), and Spanish (Morales, 2000).

Specifically, some researchers, such as Al-Otaib (2018), have claimed that Arabic learners of English face problems using PhVs due to the unique challenges idiomatic expressions pose. Consequently, the purpose of this research is to investigate whether native Arabic writers (L2s) penning news articles in English select fewer PhVs than native English writers (L1s). Writing was chosen as it exemplifies an essential communication skill (Alghammas & Alhuwaydi, The weaknesses of English writing skills among undergraduate Saudi students majoring in English at Qassim University: A perspective of English faculty, 2020). The study further compares two writers: a Saudi who composes political news articles for *Asharq Alawsat* and an American who writes political news articles for CNN.com. The researcher scrutinized 20 texts (i.e., 10 from each writer) and synthesized previous scholarly analysis regarding phrasal verbs.

## Literature Review

The verbiage “phrasal verb” has evoked controversy, as experts have viewed associating a verb with an adverb or a preposition in diverse ways, resulting in various definitions and terminology. Schachter (1974) noted that PhV epitomizes the most broadly accepted designation; other terms include a two-word verb (Taha, 1960), separable verb (Francis, 1958), and verb-particle combinations (Fraser, 1976). Taha’s (1960) proposed two-word verbs reflect the most misleading reference, as many three-word verbs entail a verb followed by a preposition and a particle (e.g., *put up with*). As phrase-verb is a common term used in reference materials, student grammar handbooks, and teaching materials (Rodríguez-Puente, 2016), this study will use the term phrasal verb.

Various experts have defined the phrasal verb syntactically and semantically. Syntactically, a phrasal verb encompasses a verb followed by a morphologically invariable particle (Hart, 2017). Thus, the pair function as a single grammatical unit (Hart, 2017). Linguistically, the PhV creates a unique meaning beyond the verb’s definition. When isolating the proper verb and particle, the reader cannot decode the phrase’s message because the verb and particle inextricably fuse into an inseparable verbal entity (Liu & Myers, 2020).

## Phrasal Verb Significance

Native English speakers commonly use PhVs because this verb structure serves as an all-encompassing, concise means to convey extensive thought, enabling people to communicate more effectively in fewer words (Artusi, 2020; Liu & Myers, 2020). For example, although the sentence “She thinks of them as inferior to herself” makes sense and is grammatically correct, it lacks the natural cadence of a native speaker; a more straightforward and efficient form of the same idea would be “She looks down upon them.” PhVs reflect a standard way of expression (Zareva, 2016). For instance, the PhVs “break into” (someone broke into the house), “put away” (put your toys away), and “fill up” (fill the bucket up with water) do not connote formality. Sometimes alternatives exist for a phrasal verb. The verb “rise” may be selected instead of the phrasal verb “get up” or “extract” instead of “pull out,” yet these single verbs do not evoke the informal nature inherent in their PhV counterparts (Garnier & Schmitt, 2015). Therefore, learning PhVs remains paramount when mastering a language, especially for Arabic students studying English.

### Importance of Phrasal Verbs to English Learners

The control over language learning ranges from the government to the family and the individual. Legislatures control the curriculum while families and people control what they want to learn (Alharthi, 2020b). According to Liu and Myers (2020), phrasal verbs constitute informal discourse and, thus, are often not integrated into the L2 curriculum. Arabic language teachers focus on syntax more than semantics, ineffectively instruct, and remain reluctant to teach writing (Alghammas & Alhuwaydi, The weaknesses of English writing skills among undergraduate Saudi students majoring in English at Qassim University: A perspective of English faculty, 2020). However, learners gaining familiarity with English language articles need to recognize PhVs (Deshors, 2016). The average English language learner (ELL) prioritizes idiomatic expressions less because they tend to master formal syntax first (Garnier & Schmitt, 2016; Mahmoud, 2015). As PhVs are ingrained language, using PhVs distinguishes a speaker as an acculturated language communicator.

PhVs often cannot be summarized with a single word. For example, the phrasal verbs “knock out” (make unconscious) or “wear out” (make unusable) do not have one-word equivalents. Attempting to express a sentence such as “With a screech of the brakes, he drove up in a red sports car” without using phrasal verbs would sound unnatural in English (e.g., With a screech of the brakes, he arrived and stopped in a red sports car). Without using the PhV “drove up,” the sentence communicates diminished authenticity.

### Phrasal Verbs as Obstacles

Although Dutch, Swedish, Norwegian, and Danish speakers use PhVs similar to English, Turkish, Chinese, and Hebrew do not contain PhVs (Yildiz, 2016). Hence, for nonnative L2s, English remains a demanding language to grasp, primarily due to the prominence of PhVs, which complicate translation. Fundamentally, two or more orthographic elements obfuscate single entity recognition (Hart, 2017). Students unfamiliar with PhVs dissect them into components and assign literary meanings to decode the PhV—a technique that often proves unsuccessful (Alangari et al., 2020). After learning and storing verb contexts, students must retrieve these pieces as a cohesive entity, yet this process has proven quite challenging without comprehensive training, practice, and instruction (Elyidirim, 2017).

Goldberg (2016) demonstrated that single-word equivalents of PhVs often alter their meaning. For example, the phrasal verb “hand over” and its formal one-word counterpart “surrender” are not entirely synonymous. Moreover, PhVs often engender a meaning entirely distinct from their single-word counterparts. When one says “break a leg,” it does not literally mean the speaker wishes harm on the listener; indeed, this verbiage expresses the opposite, conveying a wish of good luck. PhVs manifest in a corpus, where the collocation environment or semantics inextricably bind the words. Thus, their inherent meanings render the two phrases not interchangeable, meaning they do not reflect synonymous expressions. ELLs encounter trouble deciphering PhVs because PhVs engender an idiomatic meaning (Thyab, 2019). According to Artusi (2020), deciphering such a complex entity does not produce a straightforward translation.

**Avoidance Phenomenon**

As L2s confront issues when using PhVs, they tend to select the grammatical structures with which they feel more comfortable, circumventing or avoiding those they have not mastered. Tarone (1980) defined avoidance as a communication strategy adopted to unite L2 linguistic knowledge using the dialectal skills of the subject language interlocutor in actual communication. Avoidance involves passively evading a structure (Kosolsombat & Pongpairoj, 2018; Wang, 2020). According to El-Dakhs (2016), communicators choose to use or not use specific linguistic features.

If an L2 has difficulty with a particular foreign language construction, the nonnative speaker will avoid using it (Elyidirim, 2017). Alkhudiry and Al-Ahdal (2020) demonstrated that Saudi EFL learners struggled with subject–verb agreement, used the incorrect verb form, and included superfluous prepositions when writing in English. However, Liao and Fukuya (2004) contended that researchers should take into account L2 proficiency. Liao and Fukuya (2004) argued that, if students are not aware of a syntax, their lack of knowledge would skew the results. Basically, if learners do not know that a language element exists, they cannot use it; hence, aptitude significantly affects usage. Kleinmann (1977) tested conceptual familiarity with such a sentence framework and application in the respective native languages to ascertain if the individual understood the sentence constructions, concluding that the avoidance rate was similar to the disparity in sentence structure aptitude. Likewise, affective measures (confidence, anxiety) impact the frequency of use. Contrast analysis (CA) helps unmask avoidance, intertwining linguistic and psychological variables affecting L2s' efforts to evade structures. ELLs' emotional states cause them to dodge frameworks sporadically (Kleinmann, 1977).

**English Phrasal Verb Avoidance**

L2s need to recognize distasteful subjects and their proper use. A transgression can embarrass the novice speaker (Alharthi, 2020a), and such uneasiness may cause the individual to avoid certain language. Dutch learners did not avoid PhVs, but were careful not to use PhVs resembling the structure of Dutch PhVs (Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989). This evasion did not occur due to the structural disparities in the language, but rather from language similarities. Second, the learners favored safe one-word verbs with broad connotations over PhVs with precise, idiomatic significances (Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989).

Dagut and Laufer (1985) studied the English PhVs that Hebrew native speakers used. They identified 15 phrasal verbs that L1s chose over semantically comparable single words. For example, the native speakers selected the phrase “let down” over the word “disappoint” in the sentence “We didn’t believe that John could ever ____ his friends” (p. 74). Various tests have been used to monitor PhV habits employed in place of a single-word verb to check the PhV usage of native Hebrew-speaking ELLs. Most learners preferred one-word verbs. As no PhV corresponded to the particular word in Hebrew, learners circumvented phrases they could not decipher (Dagut & Laufer, 1985). Native Arabic English learners as L2s followed a similar design; their native languages lack PhVs, so they more frequently selected single-word verbs.

Überlingen (2007) compared intermediate and advanced Hebrew and Dutch learners’ PhV usage, unveiling PhV avoidance amongst intermediate Dutch and Hebrew students. Uchida (2012) corroborated this assertion when he demonstrated that Japanese L2s used more PhVs as their proficiency progressed. The ELLs recurrently chose literal phrasal verbs and completive PhVs, whereas they did not routinely select figurative PhVs. The results indicated avoidance because of semantic complexities, substantiating Hulstijn and Marchena’s (1989) findings. When comparing phrasal and straightforward verbs, intermediate Dutch English L2s chose the latter with a more general meaning, sidestepping PhVs with a specific or idiomatic connotation.

Liao and Fukuya (2004) researched PhV avoidance when they studied intermediate and advanced Chinese L2s. In contrast to the British PhVs used in Hulstijn and Marchena’s (1989), Liao and Fukuya (2004) studied native American English speakers. The PhVs examined their study included colloquial, informal connotations that the L2s perceived as formal and lengthy.

While exploring the issues L2s face, Siyanova and Schmitt (2007) analyzed the probable situations in which both native speakers and advanced nonnative speakers would choose either one-word verbs or PhVs. The results from the questionnaire showed that native speakers, compared to nonnative speakers, more prevalently selected PhVs in casual speaking.

Furthermore, exposure to native discourse did not influence. Native speakers exhibited a greater preference for using PhVs whereas the nonnative speakers tended to prefer one-word verbs. The nonnative English speakers demonstrated a readiness to choose PhVs, but the eagerness to pick them paled in comparison to the native speakers. Ben Duhaish (2008) found that 36.98% of the 129 ESL/EFL learners in the study incorporated PhVs, 60.90% used single-word verbs, and 2.12% provided incorrect or no answers. Tahaineh (2010) observed how Arabic students circumvented phrasal verbs when writing. Nonnative English speakers often avoid PhVs when learning English as a second language due to the semantic and syntactic linguistic structure complexities.

**Reasons for Avoiding Phrasal Verbs**

According to Dagut and Laufer (1985), the grammatical structural differences between L1 and L2 influences learner PhV avoidance. Dutch L2s avoided using figurative PhVs with literal Dutch counterparts (Hulstijn & Marchena, 1989). The researchers deduced that the L1–L2 similarities triggered avoidance. Laufer and Eliasson (1993) found that Swedish learners did not avoid idiomatic expressions with their counterparts in Swedish. The Dutch and Swedish studies, which included languages containing PhVs, revealed avoidance disparities.

Liao and Fukuya (2004) proposed that evasion stemmed from L1–L2 structural gaps, posing PhV semantic difficulties when they explored Chinese, which does not contain PhVs. Intermediate Chinese learners avoided PhVs, particularly idiomatic expressions. Conversely, advanced L2s did not avoid PhVs. In addition, with interlanguage development, when a learner creates a language between the target language and his/her native language, the L2 might shift from avoidance to nonavoidance, as Ben Duhaish (2008) noted. Gaston (2004) explored the presence of PhVs in the Spanish language, examining native Spanish speakers. He concluded that L2s learning Spanish avoided PhVs, primarily due to semantic factors, such as idiomaticity and low proficiency.

Arabic is distinctly different from Indo-European languages generally and Germanic languages specifically; thus, an Arabic speaker finds those languages structurally and idiomatically challenging to learn and use. PhVs pose a challenge for these learners, thereby prompting avoidance. Schachter (1974) revealed Arabic respondents preferred relative clauses. Meanwhile, Blum and Levenston (1977) discussed learner avoidance due to not feeling comfortable with structures that cannot be translated in writing and speech, resulting in verb avoidance.

The present study uniquely targets an Arabic writer using PhVs. As few experts have delved into the ramifications of L2 journalist avoidance, this study aims to address this gap by examining Arabic Engish L2 journalists' PhV avoidance.

**Study Significance**

As Arabic typifies a non-Germanic language, Arabic learners encounter problems with Germanic language structures (Al-Otaibi, 2018). PhVs exemplify such structures. Avoidance scholars have failed to incorporate Arabic ELL PhV avoidance in their studies. Indeed, the present study is significant because no previous scholars have investigated whether Arabic professional English reporters sidestep PhVs.

**Research Questions**

Avoidance will be examined in the context of written English, with the goal of answering the following questions.

1. Does the Arabic professional writer who composes in English use *fewer* phrasal verbs than the professional native English writer?
2. Does phrasal verb usage differ between professional native English and Arabic writers? Furthermore, does this difference distinguish between the two groups?

**Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses will be tested to help answer the research questions:

1. Arabic professional writers who compose in English do not use fewer phrasal verbs than professional native English writers.
2. No difference exists between professional native English and Arab writers regarding their choice of phrasal verbs, and the writing style does not distinguish between the two writers.

**Methodology**

Previous researchers, such as Klienmann (1977), Chiang (1980), and Dagut and Laufer (1985), have proposed that Arabic L2s avoid PhVs because of the difficulty they encounter in comprehending the complicated idiomatic expressions. These experts supported Schachter's (1974) finding that L2s evade PhVs due to the problems they encounter when using them.

As this paper investigates whether Arabic learners of English use fewer PhVs than English writers, this researcher compared two texts from two writers. After reviewing American and

Saudi news media (i.e., *Saudi Gazette*, *Arab News*, *Asharq Alawsat*, the *New York Post*, the *Daily Times*, and CNN), the researcher chose one writer from a Saudi newspaper and another from CNN. After collecting 10 articles from a professional Saudi writer who produces political articles in English and another 10 from an American professional writer from CNN, the researcher analyzed the data using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

**Participants**

The two participants were professional writers. Peter Hamby has been a political reporter for CNN since 2005. Mshari al-Zaydi is Saudi journalist who has been *Asharq al-Awsat*'s opinion page editor since 2005.

**Descriptive Statistics**

The 20 articles analyzed ranged in length from 400 to 800 words. PhVs were extracted and evaluated using SPSS. A frequencies procedure was calculated on the observational data collected from the articles, splitting the data into two groups: the Saudi and the American writer. The following tables and graphs offer an SPSS descriptive analysis derived from the frequencies procedure. Table 1 indicates the frequency of PhVs used per article. The two bar charts represent the total PhVs each writer used and the number of PhVs used in each article.

Table1

*Frequency of Phrasal Verb Use*

**Number of Phrasal Verbs**

| | **Writer** | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Mshari Al-Zaydi (Saudi)** | | | | **Peter Hamby (American)** | | | |
| **Total Number of Phrasal Verbs used** | **Number of Articles** | **Percent of Articles** | **Valid Percent of Articles** | **Cumulative Percent of Articles** | **Number of Articles** | **Percent of Articles** | **Valid Percent of Articles** | **Cumulative Percent of Articles** |
| 0 | 5 | 50.0 | 50.0 | 50.0 | 4 | 40.0 | 40.0 | 40.0 |
| 1 | 2 | 20.0 | 20.0 | 70.0 | 1 | 10.0 | 10.0 | 50.0 |
| 2 | 2 | 20.0 | 20.0 | 90.0 | 3 | 30.0 | 30.0 | 80.0 |
| 3 | | | | | 2 | 20.0 | 20.0 | 100.0 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 1 | 10.0 | 10.0 | 100.0 | | | |
| Total | 10 | 100.0 | 100.0 | | 10 | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Figure 1 plots the PhVs used in an article on the *x*-axis and the number of articles on the *y*-axis. The professional American writer more prevalently used PhVs than the professional Saudi author. However, this assessment does not imply statistical significance until a statistical test is performed.

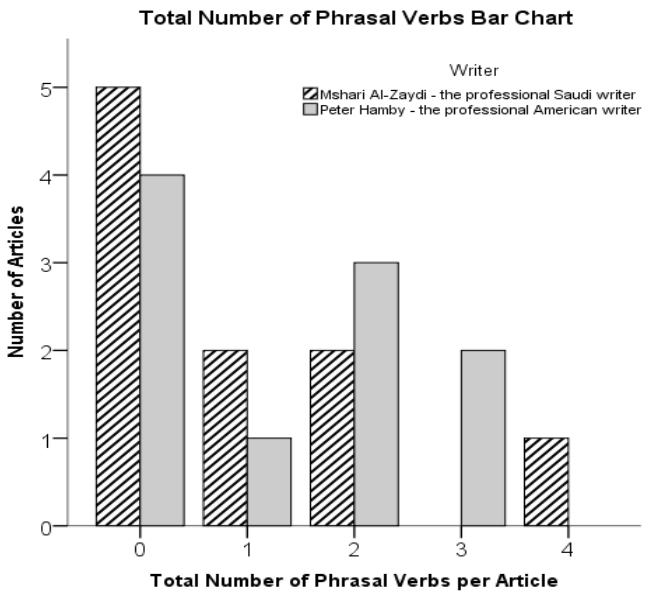


*Figure 1 Total Phrasal Verbs*

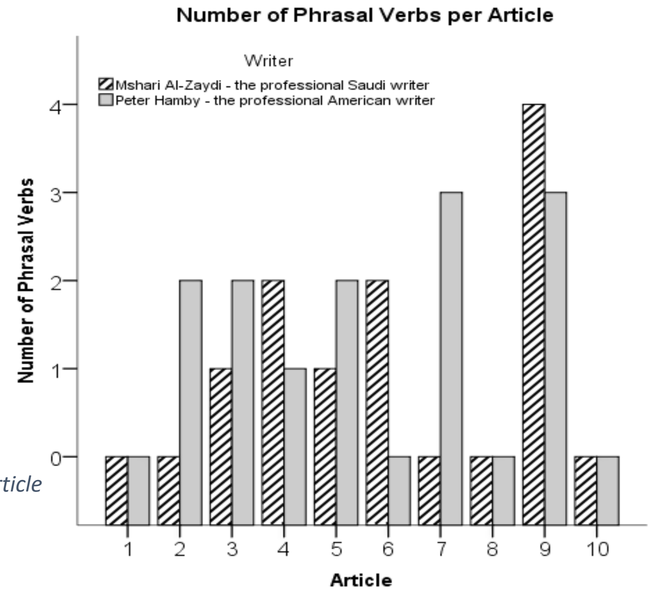


*Figure 2 Phrasal verbs per article*

Figure 2 presents how each writer uses PhVs across articles. Neither writer used PhVs in articles 1 or 8, and only the American author employed PhVs in articles 2 and 7. In articles 3 and 5, the American reporter used more PhVs than the Saudi journalist. In articles 4 and 9, the Saudi author used more PhVs than the American journalist. In article 6, only the Saudi reporter used PhVs.

Table 1

*Number of Phrasal Verbs per Article*

| | **Writer** | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Mshari Al-Zaydi (Saudi)** | **Peter Hamby (American)** |
| Number of Cases | 10 | 10 |
| Mean | 1.0000 | 1.3000 |
| Median | .5000 | 1.5000 |
| Mode | .00 | .00 |
| Std. Deviation | 1.33333 | 1.25167 |
| Minimum | .00 | .00 |
| Maximum | 4.00 | 3.00 |

Table 2 illustrates the basic statistics for each writer concerning the number of PhVs used in the 10 articles. The mean number of PhVs each writer included was equal; however, the variability in the number of PhVs the professional Saudi author used was slightly higher than that of the professional American reporter.

**Hypothesis Testing**

***Hypothesis 1: Arabic professional writers who write in English do not use fewer phrasal verbs than professional native English writers.***

This hypothesis unfolds statistically as follows:

$H_0$: The average number of phrasal verbs the professional Saudi writer used does not significantly differ from the average number of phrasal verbs the professional American writer used.

$H_1$: The average number of phrasal verbs the professional Saudi writer used significantly differs from the average number of phrasal verbs the professional American writer used.

To test this hypothesis, generally a two-independent samples *t*-test would be performed. However, with a sample size less than 30, it was too small; therefore, the two-independent-sample Mann-Whitney test represents the appropriate alternative nonparametric test. The independent-samples Mann-Whitney test compares means for two groups—in this case, the mean number of PhVs the two writers used. The Mann-Whitney test compares differences between two independent groups when the dependent variable is either ordinal or continuous, but not normally distributed. As the sample size was minimal, the normality assumption cannot be supported.

Table 2

*Two-Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney Test*

**Ranks**

| | Writer | N | Mean Rank | Sum of Ranks |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number of Phrasal Verbs | Mshari Al-Zaydi (Saudi) | 10 | 9.70 | 97.00 |
| | Peter Hamby (American) | 10 | 11.30 | 113.00 |
| | Total | 20 | | |

Table 3 indicates the mean rank and sum of ranks for the two writers tested. The writer with the highest mean rank is the one who used more PhVs. In this case, the professional American journalist used the most PhVs.

Table 3

*Test Statistics*

| | Number of Phrasal Verbs |
|---|---|
| Mann-Whitney U | 42.000 |
| Wilcoxon W | 97.000 |
| Z | -.641 |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | .522 |
| Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)] | .579[b] |

*Notes.* a. Grouping Variable: Writer

b. Not corrected for ties.

Table 4 shows the actual test significance. Specifically, it provides the test statistic, U value, as well as the asymptotic significance (2-tailed) p-value. The average PhVs the professional Saudi reporter penned did not significantly differ from the average PhVs the professional American writer composed ($U = 42$, $p = .522$). Therefore, the hypothesis asserting that the average PhVs the professional Saudi writer used would not significantly differ from the average PhVs the professional American writer used was supported.

***Hypothesis 2: No difference exists between the professional native English and Arabic writers, and the writing style does not distinguish between the two groups.***

This hypothesis unfolds statistically as follows:

$H_0$: The average number of phrasal verbs the professional Saudi writer used does not significantly differ from the average number of phrasal verbs the professional American writer used across articles.

$H_1$: The average number of phrasal verbs the professional Saudi writer used significantly differs from the average number of phrasal verbs the professional American writer used across articles.

To test this hypothesis, the GLM Univariate Analysis of Variance (GLM) was performed. GLM encompasses regression analysis, examining variance for one dependent variable (number of phrasal verbs) and one or more variables (writers). The independent variables create two sample populations (professional Saudi and professional American writers). GLM's null hypotheses test the effects of variables (writers) on the group means of a single dependent variable (Kurthen & Heisler, 2009). In addition, the effects of covariates (writing style or articles) and covariate interactions with factors can be included.

Table 4

*Univariate Analysis of Variance*

**Tests of Between-Subjects Effects**

Dependent Variable: Number of Phrasal Verbs

| Source | Type III Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Corrected Model | 20.500[a] | 10 | 2.050 | 1.836 | .187 |
| Intercept | .980 | 1 | .980 | .878 | .373 |
| Writer | .450 | 1 | .450 | .403 | .541 |
| Article | 20.050 | 9 | 2.228 | 1.995 | .159 |
| Error | 10.050 | 9 | 1.117 | | |
| Total | 57.000 | 20 | | | |
| Corrected Total | 30.550 | 19 | | | |

*Notes.* a. R Squared = .671 (Adjusted R Squared = .306)

Table 5 displays the Analysis of Variance. Every term in the model, plus the model as a whole, was verified for its ability to account for the difference in the reliance on adjustable data. The significance value for each term exceeded .05. Therefore, each term was not statistically significant and, hence, no statistically significant difference existed between the two writers concerning the average PhVs they used across each of their 10 articles. In addition, no differences in the writers' writing styles were identified.

## Discussion

The Arabic language structurally differs from the English language, diverging in writing style as well as structure and syntax. The Arabic language typifies a non-Indo-European, non-Germanic language, and Arabic learners of English may face difficulties when either speaking or writing in Germanic languages. One significant difficulty Arabic learners of English encounter encompasses using PhVs. According to Rodríguez-Puente (2016), the L2 cannot decipher the verb and participle separately to guess the lexical description of a PhV.

This researcher hypothesized that Arabic learners of English would not use PhVs in writing as often as native English writers. The findings of the study revealed the Saudi writer did not avoid using PhVs and further suggested that no significant differences between the native Arabic and English writers existed. These findings confirmed the hypothesis. One likely explanation for such an outcome is that the Saudi journalist possessed adequate, considerable, and profound experience in English writing. Al-Otaibi (2018) substantiated that advanced Arabic learners of English do not avoid idiomatic (figurative) PhVs. However, his findings diverged from those of Dagut and Laufer (1985), Hulstijn and Marchena (1989), Laufer and Eliasson (1993), Liao and Fukuya (2004), and Gaston (2004).

While tabulating the PhVs in the texts, the researcher encountered some minor challenges. As the researcher is not a native English speaker, he experienced particular problems in determining whether or not certain compound words in the articles comprised PhVs. The researcher had to refer to various dictionaries to ensure the selected words represented PhVs. Another problem encountered was that most standard dictionaries do not extensively list PhVs; therefore, the researcher had to search through many online dictionaries to validate the PhVs.

The PhV phenomenon presents an emerging field for investigating L2 obstacles (Zarifi & Mukundan, 2019). Moreover, as this study confirmed the null hypothesis, the researcher would like to conduct another PhV study investigating other PhVs topics, such as the determination of the most used PhVs and the most avoided PhVs. In addition, the researcher would like to explore the best ways to teach PhV usage and how to incorporate them into pedagogical approaches. In the future, the researcher aspires to work closely with L2 students to uncover the peculiar challenges of mastering PhVs.

## Limitations and Recommendations for Further Study

This study faced several limitations. This section includes some recommendations for further research.

This study included only two writers and a few writing samples. Larger samples could yield more accurate data and results. In addition, this study examined two male writers. Different genders could reveal differences in using phrasal verbs between males and females or other Arabic writers from different countries. The selected articles came from two news publications. Different participants from several publications might generate varying results. The selected article topics were government-related. Choosing different text genres could yield different results.

Finally, the study participants were professional writers who write for English news media. Investigating Arabic graduate students' phrasal verb usage versus that of native English graduate students could reveal new insights.

## Conclusion

This research paper explored whether Arabic learners of English used fewer PhVs than their English counterparts. A collection of 20 texts—10 each by an American and a Saudi writer—was collected and evaluated, revealing that the Arabic writer used slightly fewer PhVs than the American writer. However, a statistical analysis of the results indicated no significant difference in PhV frequency or usage between the two journalists. Nonetheless, phrasal verbs and their use remain crucial for L2 mastery as such verbs pose a challenge to nonnative speakers.

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# Locating Departure from *Standard* English: A Comparison of Periodized Data of Pakistani Press Editorials with British Press Editorials

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**Abstract**

This paper compares the patterns of change in Pakistani press editorials over a period of time in relation to the British press editorials. The objective of this exploratory research is to study which phase – soon after independence from British colonisation, after two decades as an independent country or the recent times of globalisation, capitalism, cultural imperialism and other instruments of neo-imperialism – resembles to or differs from British press editorials. To achieve this objective, Biber's Multi-dimensional (MD) model was used. Biber (1991) shows that different grammatical categories occur in the first 200 words and very few grammatical categories occur after 600 words. The corpus used for this study consists of 120 (153,450 words) Pakistani press editorials in English from three phases: 1947-1951, 1971-1975, 2012-2016. The periodized data from Pakistani press editorials was compared with MD results of British press editorials drawn by Biber (1988) in his seminal study. Biber's tagger was used to tag data. Regression method was used for the computation of dimension scores. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to find out the differences and similarities between the editorials from three phases and British press editorials. The dimension score analysis shows that, through the 20$^{th}$ century, Pakistani newspaper editorials became less informational, non-narrative, explicit and overt and more impersonal. Furthermore, Phase 3 of Pakistani press editorials has been found the closest to that of Britain press editorials in producing informational, non-narrative and explicit discourse. In phase 1 and 2, Pakistani press editorials came closer to those of the British in producing abstract discourse and overt expression of persuasion respectively. The findings will contribute to the area of research concerning English language teaching and learning for specific purposes.

**Keywords:** *Linguistic variation, Multi-dimensional (MD) modal, Register analysis, World Englishes*

## Introduction

Pakistani English was initially recognised as a separate variety of English by researchers like Baumgardner (1993) and Rahman (1990) who focussed on individual linguistic features. Later, with register coming into prominence as a major predictor of linguistic variation (Atkinson & Biber, 1994), various studies explored many registers to establish it as a separate/ independent variety of English. These studies on various registers range from academic to fiction to internet register.

In recent years, Pakistani press register has become the focus of attention for many researchers. They analyzed newspaper language through multidimensional perspective (e.g., Shakir & Deuber, 2018, 2019; Asghar, Mahmood & Asghar, 2018; Alvi, Mehmood & Rasool., 2016; Shakir, 2013, etc). Further, the study of diachronic variations in languages from around the world has also been a well-established research area. For instance, Hyland and Jiang (2016), Laine and Watson (2014), Westin (2002), and Westin and Geisler (2003), conducted diachronic studies on newspaper language. There are some diachronic studies (Ali, 2018; Ali, Ali & Ahmad, 2018; Ali & Sheeraz, 2018) on Pakistani editorials as well. Language is a changing phenomenon as the process of indigenisation continues. In order to trace this process of indigenisation and pattern of change, there is a need to compare the development of this localised variety of English through different phases with British English. This study is an attempt to fill this gap. It attempts to study which phase – soon after independence from British colonisation, after two decades as an independent country or the recent times of globalisation, capitalism, cultural imperialism and other instruments of neo-imperialism – resembles to or differs from British press editorials.

For this purpose, the present study compares the periodized data from Pakistani press editorials with the results, pertaining to British press editorials, drawn by Biber (1988) in his study. The corpus used for this study consists of 120 Pakistani press editorials in English from three phases: 1947-1951, 1971-1975, 2012-2016 (for details see table 1). The study uses Biber's (1988) Multi-dimensional approach as a framework to analyze the three phases of press editorials from Pakistan in comparison with British press editorials and arrive at a more thorough understanding of the patterns of change in Pakistani press editorials over a period of time in relation to British press editorials.

## Literature Review

English language has developed considerably in Pakistan and it has been a major factor in linking her with the world. Pakistani English is an established language as this variety fulfils the criteria presented by Platt, Weber,& Lian,(1984) for being declared a new English. According to them, new English should be used as a mode of instruction and preferred as a subject in educational institutes, developed as a non-native variety, used as a lingua franca and localized in terms of expressions and form.

Various approaches were applied in research projects throughout the world. Cruz (2018), for example, uses descriptive approach to analyse the function of code-switching. Pantaleon (2018) conducted a corpus-based analysis to find the usage of “for example” and “for instance”. Moreover, Reyes, De Vera, & Medriano (2018), Bursztejn, et al. 2011; N.Tran, T.Tran & Bien, 2020), by using a computerized concordance program developed the course materials for students.

Pakistani English has been studied impressionistically by a number of scholars. In his approach, Baumgardner (1993) thoroughly explored the impact of Urdu language on English language at the lexical level. Moreover, Talaat (2002), in her study, thoroughly investigated the impact of Urdu language on Pakistani English on the basis of text analysis. Rahman (1990) also observes that Pakistani English uses progressive aspect extensively with action that is complete and habitual.

Some researchers also made corpus-based studies in order to investigate how Pakistani English was a distinct variety. R. Mahmood (2009) and A. Mahmood (2009) applied empirical approach in order to observe unusual aspects of Pakistani English being an independent variable. Though corpus linguistics provided a new impetus to studying the language(s), prime focus of most of the studies remained peculiarities to claim English spoken and written in Pakistan as a separate variety. Biber (1988) studied spoken and written language and introduced a more comprehensive corpus-based multidimensional/multivariate approach that investigates for the co-occurrence of linguistic features in detail. He criticizes that it is unjustified to make a study of linguistic variation by focusing on individual linguistic aspects and disregarding the co-occurring linguistic aspects. Multi-dimensional model, however, has been used by the researchers on very later stages to study English used in Pakistani. Aleem’s (2013) study was the pioneering study in Pakistan that analysed Pakistani press media from Multi-dimensional perspective. He investigated linguistic variation in Pakistani advertisement register by using Biber’s (1988) Multi-dimensional modal. Researchers (like; Ali, 2018; Alvi et al., 2016; Asghar et al., 2018; Shakir & Deuber, 2018, 2019 ) studied Pakistani English using Biber’s (1988, 2006) multi-dimensional modal.

The study of diachronic variations in languages around the world has been a well-established research area. Some studies have also been carried out to analyze the differences between registers diachronically. For instance, Laine and Watson (2014) conducted a diachronic study, covering five decades from 1965-2005, to investigate linguistic sexism in the language of *The Time*. While, Hyland and Jiang (2016) also conducted a diachronic study exploring the changes in engagement features in academic texts over past 50 years, Saily (2014) studied sociolinguistic variation from Early Modern English to Present-day English. Apart from these studies, Burt and Bauer (1996), Westin and Geisler (2003) and Westin's (2002) studied the grammatical changes of newspapers editorials over time.

As far as Pakistani press editorials are concerned, Alvi et al. (2016) conducted a synchronic study on newspaper editorials. Ali et al. (2018) conducted a comparison between diachronic data of press editorials with the results of the synchronic study by Alvi et al. Likewise, Ali and Sheeraz (2018) analyze linguistic variation among the periodized data of Pakistani press editorials and their sub-categories using Biber's (1988) modal. However, to trace the process of indigenisation and pattern of change, there is a need to compare linguistic variation which occurred in English used in Pakistan since her inception with British English. So, this study is an attempt to trace/ observe the patterns of change in Pakistani press editorials over a period of time in relation to British press editorials.

## Methodology and Framework

### *Data collection and corpus*

The corpus of Pakistani press editorials in English consists of 120 text files (153,450 words). The investigation is based on four Pakistani English newspapers, i.e., *Dawn*, *Business Recorder*, *The News* and *The Nation*, from three temporally distanced phases: 1947-1951, 1971-1975, and 2011-2016 (for details see table 1). In order to draw comparison between Pakistani press editorials from the three selected phases and British press editorials, this study uses the results of Biber's (1988) in which he used texts from the LOB and the London-Lund corpus.

Table 1. Text sample and word counts in press editorial corpus

| Time Period | Dawn | Business Recorder | The News | The Nation | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Period 1: (1947-1951)** | (35135) | | | | 40 (35135) |
| **Period 2: (1971-1975)** | (30785) | (27963) | | | 40 (58748) |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Period 3: (2012-2016)** | (11509) | (20834) | (14665) | (12559) | 40 (59567) |
| Total number of samples: | | | | | 120 |
| Total word count: | | | | | (153,450) |

*Word counts are in parenthesis

The present study is a corpus-based comparative study of Pakistani English and British newspaper editorials. It uses quantitative approach for computation of linguistic features and dimensions. However, the results obtained are accompanied by qualitative interpretation also to discuss the communicative function of the dimensions.

### *Overview of Procedure*

First of all, each text file of Pakistani press editorial was tagged using Biber's tagger. As the text length varied considerably from 700-1200 and comparison of non-normalized counts might lead to incorrect results, the text files were transformed into normalized scores/ frequencies to per 1,000 words. The regression method was used for the computation of dimension scores. The sets of co-occurring features are already established by Biber (see Appendix I for details). The last step of analysis was to find out the differences and similarities between the editorials from three phases and British press editorials. For this purpose, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed.

### Theoretical framework

Biber's (1988) Multi-dimensional modal was used as a framework for this study (For details see appendix I). It is a more comprehensive approach that uses multivariate statistical techniques to study the linguistic variation across language varieties. According to Helt (2014), 'MD analysis is a viable tool for describing the linguistic differences among sub-registers, or conversation types, within a single dialect as well as between dialects…" (p. 172). So, this modal was regarded appropriate for tracing the patterns of change in Pakistani press editorials over a period of time in relation to British press editorials in detail.

### Analysis

This section presents a quantitative and functional interpretation of the results of three phases of Pakistani press editorials in comparison with British press editorials on Biber's (1988) textual dimensions. Dimension 1 is labelled as Involved vs. Informational discourse by Biber

(1988). Figure 1 compares the three phases of Pakistani press editorials with the results from Biber's study of British press editorials on dimension 1. On D1, both the registers have been found producing informational discourse, but Pakistani press editorials produce highly informational discourse in all the three phases. Phase 1 of Pakistani press editorials, with mean value of (-18.93), produces the highest informational discourse and British press editorial with mean value of (10.0), produces the lowest informational discourse. Phase 2 with mean score of (-15.66) is slightly less informational than phase 1. When editorials of the three phases of Pakistan are compared to those of Britain, phase 3, with mean score of (-13.59), has been found the closest to British newspaper editorials in producing informational discourse on dimension 1. Linguistic features like nouns, attributive adjectives and preposition together perform a function of producing informational discourse.

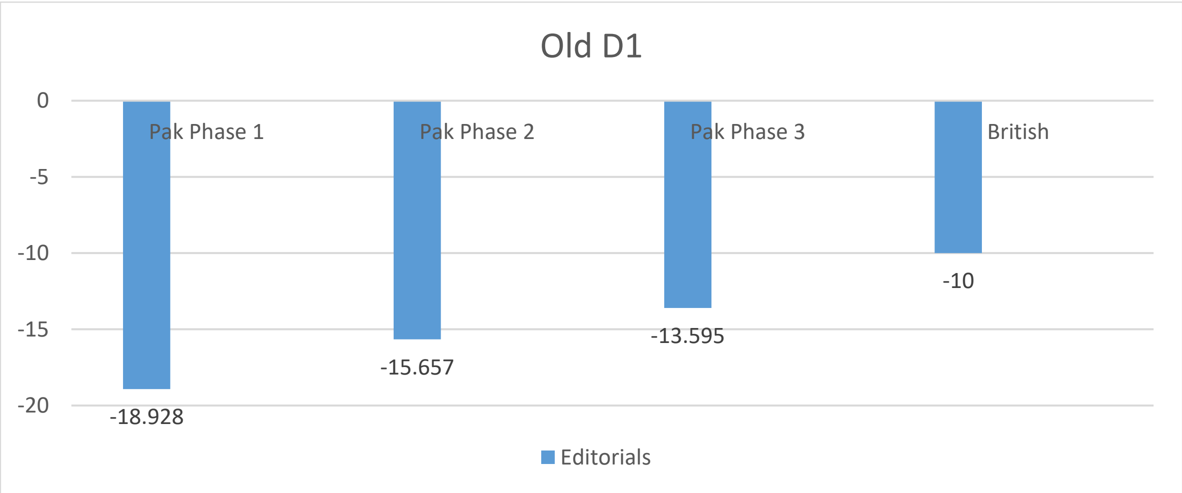


Fig 1 *Comparison of three phases of Pakistani press editorials with British press editorials on D1*

The following example is taken from phase 1 of Pakistani newspaper, *Dawn*. The words, in bold, are the example of the linguistic features that produce informational discourse. In the following example, nouns like *night, Laila, eye, faith, night, nightmare, Indian, Islamic, history, caravan, Iqbal, dream* and *destiny* and preposition like *on* and *in* produce informational discourse. Likewise, attributive adjectives, *strange coincidence, pure deliverance, eye of faith, serene night, Islamic history, eternal Caravan of Iqbal's fondest dreams* and *the joyous highroad of destiny* enhance the presence of informational discourse.

> It is **no strange coincidence** that **pure deliverance** should, have come **on the holiest night of a**, **on Laila,** add itself, and those who have the **eye of faith** can see the **Divinity** that shapes **our ends** rough he them how we or others would**. On that serene night** need the **saddest nightmare in** the Indian chapter of **Islamic history**, which began **in**

185, and this first free Id sees the **eternal Caravan of Iqbal's fondest dreams** surely and steadily **on** the **joyous highroad** of **destiny**. (ED.PH1.DN)

The following example is taken from editorials of phase 2 of Pakistani newspaper, *Dawn.* Linguistic features like nouns (*landlords, Sherpao, peace, prosperity, proposal, agricultural, province, governor, conference, mazdoor, kissan, leader, Afzal Bangash, government, solution, program, party* and *poor*), prepositions (*in* and *on*) and attributive adjectives (*problem of the tenants, peace and prosperity, concrete proposals about agricultural reforms in Frontier Province in the Governor conference* and *conditions to sabotage the program*) together perform the function of producing informational discourse in Pakistani press editorials.

The **problem of the tenants** and the **landlords** will thus shortly be solved. Sherpao said adding that soon there will be **peace and prosperity**. He disclosed, he submitted some **concrete proposals about agricultural reforms in Frontier Province in the Governor conference**- He declined to elaborate **on** the **matter**. Asked about the release of **the Mazdoor Kissan Party leader Afzal Ban gash**, the **Governor** said his was being studied by the **Government** as it was “different" from other cases but soon **a peaceful solution** will be found. **Sherpao** disclosed **people** were trying to create **conditions to sabotage the program** launched by party to better the **lot of the poor**.” We know who those people are and we shall not tolerate their **activities** any more, he warned. Questioned whether he feared **involvement of political parties also in** such **activities**, Sherpao said “no”. (ED,PH.2.DN)

Biber (1988) named dimension 2 as Narrative vs. Non-narrative concerns. In his study there was no linguistic feature on the negative polarity of this dimension. But the results of the present study show that linguistic features like present tense verbs, pronoun it and place adverbials together produce non-narrative discourse. On D2, both Pakistani and British press editorials produce non-narrative discourse. Phase 2 with mean value of (-1.38) and phase 3 with mean value of (-1.11) are more non-narrative than British press editorials having mean value of (-0.8). Phase 1, with mean value of (-0.49), is quite close to British newspaper editorial in producing non-narrative discourse.

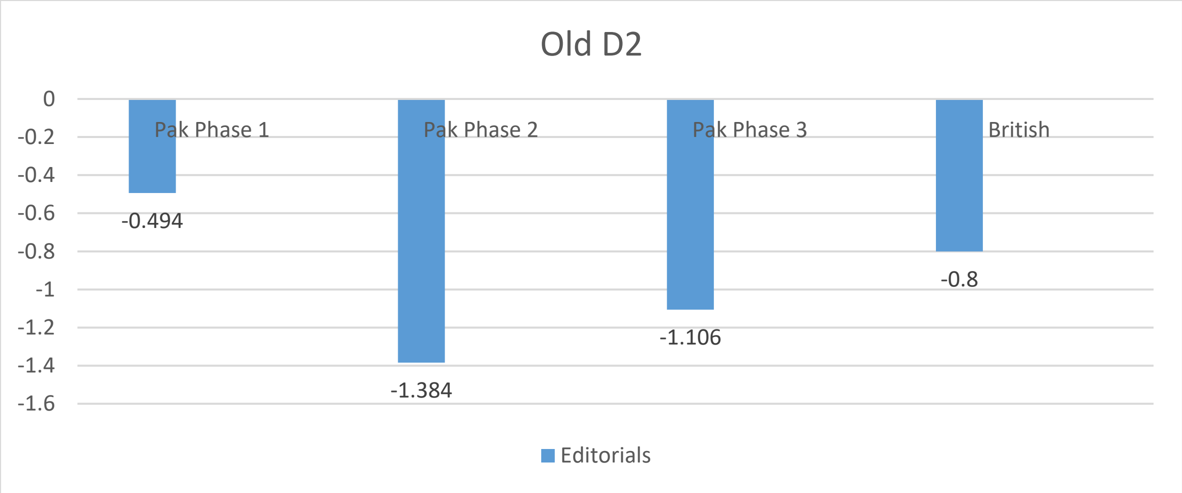


Fig 2 *Comparison of three phases of Pakistani press editorials with British press editorials on D2*

In the following example, the bold words are the linguistic features that produce non-narrative discourse. It is taken from a Pakistani newspaper, *Business Recorder* from phase 2. Biber (1988) describes, ‘present tense forms as a marker of immediate, as opposed to removed, situation’ (p. 24). Present tense verbs like *is, import, has, developing, are* and *increasing* and pronoun *it* make the text non-narrative.

> In other words, there **is** no alternative for us but to **import** the technology necessary to the building of an indigenous, diversified, self-sustaining industrial economy. **It has** to be realised that yet in spite of all the brave planning and even after a modest base of industries having been achieved in the **developing** world the inequities between nations **are increasing**. One of the main reasons for this **is** the under-development of the poorer nations' man-power and their drawbacks in engaging it in gainful occupations. (Ed. PH2. BR)

As far as dimension 3 is concerned, it is labelled as Explicit vs. Situation dependent discourse. On D3, both Pakistani and British registers of press editorials produce explicit discourse. Phase 1, with mean score of (7.10), produces highly explicit discourse in its press editorials. Phase 2, with mean score of (6.07) is slightly less explicit than phase 1. When Phases of Pakistani editorials are compared to Britain press editorials, phase 3 (5.37) appears to be quite close to British press editorials (1.9) in producing explicit discourse.

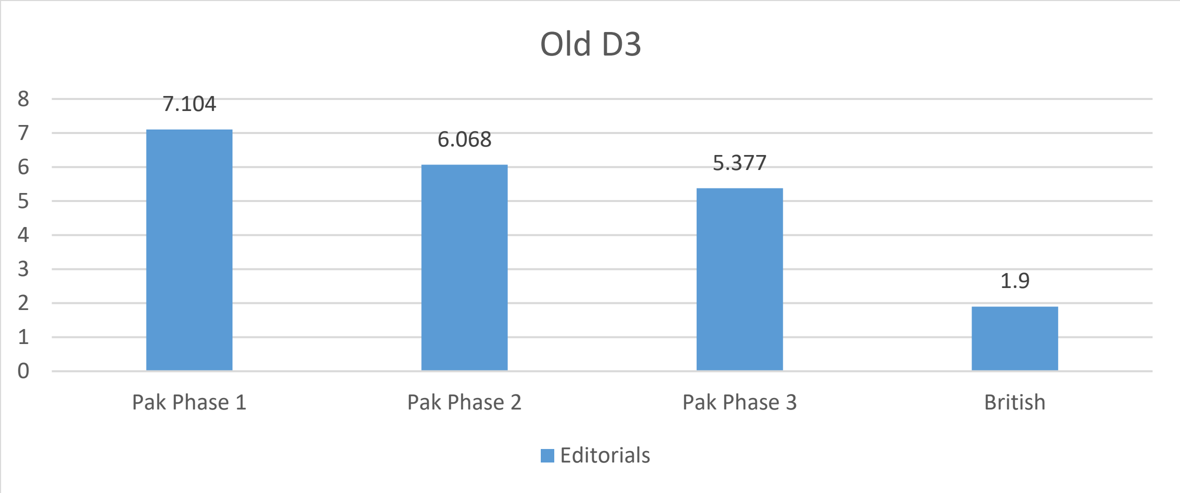


Fig 3 *Comparison of three phases of Pakistani press editorials with British press editorials on D3*

Biber (1988) interprets that the role of nominalization is to convey, 'highly abstract (as opposed to situated) information' (p. 227). The following example, from Pakistani newspaper, *Dawn*, shows the dense presence of noun-nominalization like *representative*, *commands*, *majority*, *minorities*, *electorates* and *representatives* and wh- clauses like *the report which is in conflict, with what has just been done* and *congress party which has an overwhelming majority* produce explicit discourse.

> The same source also forecasts that the **representatives** of the Congress and the League High **Commands** may meet together for the purpose and "hammer out a formula. "If **this report which is in conflict with what has just been done** in Assam, is to be believed, it would appear that wiser counsels are beginning to prevail in the **Congress Party which has an overwhelming majority** that Constituent Assembly. It may be recalled that in the Advisory Committee on **Minorities** a decision as **earlier** reached to do away with separate **electorates**' altogether, although the three Muslim League **representatives** on it vehemently protested against such a course. (ED,PH.1.DN)

Biber (1988) named dimension 4 as, 'Overt expression of persuasion/argumentation. As shown in figure 4, Pakistani press editorials in phase 1 (-0.63), phase 2 (1.09) and phase 3 (0.07) show a significant difference in their mean scores in comparison with British press editorials (3.1). The comparison between Pakistani and British press editorial registers on D4 reveals that Pakistani press editorials show a tendency towards covert discourse production, whereas, British press editorials are overt in persuasion/ argumentation.

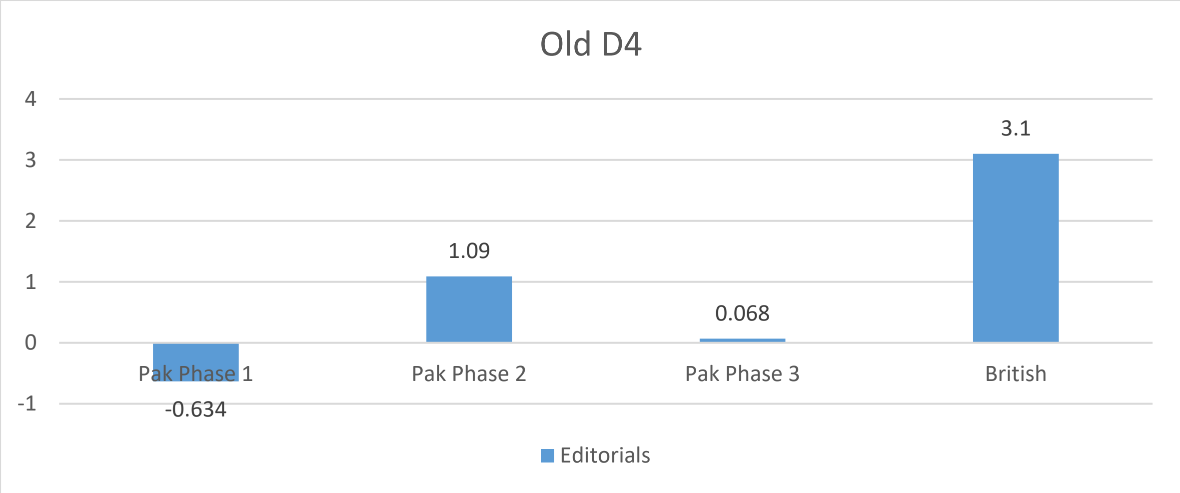


Fig 4 *Comparison of three phases of Pakistani press editorials with British press editorials on D4*

British press editorials, with mean score of (3.1), is highly argumentative. In contrast, phase 1 of Pakistani press editorials are non-argumentative/ least argumentative. Phase 2, with mean score of (1.09), has more overt linguistic features than the other two phases. Phase 3 of Pakistani press editorials, with a mean score of (0.068), is slightly less argumentative than phase 2. The following example from phase 2 shows the linguistic features that produce argumentative discourse. The argumentative discourse is marked with features like infinitives, if clauses and adverbial conjuncts which are found in dense quantity in the given example. The words like *Getting to work, to meet anything, needs to and from work, if there is no heavy rush of passengers*, etc., are example in this context.

> **Getting to work and back home** is undoubtedly the main thing but people have important transport needs outside these categories too. There are not enough buses **to meet anything** approaching the population's needs, **yet if the existing number followed** something approaching a schedule, and routes were made more comprehensive things would definitely be facilitated. A bus will linger on at certain stops **in the hope of collecting more passengers. If your stop is an out-of-the-way one, you are liable to wait** in vain. Buses will not play at times **if there is no heavy rush of passengers**. Your transport **needs to and from work** are met in extreme discomfort and overcrowding, and not met at all for most other purposes. The clump of ruffians **that sets up camp by** special ladies stops are a public nuisance. (ED,PH.2.DN)

Phase 1 of Pakistani press editorials produces non-argumentative discourse. Linguistic features like third-person pronouns, private verbs and hedges produce non-argumentative discourse. In the following example, taken from phase 1, the bold words are the example of linguistic features that produce non-argumentative discourse.

> With sixteen nations, including Britain, United States and France abstaining, the resolution failed to obtain the necessary two-thirds majority. **Almost** all the abstaining countries were **perhaps** more in favour of **admitting** Spain to the diplomatic comity of nations, than against and **their** abstention gives an impression that **they** were **guided** by considerations other than the merits of the case. Franco Spain had been coming up before the United Nations every now and then since 1946. (ED.PH.1.DN)

In the above-given example, hedges like *almost* and *perhaps*, private verbs like *admitting* and *guided* and third-person pronoun like *their* and *they* are the examples of the linguistic features which produce non-argumentative discourse.

Dimension 5 is labelled as Abstract (Impersonal) vs. Non-abstract (Non-impersonal) style. Linguistic features like conjuncts, agentless passives, past participle clauses, by-passives, past participle, whiz deletion and predicative adjectives produce abstract discourse. Figure 5 shows that press registers of both the countries show abstract style of discourse production. However, there is a significant difference between the mean scores of Pakistani and British press editorials. In comparison with Pakistani press editorials of all the three phases, British press editorial, with mean score of (0.3), is the least abstract. Phase 3, with mean score of (3.29), is the most abstract. Phase 1 (3.18) and phase 2 (3.20) are slightly less abstract than phase 3. The diachronic data of Pakistani press editorials show a certain increase in impersonal discourse style over the years.

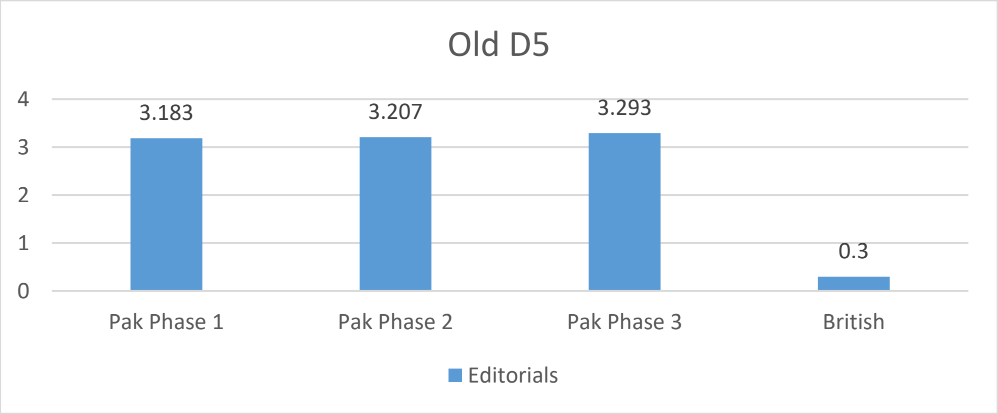


Fig 5 *Comparison of three phases of Pakistani press editorials with British press editorials on D5*

In the following example, taken from the third phase of Pakistani newspaper, *Dawn*, the bold words are the example of linguistic features that perform a function of producing abstract discourse.

> **Had there been** two hearts in the human breast, **then** in that case it would **have been possible** for man to make one the repository of goodness and the other the abode of event this is not so. Man happens to have been only one heart. He can fill it either with wickedness or with virtue. As light and darkness cannot go hand in hand, **so it is impossible** to grow the cactus of evil and the Jasmine of goodness in the same small lower-bed that 1s known as the human heart**. If one wants to plant jasmine therein**, he would have first to uproot and burn the undesirable thorns and thistles. And, on the contrary**, if one develops a link for these very thorns** and thistles, he should be prepared not to be ever blessed with the fragrance of the jasmine. A PLEDGE this is quite simple to under- stand. **In every-day life,** man does experience that his profession requires full-time devotion. **If he is serving in a private or governmental Institution,** he has got in all cases to concentrate his energies **In order to excel** in his work and thus earn the pleasure of his employer. He cannot while away time or play truant and **yet** deserve quick promotions. (ED,PH.3.DN)

Conjuncts, according to Biber (1988), 'are more formal and therefore more common in planned discourse (p.239). In the above example words like *If one wants, if one develops a link* and *If he is serving in* indicate the impersonal discourse style in Pakistani press editorials.

**Conclusion**

This study compared the three phases of Pakistani press editorials with British press editorials on Biber's 1988 textual dimensions. The results show that there are statistically significant linguistic differences in all five textual dimensions. Both the countries produce informational discourse in their press reportage register on dimension 1, however, there is a marked difference between the mean scores of the Pakistani editorials of phase 1 and British press editorials. So far as Pakistani editorials of phase 3 are concerned, they are quite close to British press editorials. Although all the countries produce non-narrative discourse on dimension 2, phase 2 and phase 3 show a great difference in their mean scores from British press editorials. As far as Pakistani press editorials from phase 1 and British press editorials are concerned, their production of non-narrative discourse is quite similar. On dimension 3, both the countries produce explicit discourse in their press editorials. However, all the three phases of Pakistani press editorials show a marked difference in their mean scores from British press editorials. Phase 3 is relatively close to British press editorials in producing explicit discourse. On D 4, Pakistani press editorials show a tendency towards covert discourse production; whereas, British press editorials are overt in persuasion/ argumentation. On D 5, both the countries show abstract style in their press registers. As far as, the three phases of Pakistani press editorials are concerned, their production of abstract discourse is quite similar. All the three phases show highly abstract style of discourse production as compared to British press editorials, which produces low abstract discourse.

Overall, the results of Pakistani and British press editorials show that on D1, D2, D3 and D5 all the three phases of Pakistani press editorials have been found highly informational, non-narrative, explicit and impersonal in discourse production as compared to British press editorials registers. On D4, significant statistical linguistic differences have been found as in phase 1 Pakistani press editorials are covert in expression and in phase 2 and 3, Pakistani press editorials register exhibits a tendency towards the covert expression of persuasion/ argumentation discourse, while, British press editorials are overt in producing discourse. On D5, there is a marked difference between the mean scores of the three phases of Pakistan press editorials in comparison with British press editorials. However, it is important to note that out of the five dimensions, on D1, D2 and D3, phase 3 of Pakistani press editorials is quite close in its mean scores to British press editorials.

A more comprehensive diachronic corpus, including a wide range of registers, can be developed and compared with British English. It can further be compared with other varieties of English. Researchers may also observe linguistic variations by comparing the development of Pakistani English over time with the diachronic corpora of other Englishes or indigenous and foreign languages.

**Recommendations**

This study will contribute to the area of research concerning language teaching and learning for ESP. The results and data of the study are useful for syllabus designers of media studies. Further, various texts from the corpus (used for this paper) can be used in the textbooks for the students of media studies. A computer application (like Grammarly) can also be developed by using the data of the study for the evaluation of students' writings.

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**Appendix I**

Co-occurring Linguistic Features on Five Textual Dimensions of 1988 MD analysis of Press Reportage

**Dimension 1: Involved vs. Informational Discourse**

| **Positive Feature** | **Negative Features** |
|---|---|
| Private Verbs | Nouns (excluding gerund |
| 'That' deletion | Preposition |
| Verb (uninflected present, imperative & third Person) | Attributive Adjective |
| Second Person pronoun/Possessive | |
| Verb 'Do' | |
| Demonstrative Pronoun | |
| Adverb/Qualifier-Emphatic (e.g., just, really) | |
| First person pronoun/possessive | |
| Pronoun 'it' | |
| Verb 'Be' (uninflected present tense, verb, and auxiliary) | |

Sub-ordinating Conjunction-Causative

Discourse Particle

Nominal Pronoun

Adverbial –Hedge

Adverbial/Qualifier-Amplifier

Wh-question

Modals of Possibility

Co-ordinating conjunction-clausal connector

Wh-clause

Stranded Preposition

**Dimension 2: Narrative vs. Non narrative Concerns**

| **Positive Feature** | **Negative Features** |
|---|---|
| Past Tense Verb | (No negative Features) |
| Third person pronoun (except ‘it’) | |
| Verb-perfect Aspect | |
| Public Verbs | |

**Dimension 3: Explicit Vs. Situation Dependent Discourse**

| **Positive Feature** | **Negative Features** |
|---|---|
| Wh-pronoun-relative clause-object position | Adverb of time |
| Wh-pronoun-relative clause-subject- position | Adverb of Place |
| Wh-pronoun-relative clause-object position | Adverb Other |
| With prepositional fronting (pied-piping) | |
| Nominalization | |
| Coordinating Conjunction –phrasal connector | |
| Singular noun-nominalization | |

**Dimension 4: Overt Expression of Argumentation /Persuasion**

| **Positive Features** | **Negative Features** |
|---|---|
| Infinitive Verb | (no negative features) |
| Modal of Prediction | |

Persuasive Verb

Subordinating conjunction-conditional

Modal of Necessity

Adverb within auxiliary

**Dimension 5: Impersonal (Abstract) VS. Non impersonal (Non-Abstract Style)**

| Positive Features | Negative Features |
|---|---|
| Adverbial-conjuncts | (no negative features) |
| Agentless Passive verb | |
| Passive verb + by | |
| Passive Post nominal modifier | |
| Subordinating conjunction-Other | |

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# Complimenting Strategies in Sociolinguistic Settings: The Case of Ilocano and Tagalog Pre-Service Teachers

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**Abstract**

Research on compliments and compliment responses (CRs) across different cultures have shown that there is no universal model using this type of speech act. Following Yuan's (2002) framework of analysis for compliments, and Holmes (1988, 1993) and Yu's (2003) frameworks for CRs, the present study contributes to the understanding of the cultural similarities and differences in the use of compliment and CRs strategies between Ilocano and Tagalog university students. Results show that in terms of compliment strategies, the Tagalog group used compliment and non-compliment strategies more often than the Ilocano group. Similar result was also found in terms of the CRs strategies employed. Overall, Tagalog group had registered more frequent usage of the four macro CRs strategies. Emerging patterns for compliments were also discovered and discussed. The interplay between culture and language use was underscored by presenting the distinct traits of Tagalog and Ilocano that were reflected in their compliments and CRs. Implications on cross-cultural communication as well as English pedagogy were also raised.

**Keywords:** *culture, speech acts, compliment, compliment responses*

## Introduction

Pragmatic competence along with linguistic and socio-linguistic competences is the key for successful communication. Barron (2003) gave a comprehensive definition of the term pragmatic competence as the knowledge of the available linguistic resources in a language for the realization of certain illocutions, knowledge of speech acts' sequential aspects and contextual use of a language's linguistic resources. For Searle (1969) the fact that linguistic communication involves linguistic acts serves as the basis for focusing on the study of speech acts.

Complimenting is a kind of speech act belonging to the category of expressive based on Searle's (1969) classification. It is a positive politeness strategy aiming to praise the addressee for a past or present action. Complimenting is one of the most important discursive strategies interlocutors use to negotiate interpersonal meaning, and to build and sustain rapport and solidarity among the interlocutors. Holmes (1988) defined compliment as a speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speaker, usually the person addressed, for some "good" (possession, characteristic, skill, etc.) which is positively valued by the speaker and the hearer. They are said to "grease the social wheel" and thus serve as "social lubricants" (Wolfson, 1983 as cited in Zhang, 2013). They are often used to start a conversation or to 'lubricate' the conversational interaction by reinforcing the rapport between the interlocutors.

Compliment responses (CRs) is a type of speech act that is also worth exploring due to the various functions it performs. It is a response to a compliment given by a complimenter and received by a complimentee. Further, the employment of CRs as 'a phatic expression' may also serve "a particular role in maintaining the solidarity of interpersonal relationships and the harmony of social interaction (Heidari, Rezazadeh, Rasekh, 2009).

Phoocharoensil (2012) cited various studies (e.g. Cedar, 2006; Chen, 1993; Falasi, 2007; Han, 1992; Lin 2008; Liu 1995; Qu & Wang, 2005; Sattar & Lah, 2009; Salut & Ozkan, 2005; Tran, 2007; Yu, 1999, 2003, 2004) to establish the fact that compliments and CRs in English have been studied for decades not only in speakers whose first language is English but also of those speakers whose L1 is not English.

## Review of Literature

### *Studies on Cross-Cultural Differences on Compliments and Compliment Responses*

Studying compliments and CRs across different cultures has shown that there is no universal model using this type of speech act. It has been revealed that different cultures have different ways to deal with compliments. The distinctive and various responses to the compliment are not only a matter of individual preferences and choices, but it is also a matter of societal group. By individual, it tends to be stylistic showing that he/she has a different way of responding to one another while by society, the typical responses reflect the norms, tradition, and ethic of the people (Dirgeyasa, 2015).

Pomerantz (1978) asserted that cultures differ in terms of the extent to which they accept or reject compliment. To illustrate the previous premise, Yuan (2002) referred to the works of Herbert (1986) and Herbert and Straight (1989) showing that although the Americans, the British and the South Africans are all English-speaking, the latter two have been found to accept compliments more readily than the former.

Herbert and Straight (1989 in Yuan, 2002) found on a comparative study on American and South African compliment responses used by college students that Americans display a high frequency of compliment expression and a low frequency of compliment acceptance. Meanwhile, South Africans give relatively lower number of compliments than Americans but accept compliments with higher frequency. The two authors attributed the differences between the two group to their respective socio-cultural background.

Yuan (2002) found that Kunming Chinese prefer to issue a clear positive or explicit statement when they pay compliments which accounted for 83.10% of the total tokens produced for compliments. The same study also revealed that non-complimentary replies, both non-compliments and opt outs, have a relatively high frequency of 11.19%. The studies of Chen (1993), Daikuhara (1986) and Wieland (1995) still in Yuan (2002) concluded that the Japanese, the Chinese and the French tend to reject compliments more often. Falasi (2007, cited in Phoocharoensil, 2012) found that Americans usually regard saying ‘Thank you’ in response to a compliment as the most common practice, whereas speakers of Asian languages often reject or disagree with praise to show modesty.

Gelato (2002 as cited in Razi, 2013) compared German and American CRs and found that while rejections and turns containing certain agreement and disagreement features are conducted similarly in German and American English, it is in agreement sequences that the two languages differ. Baek (1998 as cited in Kim, 2001) found that the acceptance rates of CRs in non-western languages were much lower than those in English speaking communities. In the same vein, Daikuhara’s study concerning compliments from a cross-cultural perspective revealed that Japanese and Korean could not instantaneously accept compliments (Morales, 2012).

***Regionalism and Language and Cultural Groupings in the Philippines***

Regionalism is the idea or practice of dividing a country into smaller units for political, economic, social, and cultural purposes. Regionalism is an ideology and political movement that seeks to advance the causes of regions. As a process, it plays role within the nation as well as outside the nation i.e. at international level.

Regionalism at national level refers to a process in which sub-state actors become increasingly powerful, power devolves from central level to regional governments. These are the regions within country, distinguished in culture, language and other socio-cultural factors. Lande (1974 as cited in Torres & Alieto, 2019a; Torres & Medriano, 2020) mentioned that "language group and loyalties are most marked in the most rural, most isolated and least modern localities."

According to Danao (1996 as cited in Torres & Alieto, 2019a; Torres & Medriano, 2020), one's loyalty to his specific sub-nation as compared to his country in general is attributed to geographical location and the Spaniard's aim to divide and conquer. She explained that a Filipino is more particular with his milieu rather than the state given that personal identity is shaped by local language, standards, mores, and traditions that he has acquired. From this sub-nation, a Filipino acquires distinct traits, norms, values and languages.

To date, Philippines is inhabited by 90 million individuals who speak around over 170 languages all over the country; almost all of them belong to the Austronesian language family. Of all of these languages, only two are considered official in the country, at least 10 are considered major and at least eight are considered co-official. Ilocano and Tagalog are considered two of the major languages in the country.

Agoncillo (1990) wrote on his book, History of the Filipino People, the extent of regionalism in the Philippines. From the north comes the Ilocano. An excursion into the northern region reveals that the Ilocano has spilled into the non-Ilocano provinces of Abra, Cagayayan, Nueva Vizcaya, northern Nueva Ecija, Pangasinan, Zambales, and a part of Tarlac. The Ilocos region is barred in one side by forbidding mountain ranges and on the other by the restless sea, so that economic opportunities are limited. Such an environment could only produce adventurous, industrious, hardy, patient and frugal people.

Ilocano frugality is proverbial and compares favorably with that of the Scot. It has been the custom of the Filipino to foot the bill if he happens to invite his companions to, say, a dinner or round of drinks. It would be difficult for the Ilocano, under the circumstances, to dig into his pockets to take charge of the situation. This is because he earns his money the hard way, and he is not one to nullify his efforts by being spendthrift.

As one goes down to the Central Plains and to the area immediately south of it, one finds the Tagalog belt. It comprises the provinces of Nueva Ecija, Bulacan, Bataan, a small part of Tarlac, Rizal, Laguna, Cavite, Batangas, Quezon, and the islands of Marinduque and Mindoro. Manila, the political capital of the Philippines and the center of cultural and commercial life, is at the heart of the region. It is this historical accident that makes the Tagalog feel superior to the rest of the Filipinos. The Tagalog is neither frugal nor extravagant.

### *The Research Gap*

Practices associated with giving and receiving compliments differ across cultures and this can become a source of cultural miscommunication. Cross-cultural differences in the context of compliments and CRs have been extensively investigated particularly in comparing how the native and the non-native speakers of English compliment and respond to compliments. Despite the fact that a number of research studies on compliments and CRs have been done from cross-cultural perspectives, attention on compliments and CRs employed by individuals from a country’s language or regional groups, like in the Philippines, seems lacking. The Ilocano and Tagalog are different in cultural backgrounds. As Agoncillo (1990) pointed out, people of different cultural backgrounds have different value systems.

The present study attempts to contribute to the understanding of the cultural similarities and differences in the use of compliment and CRs strategies between the two language and cultural groups to strengthen the hypothesis that there is no universal model as regards the use of compliments and CRs strategies among communities and that different value systems can be reflected in the speech act of compliments and CRs they produce. Further, this study would benefit the realm of cross-cultural communication as well as English pedagogy.

## Research Questions

1. How do Ilocano and Tagalog advanced ESL learners’ compliment and respond to compliments?
2. How may their compliments and compliments responses strategies be compared?
3. What Ilocano culture and Tagalog culture are reflected in their compliments and compliment responses strategies?

## Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded on Holmes’ (1986) viewpoint which holds that to maintain social relationship and to reinforce a desired action, people may compliment one another.

Compliment is a speech act that frequently occurs in everyday conversations. It is often used to start a conversation or to ‘lubricate; the conversational interaction by reinforcing the rapport between the interlocutors. Goffman (1967) posited that compliments are primarily aimed at maintaining, enhancing or supporting the addressee’s face and are used for a variety of reasons, the most significant of which is perhaps to express admiration or approval of someone’s work/appearance or taste. Herbert (1990 as cited in Zhang, 2013) argued that “*the actual sociology of compliment work cannot be understood without considering simultaneously the whole of the compliment event*” (p. 202).

It would be inadequate to study compliments independently without taking the other half of the adjacency pair, i.e. CRs into account. Yuan (2002) defined CRs as anything that follows a compliment, verbal or non-verbal. Responding to compliments is not an easy speech act to perform because the speaker has to balance the two conflicting constraints namely to agree with one’s conversational co-participants and to avoid self-praise (Herbert 1989 cited in Boonkongsaen, 2011). Pomerantz (1978) pointed out that CRs pose a dilemma for the recipient in that they involve two conversational principles that stand in potential conflict. Principle I, agreeing with and/or accepting compliment and Principle II, avoiding self-praise. These principles were also consistent with Leech’s (1983) Politeness Principles or Politeness Maxims, more specifically the agreement and modesty maxims.

## Methodology

### *Participants*

A letter request was addressed to the college dean of the Teacher Education in a State University in Central Luzon to seek permission for the conduct of the study. After the letter was approved, a survey questionnaire was administered to 120 sophomore Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English to determine their language or regional groupings. The questionnaire required the students to report their place of birth, current province, length of stay in the province, province where they completed primary and secondary education, languages spoken at home, and parents’ province of origin. After the students filled-out the survey form, the researchers identified students who met the criteria and considered them participants.

For the students to be classified as either Ilocano or Tagalog participants in the study, they must have: (1) completed primary and secondary education in any of the provinces known to be the province of Ilocano or Tagalog; (2) used either Ilocano or Tagalog as dominant language at home; and (3) one of their parents as either native Ilocano or Tagalog (Torres & Medriano, 2020). The choice on the set of participants was done to ensure that they are suitable informants since situations in the DCT are expressed in English. The study participants were referred to as advanced ESL learners since they are pre-service teachers specializing in English, whom for Alieto (2018 as cited in Torres, 2019) will soon form part of the basic implementer of pedagogical policies. Of the 120 students who filled out the survey form, the researcher randomly selected 25 Ilocano participants and 25 Tagalog participants who met the criteria set.

### ***Data Collection Device***

The study used Discourse Completion Test to gather data. The DCT questionnaire had two parts. Part 1 was designed to explore the possible compliment strategies used by Ilocano and Tagalog advanced ESL students. As Yuan (2002) mentioned, positive characteristics of the complimenter such as appearance, possession and ability are common objects of the compliment. The DCT situations, which were used to elicit compliment from the participants, was patterned from those situations presented by Zhang (2013) to college students in a Philippine University. Modifications were made to the situations in the DCT to ensure that topics and situations suited the level, familiarity, and real-life experiences of the present participants. Six topics were presented to the participants, so they could have a clear picture of what the topic is as well as their relationship to the one described in the situation. The participants were asked to play the role of the complimenter and give compliments. Table 1 presents the topics of compliments in DCT questionnaire.

Table 1. Topics of Compliments in the DCT Questionnaire

| Context | Topic | Object of Compliment |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Classmate is wearing a new shoes | Attire |
| 2 | Friend assisted in finding a cellphone application | Ability |
| 3 | Classmate made an excellent PPT | Ability |
| 4 | Friend listened to your problem | Kindness |
| 5 | Classmate taught you in your Biology lesson | Kindness |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 6 | Friend bought a new laptop | Possession |

For the compliment response, situations employed by Mohammad Ali Heidari et al. (2009) and modified by Morales (2012) as well as Zhang (2013) were adopted with little modifications to suit the present participants. Part II of the DCT also had six situations, where a complimentee responds to a complimenter's compliment. The given situations as well as the topic and object. CRs are shown in Table 2 as follows:

Participants' actual DCT responses, which were lifted and used as examples in the results and discussion, were presented as they are and there were no modifications nor refinement of language structure that were done.

Table 2. Topics and Objects for Compliment Responses (CRs)

| Context | Topic | Object of Compliment |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | You look good at a party | Appearance and Attire |
| 2 | You do favor for a classmate | Kindness |
| 3 | You sound nearly native American speaker | Ability |
| 4 | You have the latest cellphone model | Possession |
| 5 | You have a new hairstyle | Appearance |
| 6 | You wear signature collection perfume | Attire |

**Framework of Analysis**

***Coding System for Compliments***

Participants' compliments were coded following Yuan's (2002) three types of compliments: compliment, non-compliment and opt out. According to Yuan, semantic formulas for compliment can be divided into two types: unbound semantic formulas and bound semantic formulas. Unbound semantic formulas refer to those expressions that can function independently as compliments, while bound semantic formulas refer to those responses that cannot be considered as compliments by themselves but must be attached to or co-occur with one of the unbound semantic formulas to be interpreted as part of a compliment. Unbound semantic formulas can be further divided into two sub-types: explicit compliments and implicit compliments. Bound semantic formulas include explanation, information question, future reference, contrast, advice and request. Non-compliment refers to responses that cannot be regarded as compliments, be it either mere expression of thanks, or bound semantic formula occurring on their own, or replies that do not carry any positive meanings. Opt out refers to the cases where the participants indicated that "I would not say anything" when a compliment is expected in that situation.

***Coding System for Compliment Responses (CRs)***

The CRs were analyzed based on Holmes (1988, 1993) and Yu's (2003) categories of CR strategies. Holmes (1988, 1993) categorized the CRs in the forms of macro levels. Each act in the macro level is subdivided into sub-categories in the forms of micro levels. Macro levels include accept, reject and deflect or evade. Yu (2003) explored the CRs at discourse level and proposes the combination here. In the present study, the categories adapted have four macro and 10 micro levels as shown in Table 3.

DCTs were coded according to the categories of the CR strategies. For example, the CR "It's from my aunt", was coded into the category of 'Evade' at macro level and 'Informative comment' for micro level. Furthermore, if the participant responded more than one micro strategies (e.g. Thank you. This perfume was given to me by my aunt. You smell good too) these utterances were coded into 'Combination' strategies with three micro patterns which were 'Appreciation token', 'Informative comment' and 'Return compliment'. 'Appreciation token' pattern was coded when the participant said appreciation such as "Thank you", "Thanks a lot". Informative comment pattern was coded when the participant gave the informative comment to what had been given the compliment such as "It's the perfume being used by Hollywood celebrities". After the coding, the total number of compliments and CRs strategies was then counted.

Table 3. Framework of Analysis for CRs

| Macro level | Micro level | CRs Examples |
|---|---|---|
| | 1. Appreciation Token | "Thanks"; "Thank you"; |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | “Cheers”; “Yes”; “Good” |
| | 2. Agreeing Utterance | “I know”; “I am glad you think so”; “I did realize I did that well”; “Yeah, I really like it;” |
| Accept | 3. Downgrading qualifying utterance | “It’s nothing”; “It was no problem”; “I enjoyed doing it”; “I hope it was OK”; I still only use it to call people”; “It’s not bad.” |
| | 4. Return compliment | “You’re not too bad yourself”; “Your child was an angel”; “I’m sure you will be great”; “Yours was good too”. |
| | 1. Disagreeing utterance | “Nah, I don’t think so”, “I thought I did badly”; “Nah, it ’s nothing special”; “It’s not”; ‘Don’t say so’ |
| Reject | 2. Question accuracy | “Why?’, “It’s right” |
| | 3. Challenging Sincerity | “Stop lying”, “Don’t lie”; “Don’t joke about it”; “You must be kidding”; “Don’t, come on.” |
| | 1. Shift credit | “That’s what friends are for”; “You’re polite”; “No worries”, “My pleasure.” |
| Deflect/Evade | 2. Informative comment | "It wasn’t hard”; “You can get it from (store name)”; “It’s really cheap” |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | |
| | 3. Request reassurance | "Really?!" |
| Combination of CRs strategies | | |

***Inter-Coding of Compliments and Compliment Responses***

Before coding the participants' DCT responses, the three coders met and discussed how they would code participants' responses based on scripts following the frameworks of Yuan (2002) for compliments, and Holmes (1988, 1993) and Yu (2003) for compliment responses. To help the coders familiarize the coding of compliments and compliment responses, the researchers followed the inter-coding approach done by various researchers (i.e., Torres, Collantes, Astrero, Millan & Gabriel, 2020; Torres & Flores, 2017). The coders practiced coding 40 actual DCT responses (equal distribution of compliments and compliment responses). After the practice, they compared their individual coding. Differences in their coding during the practice were discussed and agreement was set on how to code the responses that were coded differently. After the practice, the encoded responses were given by one of the researchers, who also served as coder, to the two inter-coders, who were also graduates of PhD in Applied Linguistics and teaching education and language courses in CHED recognized Teacher-Education Institutions. Cross tabulation results show the following Kappa ($\kappa$) values: between Rater 1 and Rater 2 ($\kappa$ = .886), between Rater 2 and Rater 3 ($\kappa$ = .821), and between Rater 1 and Rater 3 ($\kappa$ = .881).

**Results and Discussion**

This part presents and discusses the findings in the study. It begins by presenting how the participants from the two groups compliment and respond to compliments. Comparison of the compliments and CRs of Ilocano and Tagalog then follow. Cultural traits of the Ilocano and Tagalog groups that are reflected in their compliments and CRs were discussed in the latter part.

**Compliments**

*Distribution of Compliment Strategies*

A total of 335 compliment tokens were elicited from 50 participants who were asked to give their compliments in the six situations described through the DCT. Data from Table 4 show that 238 (71.04%) were considered compliments followed by 90 (26.87%) non-compliment replies and 7 (2.09%) opt-out.

Table 4. Overall Distribution of Compliment Strategies

| Compliment Strategies | Ilocano | | Tagalog | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Raw Tokens | % | Raw Tokens | % | Tokens | % |
| Compliments | 115 | 34.32% | 123 | 36.71% | 238 | 71.04% |
| Non-Compliment | 33 | 9.85% | 57 | 17.01% | 90 | 26.87% |
| Opt-out | 3 | 0.90% | 4 | 1.19% | 7 | 2.09% |
| | | | | | 335 | |

As shown in Table 5 the most frequently used compliment strategy by the Ilocano and Tagalog participants is explicit semantic formula accounting for 39.10% of the 335 compliment tokens. The previous finding coincides with the observation of Yuan (2003) and Zhang (2013) that people tend to make direct and positive statements in giving compliments. Explicit compliment is followed by non-compliment with 26.87% or 90 instances. The current result for the non-compliment is 17.37% and 19.11% higher as to what Zhang (2013) and Yuan (2003) recorded in their respective studies. The two authors also observed the relatively high frequency of non-compliment response and explained their common observation following the idea that not paying compliments when the situation calls for is attributed to fact that the participants were not able to distinguish expression of thanks from expression of compliments. Expressing of compliment and expression of gratitude are two different things. Giving compliments is a way of showing that one noticed and appreciated something about the person or the situation, while thanking is used to express grateful feeling to other people. Example 1 below illustrates how Tagalog respondent 1 (TR1) did not compliment in the situation described in context 4 (C4):

Example 1:

*I owe my life to you. Just kidding, but I'm very thankful that I felt better because of you* (C4). - TR1

From the given example above, it can be seen that though the respondent had acknowledged the fact that the one who was supposed to be complimented extended help as described in the given situation, still no compliment was made. Although, gratitude had been expressed, it cannot be equated as a form of compliment.

Table 5. Detailed Distribution of Compliment Strategies

| Compliment Strategy | Ilocano | | Tagalog | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Raw Tokens | % | Raw Tokens | % | Tokens | % |
| Explicit | 55 | 16.42% | 76 | 22.67% | 131 | 39.10% |
| Implicit | 23 | 6.87% | 22 | 6.58% | 45 | 13.43% |
| Explanation | 12 | 3.58% | 6 | 1.79% | 18 | 5.37% |
| Information Question | 10 | 2.99% | 6 | 1.79% | 16 | 4.78% |
| Future Reference | 4 | 1.19% | 4 | 1.19% | 8 | 2.39% |
| Contrast | - | - | 1 | 0.30% | 1 | 0.30% |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Advice | 1 | 0.30% | 1 | 0.30% | 2 | 0.60% |
| Request | 10 | 2.99% | 7 | 2.09% | 17 | 5.07% |
| Non-compliment | 33 | 9.85% | 57 | 17.01% | 90 | 26.87% |
| Opt-out | 3 | 0.90% | 4 | 1.19% | 7 | 2.09% |
| | | | | | 335 | |

The third most frequently used strategy is the implicit compliment with 13.43% or 45 tokens. Herbert (1997) described implicit compliments as those in which the value judgment is presupposed and/or implicated by Gricean maxims. Therefore, the positive value of an expression can be inferred from what is said in a particular situation. Examples 2 and 3 show how Ilocano and Tagalog participants used this type of compliment strategy.

Example 2:

*Thank you so much! That was a really big help. I don't know what to do without you*. (C2) - TR27

Example 3:

"Hey thank you bro. Biology doesn't love me and the feeling is mutual but because of you we fell in love with each other hehe. Thank you, thank you Paul. I hope we both pass the exam. (C5) -IR1.

Based on the foregoing examples, positive values are not clearly stated in their responses but can be inferred based on the context. The context where Example 2 was derived could help in interpreting the last part of the reply (I don't know what to do without you) as a form of compliment to the ability of the one being complimented. Likewise, the context where Example 3 was produced could explain why the second part of the reply (Biology doesn't love me and the feeling is mutual but because of you we fell in love with each other) is a form of compliment to one's ability to explain the topic well so that something that is perceived as hard subject could be easily understood.

Instances of explanation and request were also recorded accounting for 5.37% and 5.07% of the total tokens in compliment strategies. Opt-Out (2.09%) and other compliment strategies (information question, 4.78%; future reference, 2.39%; advice, 0.60%; and contrast, 0.30%) were the least frequently used strategies.

## Compliment Responses

*Distribution of Compliment Response Strategies*

Presented in Table 6 is the overall findings on CRs strategies in the macro level. Of the 387 tokens, more than half (52.97%) of the responses were classified as acceptance tokens, more than one-fourth (25.32%) were deflect/evade, followed by combination of CRs (13.95%) and the remaining (7.75%) were classified reject strategies. Except for the presence of combination of the different CRs strategies, similar trend was found by Morales (2012) in her study of the CRs of high school students in the Philippines, Boonkongsaen (2011) on the Filipino and Thai responses to compliments in English and that of Razi's (2012) contrastive study of compliment responses among Australian English and Iranian Persian speakers. Table 7 summarizes participants' CRs strategies in the micro level.

Table 6. Overall Distribution of CRs

| Compliment Responses Strategies | Ilocano | | Tagalog | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Raw Tokens | % | Raw Tokens | % | Tokens | % |
| Accept | 99 | 25.58 | 106 | 27.39 | 205 | 52.97% |
| Reject | 13 | 3.36 | 17 | 4.39 | 30 | 7.75% |
| Deflect/Evade | 36 | 9.30 | 62 | 16.02 | 98 | 25.32% |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Combination | 23 | 5.94 | 31 | 8.01 | 54 | 13.95% |
| | | | | | 387 | 100.00% |

From the data, it is evident that appreciation token (20.67%) was the most utilized CR type between the groups, followed by return compliment (15.25%). These results support that of Morales (2012) and Wu (2006 as cited in Morales, 2012) that students tend to use appreciation token and return compliment more frequently than other strategies. However, previous results did not conform to Mojica's (2002) observation that Filipino college students used more non-acceptance and non-agreement strategies in response to compliments and that the Filipino students are more likely to be constrained by modesty maxim. According to Zhang (2013) such disparity took place since Filipino is the target language in Mojica's study. Hence, it might be the case that the Philippine English learners were able to learn the rule of thumb in responding to compliments, that is, to accept it when receiving one.

Other CRs strategies employed by the participants were combination strategies (13.95%), shift credit (13.69%), downgrading qualifying utterance (10.86%), informative comment (6.20%), agreeing utterance (6.20%), request assurance (5.43%), disagreeing utterance (5.42%), challenging sincerity (1.81%), and question accuracy (0.52%).

Table 7. Detailed Distribution of Compliment Responses (CRs)

| Compliment Responses Strategies | Ilocano | | Tagalog | | Total | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Raw Tokens | % | Raw Tokens | % | Tokens | % |
| Accept | | | | | | |
| Appreciation Token | 41 | 10.59% | 39 | 10.08% | 80 | 20.67% |
| Agreeing Utterance | 16 | 4.13% | 8 | 2.07% | 24 | 6.20% |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Downgrading qualifying utterance | 21 | 5.43% | 21 | 5.43% | 42 | 10.86% |
| Return Compliment | 21 | 5.43% | 38 | 9.82% | 59 | 15.25% |
| Reject | | | | | | |
| Disagreeing Utterance | 10 | 2.58% | 11 | 2.84% | 21 | 5.42% |
| Question Accuracy | - | - | 2 | 0.52% | 2 | 0.52% |
| Challenging Sincerity | 3 | 0.78% | 4 | 1.03% | 7 | 1.81% |
| | | | | | | |
| Deflect/Evade | | | | | | |
| Shift Credit | 23 | 5.94% | 30 | 7.75% | 53 | 13.69% |
| Informative Comment | 7 | 1.81% | 17 | 4.39% | 24 | 6.20% |
| Request Assurance | 6 | 1.55% | 15 | 3.88% | 21 | 5.43% |
| | | | | | | |
| Combination | 23 | 5.94% | 31 | 8.01% | 54 | 13.95% |
| | | | | | 387 | 100 |

**Comparison between Ilocano and Tagalog Compliment Strategies**

As regards the frequency on the use of the different compliment strategies between the two groups, data in Table 3 shows that Tagalog participants elicited more complimentary (2.39% higher), non-complimentary (7.16% higher), and opt-out (0.29% higher) than the Ilocano group. However, looking at the frequency as to how the individual compliment strategies had been employed reveal that Ilocano participants elicited more compliment strategies in the following types: implicit, explanation, information question and request than the Tagalog group.

Aside from the frequency on the use of these strategies, instances as to how the two groups used the compliment and non-compliment strategies also vary. Examples 4 and 5 are non-compliment responses of Ilocano and Tagalog participants, respectively. Responses of Ilocano respondents 2, 6 and 23 in Example 4 came from contexts 4 and 5 in the DCT, while responses of Tagalog respondents 17 and 23 in Example 5 were produced from contexts 2 and 5. In comparing the replies of the two groups, it can be inferred that Ilocano participants opt to promise that they too would be there for the person, who they complimented, when that person would be facing similar situation. Though the Tagalog participant also promised something to the one being complimented, the difference is on the promise itself. While in the case of Ilocano participants, they promised that they will also be there for the person or extend help to the same person whom they complimented, the Tagalog participant's promise would be in the form of offering the complimentee a treat for a lunch or snacks to return the favor the Tagalog participant received. The difference can be interpreted in a cultural lens. The Ilocanos are generally known for being hardworking, appreciative and determined and compared to other cultural group like the Tagalog. Ilocanos are also known for their simple lifestyle and strong value for money.

Hence, the responses made by the Tagalog participant is less likely to be heard from Ilocano since they are known to be thrifty. Thus, the promise made by the Tagalog tends to be more tangible and more likely to happen compared to the one the Ilocano had promised. It can be deduced then based on the given examples that the return favor promised by the Tagalog along with the non-compliment response will have a greater tendency to be realized first since the promise for a lunch or snack treat is immediate than the time when the person who was supposed to be complimented would be getting back the given favor.

Example 4:

*Thank you so much for listening. It feels better now. I really appreciate it, remember that I'm always here for you too*. (C4)-IR2

*I feel much better right now. Thank you for listening Bel. I swear you can count on me*. (C4) -IR6

*I understand it already Paul. Thanks for your help. If you're needing help, count on me*. (C5) -IR23

Example 5:

*Paul, let's have a snack. My treat* (C5) -TR17

*Oh my gosh! Thank you for your help Rhea. I will treat you after our class. That's a promise*. (C2)
*Thank you very much Paul! If I get a high grade on our exam I will treat you*. (C5) -TR23

The superior characteristic of Tagalog group can be reflected on the non-compliment reply made by Tagalog respondent 20 shown in Example 6. Tagalog would have the tendency to yield non-complimentary in instances where they also possess the same object of the compliment, which for them is of the same quality or sometimes better.

Example 6:

I also have my own laptop. Don't show off too much. (C6)-TR20

Another way the Tagalog participant used the non-compliment strategy is by combining it with a request. In Example 7, Tagalog respondent 16 did not compliment in contexts 4 and 5, yet a request from the one who supposed to be complimented was asked. The request in context 4 is "Please don't tell this to anyone" and the request in context 5 is "I hope you can teach me again next time."

Example 7:

Thanks for being there and be my shoulder to lean on. You know I have no one to tell these cause I'm afraid I might be judged by anyone or everybody. Thank you and I love you. Please don't tell this to anyone. (C4)

Hey! Thanks. I've been confused with those concepts all the time. I badly needed to understand those for our first term examination is coming. Thank you and I hope you can teach me again next time. (C5) -TR16

It is also noteworthy to mention the possible emergence of new category of compliment observed from the DCT of Tagalog participants. In Yuan's (2002) classification of compliments, request is one of them categorized under bound semantic formula. The bound semantic formula like that of 'request' must have to co-occur with one of the unbound semantic formula. In the case of Example 8, the unbound semantic formula is "Oh! So cool" is categorized explicit. However, the following structure (Let me try it.) which is supposedly labeled as bound semantic formula cannot be classified as request but a command. In Yuan's classification, command is not included. Yuan only provides two unbound semantic formulas and seven for bound semantic formulas.

Example 8:

Oh! so cool. Let me try it! (C6) -TR19

A participant from the Ilocano group elicited explicit compliment that goes with a structure that does not fit to the previously identified type of bound semantic formulas for compliments. In example 9, the first part is classified explicit comment while the second component is different from the bound semantic formulas identified by Yuan (2002).

Example 9:

That's awesome dude! I would like to uninstall all of these though. (C6)-IR14

Another interesting finding that differentiates the Ilocano group with the Tagalog is the use of nonverbal compliment by an Ilocano participant. In context 6 of the DCT Ilocano respondent 11 wrote, “I will give her thumbs up for picking useful and adorable one”. Nonverbal compliment like the previous did not register as a compliment strategy of the Tagalog group.

Example 10 is a compliment from Tagalog participant. It can be observed that word such as “pricey” could carry either a positive or negative value. Taken away from the context, “pricey” alone could carry a negative value. But when used in the context as in the example, “pricey” was able to carry a positive value hence was considered compliment.

Example10:

Your laptop must be pricey. Yet it really helps (C6) -TR10

**Comparison between Ilocano and Tagalog Compliment Responses Strategies (CRs)**

In terms of frequency on the use of CRs strategies, data from Table 7 shows that the Tagalog group employed more return compliment, informative comment, request reassurance, shift credit, question accuracy, disagreeing utterance, and challenging sincerity. The participants from the Ilocano group, on the other hand, used appreciation token and agreeing utterance as their CRs more frequent.

Aside from the difference on the frequency distribution in terms of the use of CRs strategies by the participants from the two groups, it is also interesting to describe how Ilocano and Tagalog participants combined CRs strategies in one context. Table 8 presents the frequency distribution of combined CRs strategies as well as sample replies for each combination elicited by the participants in the DCT. A total of 19 combinations were noted from the responses which accounted for 54 tokens of combined CRs strategies. Participants from Ilocano group elicited 23 tokens of combined CRs strategies, while the Tagalog participants elicited 31 tokens of combined strategies. Combination of appreciation token and return compliment had the highest frequency of all the combined CRs strategies. It was used more frequently by the Ilocano participants including combined Appreciation Token and Shift Credit and combined appreciation token, disagreeing utterance and informative comment. Meanwhile, the other combinations generated were frequently used by Tagalog participants. Some of these include combined appreciation token and informative comment, combined appreciation token and disagreeing utterance, combined request reassurance, appreciation token and request reassurance, combined request reassurance, appreciation token and return compliment, and combined request reassurance and return compliment.

Table 8. Summary of the Combined Compliment Responses Strategies

| Combined Compliment Responses Strategies | Ilocano Tokens | Tagalog Tokens | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Combination 1. Appreciation Token and Return Compliment<br>Hey thank you, you look great too, you're stunning! (C1) IR23 | 12 | 4 | 16 |
| Combination 2. Appreciation Token and Disagreeing Utterance<br>I'm still stuttering a little but thanks (C3) TR20 | - | 2 | 2 |
| Combination 3. Appreciation Token, Return Compliment and Challenging Sincerity<br>Oww! Thank you! You too. You look great. I only hope you're not joking huh!<br>(C1) T16 | - | 2 | 2 |
| Combination 4. Appreciation Token and Shift Credit<br>Thank you. My aunt gave this to me. (C6)<br>-T13 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Combination 5. Appreciation Token and Informative Comment<br>Thank you, actually I used a signature perfume used by a famous celebrity. (C6)<br>-T7 | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| Combination 6. Appreciation Token, Informative Comment and Return Compliment<br>Thank you. This perfume was given to me by my aunt. You smell good too. | - | 2 | 2 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| (C6)<br>-T6 | | | |
| Combination 7. Appreciation Token, Shift Credit and Return Compliment<br>Thank you. Thanks to my aunt. You also smell good. (C6)<br>-T16 | - | 1 | 1 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ….continuation of Table 8 | | | |
| Combination 8. Appreciation Token, Disagreeing Utterance and Informative Comment<br>Thank you! But not that really, it's just that, I prepared for this presentation that's why I sounded good at it. (C3)<br>-I5 | 2 | - | 2 |
| Combination 9. Agreeing Utterance and Challenging Sincerity<br>I think so, but are you sure? (C4)<br>-I5 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Combination 10. Return Compliment and Appreciation Token<br>You too, thanks (C1)<br>-I12 | 1 | - | 1 |
| Combination 11. Disagreeing Utterance and Appreciation Token<br>They not really. I just dressed up like this for her special day. But anyway thanks (C1)<br>-T11 | - | 2 | 2 |
| Combination 12. Disagreeing Utterance, Appreciation Token and Return Compliment<br>Uhm…not really, but thanks. you look good also (C1) | 1 | - | 1 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| -I22 | | | |
| Combination 13. Challenging Sincerity and Return Compliment<br>Really? Can I take you a photo? Stay there. It is more beautiful because of your smile. (C4)<br>-T18 | - | 2 | 2 |
| Combination 14. Challenging Sincerity and Appreciation Token<br>Are you kidding me? Hahaha. Thank you so much. (C5)<br>-T23 | - | 1 | 1 |
| Combination 15. Request Reassurance, Appreciation Token, and Return Compliment<br>Really? Thank you, and so you do! (C1)<br>-T1 | - | 2 | 2 |
| Combination 16. Request Reassurance, Appreciation Token and Shift Credit<br>Is that so? Thanks. Maybe its the effect of watching too much movies. (C3)<br>-T17 | - | 1 | 1 |
| Combination 17. Request Reassurance, Shift Credit<br>Really? Thanks to this phone. (C4)<br>-T2 | - | 1 | 1 |
| Combination 18. Request Reassurance and Appreciation Token<br>Is that so? Well, thank you. (C5)<br>-T9 | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| Combination 19. Request Reassurance and Return Compliment<br>Really? I think it also looks good on you (C5)<br>-T10 | - | 2 | 2 |

**Reflected culture in participants' compliments and compliment responses (CRs)**

Investigating on the ways the participants from the two cultural groups compliment and respond to it provides valuable insights on the extent of cultural influence in the performance of such speech acts. For Holmes (1988), the compliment is a particular suitable speech act to investigate when comparing cultures because it acts as a window through which we can view what is valued in a particular culture. Based on the analysis of the participants' DCT responses for compliments and CRs, it was found that the frugal nature of Ilocano and the superior nature of Tagalog as what Agoncillo (1990) mentioned in his book History of the Filipino are also reflected in their compliments and CRs.

Analysis of the compliments and CRs elicited by the Ilocano participants reveals the presence of the proverbial Ilocano frugality. The compliments made by Ilocano respondents 2, 6, and 23 in contexts 4 and 5 in the earlier examples support the claim that Ilocano frugal nature manifests in their compliments. Unlike the participants from the Tagalog group who promised the complimentee of a snack or lunch to return the favor they received as what is reflected in DCT responses of Tagalog respondents 17 and 23 in providing compliments in contexts 4 and 5, the Ilocano participants, on the other hand, ensured the complimentee that they too would extend the same help or favor should the person they complimented be in the similar situation. In the compliments made by the Ilocano, no promise of any material thing in exchange of the favor received was seen. This can be supported by what Agoncillo (1990) mentioned that it would be difficult for an Ilocano to invite someone for a lunch, dinner, snacks or round of drinks or should he do invite, it would be hard for him, under the circumstance, to dig into his pockets to take charge of the situation. This can be explained by an Ilocano's thinking that since he earn his money the hard way, he is not the one to nullify his efforts by being spendthrift. Thus, even in complimenting, this trait has also become visible.

Ilocano frugality was also revealed in the way they respond to compliment. Ilocano participants employed combination of CRs less frequent than the Tagalog participants. The less frequent use of the combined CRs means fewer use of words and sentences. Hence, even in the utterances of words and sentences Ilocano participants still tend to be thrifty. Likewise, a look at the frequency on the detailed frequency distribution of CRs in Table 7 shows that Ilocano participants utilized fewer informative comments. As a CR micro strategy under Deflect/ Evade macro strategy, informative comment is a strategy in which the one who received the compliment would give the complimenter additional information as regards the object of the compliment. The fewer instances on the use of informative comment also reflects the Ilocano's frugality.

Agoncillo (1990) attributed Tagalog superior nature to the fact that most of the Tagalog reside in Manila, the political capital of the Philippines and the center of cultural and commercial life. Hence, most of the Tagalog, having lived and experienced the life in the metro, feel that they have the best experience and exposure making them to feel superior to the rest of the Filipinos. As a cultural trait, superior nature of the Tagalog participants can also be inferred in the higher recorded occurrence of non-compliment response among them. Further analysis of the non-compliment responses elicited in the DCT by some of the Tagalog participants reveals that one of the common reasons for non-complimenting is that they feel that what they possess is better than what the one who supposed to receive the compliment. This was illustrated in Example 6 earlier. Example 6 was classified as non-compliment since no positive meaning can be deduced from the
reply. What can be inferred was the feeling of superiority of the one who uttered the statements over the one who should have received the compliment.

## Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

### *Summary*

The study examined the compliments and CRs strategies used by Ilocano and Tagalog advanced ESL learners. Fifty sophomore students (equal number of participants from each group) enrolled in Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English program from a state university in Luzon. To explore how participants from the two groups give compliments and respond to compliment, DCT was used.

Following Yuan's (2002) framework of analysis for compliments, results show that of the 335 compliment tokens, 238 (71.04%) were considered compliment, 90 (26.87%) were classified non-compliment replies and 7 (2.09%) were coded opt out. The three most frequently used compliments were explicit (39.10%), implicit (13.43%) and explanation (5.37%).

Participants' CRs strategies were analyzed following Holmes (1988, 1993) and Yu's
(2003) frameworks for CRs. On the macro level, accept (52.97%) is the most frequent, followed by deflect/evade (25.32%), combined CRs strategies (13.95%) and reject (7.75%). Comparison on how the participants from the two groups give compliments and employ CRs was also done. In terms of compliment strategies, the Tagalog group used compliment and non-compliment strategies more often than the Ilocano group. Similar result was also found in terms of the CRs strategies employed. Overall, Tagalog group had registered more frequent usage of the four macro CRs strategies.

Emerging patterns for compliments were also discovered. This can be attributed to the dynamic nature of language. The distinct cultural traits of the two groups, frugality for Ilocano and superiority for Tagalog, manifested in their compliments and CRs strategies were also discussed.

***Conclusion***

In this research, the compliment and CRs strategies of Ilocano and Tagalog advanced ESL learners have been compared using data from written DCT. Results revealed that since the participants are majoring in English, they apparently learned to employ CR patterns resembling those in the American norms. Thus, when there is a situation that would stimulate them to compliment and respond to a compliment, they give compliments and respond to compliments as well.

While there is high occurrence of complimenting among the participants, instances of non-compliments were also recorded. This can be attributed to the fact that there are still some from the participants who were not able to distinguish the speech act of gratitude from that of compliment giving. Thus, the nature and the felicity conditions of compliments should be explicitly instructed and the difference between compliments and gratitude should be explained (Zhang, 2013).

One of the reasons for opt-out, as mentioned in the DCT, is the lack of interest of the one who is supposed to compliment to the object of compliment. Hence, one's interest in the object of compliment can be a factor why a person will give a compliment. Complimenting then is relative. That is, we tend to compliment the things we are aware of. Having that said, it would be unusual for someone to compliment something he has little or no knowledge at all.

The prevalent use of the combined CRs among the participants can be supported by the fact that since participants are specializing in English, there English conversational competence has already been sufficiently developed to elaborate their feelings in giving CRs. For instance, it may begin with an appreciation token (e.g. Thanks), followed by a compliment downgrade (e.g. I

think it's not that beautiful), which represents the principal content of this CR. The use of combined CRs strategies can also be interpreted in a different way adhering with what Pomerantz (1978) pointed out that CRs pose a dilemma for the recipient in that they involve two conversation principles, one is agreeing with and/or accepting compliment and the other is avoiding self-praise. Hence, another possible reason for the use of combined CRs strategies among the participants is that at first, they do not want to accept the compliment so the tendency is that they employ other strategies such as disagree first, then return the compliment and finally accept it.

The findings on the difference on the frequency and use of compliments and CRs strategies between the two groups conform to the idea that cultures carry norms and expectations on how speech acts are performed (Torres, 2020; Al-ghamdi, Almansoob & Alrefaee, 2019). Results also strengthen the connection between language and culture, which are intricately related to each other to a certain extent that they are somehow inseparable (Cedar & Setiadi, 2016). Culture, is often, if not always reflected in the language one speaks or in how they speak a language. No matter how close two cultures literally are, like the Ilocano and Tagalog belonging to one nationality, differences are unavoidable. Thus, communication is becoming more and more intercultural because it involves interlocutors who have different first languages, communicate in a common language, and represent different cultures (Kecskes, 2004).

The role of context is important especially in understanding the communicative content of an utterance. In the case of compliments, context is important especially in interpreting implicit compliment. Context plays a big role in determining whether a word carries a positive or negative value. If the context allows a word to carry positive value, then the word is used for complimenting.

***Recommendation***

Since the present study explored the compliment and CRs strategies in English between Ilocano and Tagalog using the DCT as the data gathering instrument, it is recommended that in carrying out any further research in comparing the speech act of complimenting between the two groups, other research methods should be explored. DCT method predetermined many aspects of speech acts including the demographics of the interlocutors, the object of compliment, and the occasion of compliment. For Jucker (2009), using DCT enables the researcher to determine in advance who compliments whom, where and when. It is assumed that data from oral role-play or natural setting might yield different insights. For Yuan (2001), field note data can help the researcher identify when and where a speech act is likely to occur, by whom, and in what social contexts, whereas natural speech, if recorded properly, can provide the most accurate picture of everyday conversations. It is also worth exploring to determine how the two groups compliment and respond to compliments in conversations between interlocutors of unequal status. Using the same groups, it would also be interesting to compare the compliments they produce in both written and oral discourses.

Additional studies have to be done to explore and validate emerging compliment types and to account for the combined compliment responses since 19 combinations were seen in the study accounting for a total of 53 occurrences. It is hoped that future studies can further explain the occurrence why they occurred and more about the particular context in which they are used. The study is an exploratory attempt to compare the pragmatics of compliments and CRs of Philippine English as used by Ilocano and Tagalog participants. Since only 50 participants were considered in the study and that they are tertiary English majors, results in this study should be interpreted with caution. Future studies should include participants with different age brackets, educational background and socio-economic status (Torres, Pariña, Collantes & Tan, 2020) to validate the findings in the study and to gain a full picture of compliment speech events in Philippine English specifically in the case of Ilocano and Tagalog groups.

It is widely acknowledged that teaching and learning languages involves far more than targeting surface grammatical or lexical systems. In designing curriculum and textbooks for English learners, culture should also be given emphasis. Syllabus designers should consider learner's needs (Tan, Polong Collantes & Torres, 2020; Torres & Alieto, 2019b) considering the understanding and production of speech acts they are likely to come across. As Grossi (2009 as cited in Razi, 2013) suggests presenting naturally occurring oral examples of compliments and CRs by speakers of different ages, and types of relationships collected in different settings such as the workplace and home can be helpful.

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# Writing Instruction and the Development of ESL Writing Skills: A Case Study in Indian Context

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**Abstract**

Writing instruction in English as a Second Language (ESL) is a challenge for teachers. Writing lessons have to be properly planned by agreeing on the best method as the teaching approaches significantly affect the learning of the students. The research discusses the favorite teaching methods of 10 pre-service teachers in the teaching writing framework (between product and process approach) and the impacts on written texts of students. The data were obtained from reviews, interviews, and written texts. The data was semi-structured. The data from the observation lists were analyzed using the Rasch Measurement Model, which justified the analysis at an alpha Cronbach high-value (0.81). Thematic and textual studies were conducted on the opinions of the participants and the written text of the students. The results have shown that the approach to commodities is the preferred practice. The students, therefore, prepared a very similar pattern of written work based on input from the participants. Students could practice written work with linguistic accuracy, but they did not try to compose more creatively. This study, therefore, recommends that teachers incorporate

process approach techniques into their written instructions to direct students to write more in-depth in the future.

**Keywords:** *Writing instruction; English as a Second Language (ESL); product approach; process approach*

## Introduction

Mastering English as a Second Language (ESL) can be very useful but this demands a lot from both, the teachers to teach and students to learn(Alrefaee & Al-Ghamdi, 2019). Furthermore, the inexplicable challenge for teachers is teaching writing in English and for students learning writing in English in a second language classroom. While teaching the students at various levels including primary, secondary, and tertiary (Akinwamide & Kolade, 2012; Hashim & Zuwati, 2014) most of the writing teachers are still grappling to find a more suitable and more effective approach to conduct writing lessons as easily understandable for the students. According to the study, teaching writing skills can be overwhelming because it involves several stages which beginning from choosing the appropriate strategy to be employed in the classroom and to getting the students to write effectively.

The procedure of writing English involves many aspects which include grammar, sentence structure, vocabulary, and coherence. Hence, writing English demands a great command of language ability which is appropriate in producing cohesive written work so that the writers can express their message more clearly and effectively and the readers can understand without any difficulties. Hence for the teachers, teaching writing becomes more uninteresting to teach the students as because it involves several sub-areas. According to the study the writing calls for a decent amount of prior language schemata, most of the students when they need to write in the language, they are found to undergo writing anxiety. (Dar & Khan, 2015). Ali & Ramana, (2018) have highlighted these four reasons for which the students dislike writing: (1) becomes permanent record; (2) gives the lack of knowledge feeling; (3) needs to be grammatically correct and (4) has to be formally correct in the first attempt. Accordingly, all these factors become great treats that can terrify students to start leaving the writing.

The teachers are unenlightened about how to develop the interest of the student and to get them to start writing. Hence, the teachers need to find different ways and means to develop motivation and attraction to the students so that they learn writing.

Despite the fact that teaching writing is difficult but this skill cannot be negated because of its vast importance in students' daily life, their education, and employment. The research also reveals that the students are incompetent in effective writing since they do not possess enough exposure to the writing skill (Moses & Mohamad, 2019). The study reveals that it is much important to emphasize the concern to develop the skill of writing among the students as soon as possible such as in primary school itself. According to Harmer, (2001) highlighted four main reasons to teach writing to students: (1) reinforce writing sentences using the new language; (2) developing language as an on-going learning experience; (3) identify students' learning style and (4) emphasize the basic skill of a language. Hence, the writing teachers hold significant great responsibility in making sure that the students learn writing more effectively and more meaningfully. For the time being, the ESL teachers need to explore sufficient ways to help the students for effective writing (Ghabool, Mariadass, & Kashef, 2012; Hossein & Nasrin, 2012). According to the study conducted by (Adula, 2018) reported that some writing teachers confess that they did not participate or obtained enough training to go through the process approach which was found to be more beneficial for their students. Thus, the study highlighting and emphasizing the importance of the training institution development for pre-service teachers provides them sufficient training to teach writing skills effectively before starting their teaching profession (Ghabool et al., 2012; Hossein & Nasrin, 2012).

The study approaches that the writing teachers adopt and adapt the need which suits their classroom situations including the students' and their proficiency level, availabilities of the materials, sources, exposure, and several other pedagogical factors. Apparently, the teachers have the extreme liberty to select the type of writing instructions to accomplish the syllabus designed and prepared by the policymakers in terms of the topics, themes, skills, and other elements of the subject. In the Indian teacher's ESL classrooms, they tailor their writing lessons accordingly in order to achieve in the best manner they planned objectives of the lessons. For teaching the writing skills the ESL teachers practiced two major approaches which are product and process approaches (Badger & White, 2000). In the context of the writing instructions in the ESL classroom, these two approaches received many support and critiques because of their advantages and disadvantages.

**Problem Statement**

The ESL teachers face challenges from many areas including time constraints, pedagogical factors, institutional demands, and many more to get the best approach to get the students to write effectively. The undeniable fact that despite all constraints and shortcomings the teachers need to meet the demand of educational institutions to produce the results in terms of passing rate and grades of their students as the pressure and demand from the faculties including higher officers, parents, stakeholders, society, and students themselves leave teachers in no position but to opt any teaching approaches or strategies that help students to scare batter grades in the examinations. Thus, both the teachers and the students do not have any interest to adopt or practice the writing activities which can help to improve their writing ability in the long run. Consequently, everybody falls into the inevitable circumstances to focus only on the grades of the students at the end of each educational level that they are involved (Lie, 2008). In this scenario, a huge problem becomes in the ESL classroom especially in the Indian context that the students seem to pass with outstanding grades but they are unable to perform writing independently which becomes evident only once the student enters the tertiary level or workplace.

**Research Objectives:**

The objectives of this study are:

- To identify the preferred approaches employed by the pre-service teachers in their writing lessons in the ESL classrooms.
- To identify the effects of the pre-service teachers' teaching practices on the students' written tasks.

**Research Questions**

The current research endeavors to find out the answers of the following questions;

- What type of approaches the pre-service teachers tend to utilize in writing instructions?
- What is the impact of writing instruction on students at the primary level?

**Literature Review**

The educators around the world including India practiced many writing approaches at various levels of educational settings for providing outstanding services to their learners to learn writing skills more adequately. In the Indian ESL classroom context, they used the two approaches, the product and the process approaches, which are among the most popular approaches. According to the study (Hosseini, Taghizadeh, Abedin, & Naseri, 2013), the teaching approaches practiced by ESL teachers dominantly have undergone several paradigm shifts and it is based on the need for pedagogical factors. According to the study, process writing was practiced popularly during the 1970s and 1980s. The study conducted by Steel

(2004) shows that process writing includes eight strategies (brainstorming, planning, mind mapping, first draft, peer feedback, editing, final draft, and evaluation). Accordingly, it is a cyclical process and the emphasis is the development of the writing process rather than the linguistic aspects (Badger & White, 2000). The research shows that the students need to prepare several drafts before they arrive at the final draft to have a satisfied one and the role of the teacher is a facilitator who monitors the writing process students' development. Although, the approach of preparing several drafts by the students is found much time consuming and it increased the loads for the teachers as because they had to deal a number of drafts (Foo, 2007) and the elaborate writing activities is also a targeting challenge for the teachers to complete the syllabus on time (Hasan & Akhand, 2010; Macbeth, 2010).

In the 1990s, it seems that the teachers started to practice the product approach (Foo, 2007) and according to (Steele, 2004), the product approach has four strategies (familiarization, controlled writing, guided writing, and freewriting). The research reveals that some studies refer to the Product approach as the model-based approach (Akinwamide & Kolade, 2012). In this Model-based Product approach, a model or sample essay or paragraph is given to the writing students to refer them while they are preparing their written work. The focus is on the accuracy of the language and its contents where the final product is emphasized. The teachers find that practicing this product approach is more suitable for them in accomplishing the syllabus on time.

According to the views of writing teachers, they find this product approach more useful as the students can learn the components of the language which they want to emphasize and the model helpful for the students to provide a guideline to produce a greater piece of final written work that causes to award them outstanding grades. However, the researchers argue that the product approach stifles the students' creativity (Hasan & Akhand, 2010; Macbeth, 2010).

The study shows the strengths and weakness of both the approaches and some of the researchers claims that the process approach will be more useful to help the students to learn to develop their writing skills (Nabhan, 2016). A study conducted by (Adula, 2018) shows that while writing by the eleventh-grade students got benefit from the process writing practices as because the strategies involved in this approach such as brainstorming, planning and rewriting several drafts helps the students to spend more and practice more in writing activities which can enhance their writing proficiency. However, some of the researchers argue that the process writing approach consumes a lot of teaching time which teachers are unable to afford (Maarof, Yamat, & Li, 2011). On the other hand, some researchers say that the production approach can be very useful as a teaching approach because it helps the low proficient students to learn the language more batter (Macbeth, 2010). Hence, some of the researchers argue that in the product approach the writing students keep the focus on the language accuracy and the final product would contribute in developing students' critical thinking but the students may become more dependent on models and are unable to write creatively (Hasan & Akhand, 2010). Thus, the long term ability to become an independent writer becomes a question mark as the development of writing ability is less focused on product approach.

In a nutshell, all the ongoing arguments leave the ESL teachers in a huge dilemma as they make great efforts to find the most suitable approach to adopt and adapt to develop and organize their writing lessons successful both in the short and the long term.

**Research Methodology**

This research is a multiple case study and a mixed-method design at which identifying the preferred writing instructions for the selected pre-service teachers and the effect of their teaching approaches on the students' written tasks. In this study the data was collected through observations, semi-structured interviews and written documentation (students' written texts) by 10 pre-service teachers who were selected as participants through purposive sampling technique and they taught in primary schools in a particular state of India. Writing lessons by each participant were recorded and data collected from the observations using observation checklists and field notes (Five observations per participant). The checklist of observations was validated descriptively using the Rasch Measurement Model and data from the semi-structured interviews were transcribed and analyzed thematically. In the study, the written texts of the students were analyzed to identify the effects of the teaching approaches and strategies being practiced by the teachers on the student's written products.

**Results and Findings**

In this study, the checklist of observations was analyzed by using the Rasch Measurement Model and the value of item reliability was 0.98 which is considered excellent according to (Fisher, 2007). Moreover, the reliability of the person was 0.81 which was considered as good and the reading of alpha Cronbach was 0.86 which highlighted the reliability of this study. Subsequently in the study, the findings from the data analysis provided reactions for the two subdomains which were the preferred practices by pre-service teachers' in teaching writing and the effects of their practices on students' written tasks.

**The pre-service teachers' preferred practices in teaching writing**

In this study, all the participants ( pre-selected teachers) were observed to have plans and their teaching plans divided into five stages which were introduction, presentation, practice, production and closure and the focus of this study was on three important stages presentation, practice, and production which involved in the writing input from the participants and the output from the students. The two stages introduction and the closure stage were merely used to draw the attention of the students towards the lesson and to conclude the lesson respectively so these two stages were not discussed in this study as these two stages did not have a significant impact on the study. The summary of the observation's checklist is illustrated in Table 1 below,

**Table 1: Summary of Analysis (Observation)**

| Stage | Presentation | Practice | Production |
|---|---|---|---|
| Frequency | 6 Product Approach & 4 Mix Approaches | 10 Product Approach | 10 Product Approach |
| Preferred Approach (Stages) | Product Approach (60%) | Product Approach (100%) | Product Approach (100%) |
| Overall Preferred Approach | Product Approach | | |

Table:1 highlighted the practices preferred by the pre-service teachers and these practices are elaborated in the following three stages. The observations during the pre-service teachers writing lessons showed that the majority of them employed a product approach to teach writing during the presentation (60%), practice (100%), and production (100%) stages. Thus, the overall preferred teaching practice employed by the pre-service teachers was the product approach. The observations analysis was triangulated with the views shared by the pre-service teachers in the semi structured interviews which highlighted the reasons for their practices in the three significant stages.

Based on Table:1, the majority (60%) of the participants employed the product approach to teach writing to the students. In the study, the pre-service teachers shared their teaching practice exposure that they had "to provide as much information as possible in the presentation stage so that students understood the topic well". The participant shared that they also provided sample texts (or model essays) for the students to refer them as they felt that the models would help the students to focus on important keywords, sentence structures, and correct spelling. The participants shared that it was important to offer necessary input prior to the final writing stage as it involved similar written tasks. The teaching practice of the participants highlights the use of a familiarization strategy of product approach and brainstorming and planning strategies of process approach was not practiced profoundly during the presentation stage. Some of the participants who attempted to include the brainstorming strategy of the process approach were found to have employed it was only to get the students to guess the topic of the lesson. Subsequently, the familiarization strategy was employed by them to provide input to the students. Therefore, some of them (40%) have utilized both the approaches in this stage. Generally, most of the participants felt that the provision of input to students was crucial to "help students become clear of the facts" that they have planned to teach. Besides, the participants shared that the strategies of process approaches such as brainstorming and planning might "take longer time" and they will face time constraint issues for the upcoming stages. Therefore, the familiarization strategy of the product approach was profoundly employed by the pre-service teachers during the presentation stage.

The participants (Pre-service teachers) use the practice stage to involve the students in the training of the intended language in which they wanted to emphasis in writing lessons. The participants felt that before the final writing the students need to be given sufficient practice in the selected language components and the similar language patterns of the same theme as well. Based on Table 1, all the participants (100%) were found to have employed controlled writing strategy of the product approach in the practice stage where they advised the students to implement certain "features of writing based on the models" or input they taught earlier. These results showed that the participants were in full control of the teaching and learning process at this stage which portrays the controlled writing stage of the product approach. The strategies of process approach (mind mapping) were not practiced by them. The controlled writing strategy with restricted language components which were selected and highlighted by the participants was employed to support the students only to work in the context of the assigned task. This helped the students in terms of language accuracy where the least mistakes could expect in the final piece of writing.

Table 1 shows that in the production stage all the participants practiced product approach and during the production stage all the pre-service teachers would "assign the final written task to the students" where the students need to write with or without guidance. The tasks for the students were selected carefully which suit the "input and training carried out during the presentation and practice stages". The students' written work was collected for marking (evaluation) and returned to them for correction (if any). All these activities clearly resembled the guided writing strategy of the product approach. While the strategies of process approaches such as first draft, peer feedback, editing final draft, and evaluation were not found being practiced by the students. The study reveals that all ten pre-service teachers utilized dominantly the guided writing strategy to get their students' writing more effectively in the production stage. Hence, the production stage was the final writing activity of writing the lesson based on the topic selected allocated to teach writing and the output was the main focus. Therefore, the product approach was found to facilitate the focus of producing the intended output of the writing lessons.

**The effect of pedagogical practices on ESL learners**

A total of 5 written texts of the students' observed and the final writing work was collected at the end of each observation of the participants. The writing contents and the patterns were analyzed in the study to identify the effect of the teaching approach employed on teachers in the writing of students. One sample textual analysis after one writing lesson is provided below in Table 2.

**Table 2: Sample textual analysis**

| Notes Provided | Written Text produced by students |
|---|---|
| **Keywords:**<br>**Camera, Screen, Keyboard, Touch Pad, Send Emails, Play Games, Search for Information, Watch Movies and Listen to Music.** | Student 1: This is my favorite notebook computer. It has a keyboard. It also has a touch pad and a screen. I can also send emails and play games. I can also search for information. Lastly, I can watch movies and listen to the music.<br>Student 2: This is my favorite notebook computer. It also has a keyboard. It also has a touch pad and a screen. I can search for information. I can also send emails. I can also play games and listen to the watch movies and listen to the music. |

Table 2 shows that the analysis preceded by taking the sample of two randomly selected students' written texts. The result shows that the input provided by the participant is much similar to the output which is the final writing of the students. The analysis shows that both the students prepared the final writing work on the same pattern that is why the input resembled. Thus, the study reveals that on the basis of the textual analysis conducted on the overall texts collected results that most of the participants' students similarly prepared their final writings and the participants' students were observed to have employed the product approach in preparing their written work. All the students have utilized all the vocabulary provided by their teacher' to develop their sentences. These developed sentences were also used by the participants in the presentation stage to provide input to the students. Table 3 shows the frequencies of the teaching approaches that the participants' students' employed in their final written work.

**Table 3: Frequencies of text orientation based on participants' practices.**

| No of Participants' Observations | Frequencies of Written Texts orientation (based on participants' practices) | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Product | Process | Mix |
| 50 | 40 | 1 | 9 |
| (100%) | (80%) | (2%) | (18%) |

Dominant Approach = Product Approach

According to the results, a majority of 80% of the participants' students were found to have employed a product approach in preparing their final written work which was very identical to the participants' input. In this study analysis, the output of the students was observed to be almost perfect without much error in terms of language knowledge such as spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure. The result of this study also confirmed the findings that in Indian ESL classrooms the product approach was intensely used in assigning tasks to students (Foo, 2007). Thus, the teaching practices of pre-service teachers' which are adopting the product approach also influenced their students to produce very similar ways for final written work with significant language accuracy but lack of creativity on their own.

## Discussion

Based on the findings from the observation, semi-structured interview and written text, teaching constraints and institutional factors were found to have influenced the pre-service teachers' selection of teaching approaches. Basically, the writing lessons were conducted for about one hour in a week (on a particular theme). Most of the participants felt obliged in providing sufficient input to students so that the students will have sufficient knowledge of the topic discussed. The teachers were found to have spent more than 20 minutes during the presentation stage to provide input for the students. The practice and production stages were conducted in about 15 minutes each. Apparently, 15 minutes were not enough for the students even to do guided writing activities let alone the free writing activities (which were not found to be practiced based on the finding of this study). Based on the timeframe practiced by the pre-service teachers, the strategies of the process approach will be difficult to be practiced. Thus, this study suggests that some strategies of process approach (if not all) be integrated into the writing instructions by increasing the in-class writing sessions by increasing the time allocated for the production stage. The general division of time practiced and suggested is highlighted as a time framework in Table 4 below.

**Table 4: Practiced and Suggested Time Framework**

| Stages | Practiced Time Frame (60 Mins) | Suggested Time Frame (60 Mins) | Note |
|---|---|---|---|
| Introduction | 5 mins | 5 mins | Same |
| Presentation | 20 mins | 10 mins | Need to reduce |
| Practice | 15 mins | 10 mins | Need to reduce |
| Production | 15 mins | 35 mins | Need to increase |
| Closure | 5 mins | 5 mins | Same |

Based on Table 4, writing teachers may have more time to get their students to be directly involved in the writing activities. This can be done by adjusting the time spent on other stages such as the presentation and practice stages. This can be done by utilizing the current technology and social media to provide students some input online prior to the writing lessons. Thus, teachers can find more time to practice the writing activities in the classroom. At the same time, some strategies of process writing such as the preparation of several drafts before arriving at the final draft can be practiced with students. This training is important so that students do not become very dependent on mere input from the teachers or similar models to prepare their own writing. Teachers can also practice the free writing strategies of the product approach which is crucial in getting the students to write independently.

## Conclusion

The overall finding of the study reveals that the dominant approach practiced by the pre-service teachers was the product approach. The study shows that pre-service teachers were not able to employ the process approach which is favored by researchers for preparing the students to be better in writing due to the need for syllabus completion and students' preparation in producing an error-free final product. Thus, the input became more important than the output. This study recommends the use of the suggested time framework for teachers to practice the strategies of the process approach and the free writing strategy of the product approach to help students in producing more independent written text beyond the teachers' sample texts or input. Despite the debate that which of the approach is superior or inferior, both the approaches are worth to be utilized wisely in the writing classrooms. Hence, a constructive learning process may take place rather that was memorization and regurgitation of the input provided by the teachers. The teaching lessons need to be construed carefully to provide room for free writing with several drafts and editing stages for students to develop the writing skills under a less stressful environment. It is timely that this effort is done to take the learners to the next level of writing as well as preparing independent writers of the future.

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THE ASIAN ESP JOURNAL

# Modified Reading Program to Improve Students' Motivation in Writing Skill of Level-One Students at the English Language and Translation

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**Abstract**

The present study explores the impact of reading skill on 30 undergraduate students' narrative ability from level one at the English Language and Translation, Qassim University. A total number of 4 narrative passages were circulated to the students at the English Language and Translation, Qassim University. This study is based on quantitative and qualitative research methods in order to reach results accurately. The students participated in a four-week intervention program. The categories in which the students participated are on content progress, lexical diversity, and grammatical correctness. The level one students' scores indicated variations and differences in their content progress, grammatical correctness, and lexical diversity. The findings of this study point out that to get an improvement in the writing narrative passages in content progress, grammatical correctness, and lexical diversity in students' essays needs high motivation. The improvement of the students in the content progress part displays that reading passages which is enhancement information collective to the students' contextual will assist them in their satisfied growth precisely and as the whole on their writing performance. The results also show that the terminology input and the reading passages and comprehension training inspired the students to increase their use of grammatical structure and lexical diversity. These results are in line with the view that comprehensible input of (Krashen, 1984) and suitable language instructional training for writing interference allows involving of learning by the students. Therefore, this study suggests that teachers in the English Language and Translation, Qassim University should apply reliable reading resources that are applicable to the contextual awareness of the students in teaching writing to the undergraduate students of level one.

**Keywords:** *Reading program, students' motivation, writing development, narrative writing, Qassim University*

## Introduction

At present, motivation to study has turned out to be an essential aim in learning a language. Teachers have accountability to motivate and encourage learners in an order they succeed in mastering and using the language in a social context (Alrefaee & Al-Ghamdi, 2019)l. According to Winkel (1989: 99), the teacher should attempt to improve the students' motivation to learn a language in many ways. One mutual inquiry is that English teachers frequently ask themselves, "How do we motivate students to learn English?" Students' motivation has constantly turn out to be the main alarm for them because students' motivation is serious for the efficiency of English teaching and learning in this era.

English is the maximum broadly used language in the world. English is the language of power. Due to mushrooming growth in science and technology, trade, international relations, and the like, the world has become a small city having English as its primary language (Alzeebaree and Yavuz, 2017 cited in Alzeebaree and Hasan, 2020). Today, the countries are competing in the global race of development in all fields of life. These countries plan to develop their resources in science, technology, commerce, information, cybernetics, international relationships, economy, diplomacy, tourism, banking, etc. So, these countries have come to know that developing English resources will enable them to compete in such a global race. As Crystal (1997, p. 360) pointed out that "According to conservative estimates, mother-tongue speakers [of English] have now reached around 400 million; a further 350 million use English as a second language, and a further 100 million use it fluently as a foreign language".

**Literature review**

Mahadi's study (2018) indicates that reading materials, comprehension exercises, and vocabulary input help students be more aware of the grammatical structure and use of lexical variety. There is a similar study which also resulted that the students need to be engaged in language instructional exercises for writing intervention and need to have comprehensible input (Krashen, 1984). Moreover, many studies have concluded that having the right input of reading is essential when teaching when a second language or foreign language is concerned (Hyland, 2003: Renandya, 2007; Zainal & Husin, 2011). In addition, regular reading and writing training have a positive effect on writing outcomes (Tsang, 1996). By reading before writing can make students easier to face vocabulary and grammatical problems. It is because reading the students has knowledge in comprehending not only the meaning of the words but also the grammatical structure. Therefore, one technique of improving the grammatical and lexical mastery is by reading, a notion that provides importance to the effect of extensive reading (Renandya, 2007; Tsang, 1996).

In acquiring a second language, writing skills are recognized to post the highest challenge to both the learners and the teachers. In a writing task, the learners are compulsory to provide their ideas, thoughts, feelings, and experiences into text (Grabe, 2001; Hyland, 2003; Zainal & Husin, 2011). Similarly, the teachers need to deliver and convey the content of the material that will be taught and how they will start writing. It offers an effect on the teacher's performance if the students' performance is good in that practice. Consequently, the teacher certainly needs the expertise and capability to teach the students to write (Hyland, 2003). Richards and Renandya (2002: 30) noted that "There is no doubt that writing is the most difficult skill for EFL learners to master. The difficulty lies in generating and organizing ideas and translating these ideas into readable texts. They found that lower level students used their L1 more than the advance students, an obvious pitfall caused by several factors such as lack of vocabulary acquisition and interest".

When it comes to English as a foreign language, initial knowledge of students facing writing difficulties is a significant first step to increase their writing performance ( David and Ritchey ; 2014). The First score of students (N = 150) was managed like a piece of initial writing procedures and reading methods in January. Oral Reading Fluency and Sentence Writing Quality established very good grouping accurateness when a teacher assessment was used to classify which students had writing problems (AUC > .90), and the united procedures produced understanding and specificity indices greater than 0.90. At this time, reading skills may be a vital element for classifying risk for writing problems and the mutual basis of many writing and reading skills and the comorbidity of writing and reading difficulties for students (Hooper et al., 2010; Katusic et al., 2009). Reading procedures can work to progress the accurateness. When the students observe the text confidently, they will have a lesser level of fear of the writing works and hence increase their readiness to write (Abd Rahim, Jaganathan & Tengku Mahadi, 2016). Hence, the current study is inspired by the proposal that a reading program that is familiar and relevant to the reader's experience will affect the students' writing skills. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the progression of reading-giving enhancement to encourage and motivate the students in writing skills for the level one undergraduate students.

**Situation of English Language in Saudi Arabia**

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is among the Arab nations where English is taught as a foreign language. The history of English teaching in Saudi Arabia is closely linked to the events shaping the history of Saudi Arabia after the influx of English-speaking people related to the discovery of oil. The then king, Abdul Aziz, had consolidated the tribal set up of the land into a state and English language teaching had been introduced in this state in 1924, though, the major boost in the teaching of the language appeared only after the establishment of English department in 1957 at King Saud University (Al-Abed Al-Haq, & Smadi 1996; Faruk; Niblock, 2006).

Therefore, the need for English and its teaching and use go parallel to the growth of the oil industry in the Kingdom, with the influx of foreign workers and the government's desire to bring the state's mixing into the world scheme where English was an essential requirement. Thus, in the 1970s, sweeping changes took place in Saudi Arabia towards ELT, materializing all the desired developments. For example, in the 1970s "tens of thousands of Americans were employed in Saudi Arabia" (Zuhur 2011: 117), and the Ministry of Education designed a distinct program for English language teachers in 1973, and "English language teaching became part of training and curriculum at almost all the institutes of higher education" (Al-Abed Al-Haq, & Smadi 1996: 459). There has been a tremendous growth of ELT in Saudi Arabia since then. However, in spite of all these efforts and initiatives, Saudi Arabia falls, as figured out by Khalid Al-Seghayer (2011) and noted by the present researcher, and many other researchers as well, into the low ability (rather than the inner/high ability sphere in country, to use B. Kachru's terminology denoting the level of English in various countries. As mentioned in the abstract, English is taught as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia, but all university graduates must learn the language and have academic knowledge of English since English is the library language and the medium of instruction for all the general and professional university courses. However, commonly students joining universities are found lacking in the required proficiency in English. They are expected to follow the university courses in English, and even the English language training courses provided to them in the Preparatory Year to bridge the gap expect from them some basic level proficiency so that they follow the course instructions. The problem gets complicated because they join the university after the critical age of language learning in a native or near-native environment, subconsciously internalizing the target language's latent grammar. The teaching of English language initiates from beginner level in Saudi Arabia, and it lasts to advanced levels. Nevertheless, learners' understanding of the language (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) usually stays not good, as stated by Al-Seghayer (2011).

**Objectives of the study as follows:**

- To have a clear knowledge of the difficulties that undergraduate level one EFL students face in writing narrative passages.
- To know the enhancement of the students' aspiration and motivation in writing narrative passages through the reading program.
- To shed light on the students' difficulties while writing in order to avoid and overcome them.

## Methodology

### *Sample*

Thirty undergraduate level-one students studying at the English Language and Translation, Qassim University participated in this study. A total number of 4 narrative passages were distributed to the students at the English Language and Translation, Qassim University. This study is based on quantitative and qualitative research procedures to reach results accurately. The students participated in a four-week intervention program. The categories in which the students participated are content progress, lexical diversity, and grammatical correctness. All the students have studied writing narratives by using direct translation. They always tend to use a dictionary when they write into a foreign language. They face difficulty in writing a text without opening a dictionary. Then the teacher gives the students a new method for improving their writing performance in learning a foreign language. Some narrative text is conducted for the students to teach reading and writing to the students and to discuss and mark students' essay writing.

### *Instrument*

The research instrument for teaching narrative writing by reading program is an observation sheet to know the teaching process using the reading program. On the side of observation, the writer also gives close and ended questioner for the students to know their motivation and their reply after using the method after learning development. The questionnaire measures their motivation toward writing after using the reading program method. In addition, the writer uses documentation about everything that happens in the teaching-learning process. Different from the other techniques in collecting data, documentation is not reactive so that the subject cannot hide something (Setiyadi, 2006).

The researcher also provides pre-test and post-test to the students to compare the result of writing by translating and writing a reading program between level one students. The pre-test was administered to evaluate the students' preliminary writing skills, while the later was managed to assess the effect of reading on the students' writing achievement. The test duration was one hour, and both tests were graded according to the students' writing scale. Three raters also managed scores. To assess the students' writing outcome marks scale for writing was used besides the recommendation by English courses. The measures cover three components of writing performance, including content, lexical variety, and grammatical accuracy. Table 1 below illustrates the marks.

**Table 1 Components for assessing the writing tasks and marking titles**

| Components | Descriptions | Marks |
|---|---|---|
| **Content** | • Ideas are clearly on topic specified. | 4 points |
| | • Most ideas are focused on topic but important facts and information either unclear or omitted. | 3 points |
| | • Ideas are generally related to the topic | 2 points |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | with little evidence provided.<br>• Few facts related to topic with little evidence provided. | 1 points |
| **Lexical variety** | • Word choice and tone that is purposeful, precise and clear.<br>• Most parts clear and specific with appropriate tone.<br>• General words choice with little establishment on the appropriate tone.<br>• Vague or limited word choice with inappropriate tone | 4 points<br>3 points<br>2 points<br>1 points |
| **Grammatical Accuracy** | • Consistent command of grammar- (spelling accuracy, punctuation, tenses, subject-verb agreement and discourse markers).<br>• Adequate command of grammar.<br>• Poor command of grammar | 3 points<br>2 points<br>1 points |

## Result and Discussion

Cycle 1

**Table 2 Independent Components Statistics**

| | | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Content CC1** | Pre-test | 30 | 66.2333 | 10.51988 | **1.92066** |
| | Post test | 30 | 69.4667 | 9.70863 | **1.77254** |
| **Lexical CC1** | Pre-test | 30 | 63.8333 | 10.85352 | **1.98157** |
| | Post test | 30 | 65.5333 | 10.21403 | **1.86482** |
| **Grammar CC1** | Pre-test | 30 | 63.4000 | 10.17638 | **1.85794** |
| | Post test | 30 | 64.9667 | 9.84179 | **1.79686** |
| **Content EC1** | Pre-test | 30 | 69.4667 | 9.70863 | **1.77254** |
| | Post test | 30 | 70.6333 | 10.09433 | **1.84296** |
| **Lexical EC1** | Pre-test | 30 | 64.7333 | 9.50838 | **1.73598** |
| | | | | | |
| | Post test | 30 | 70.5333 | 8.29929 | **1.51524** |
| **Grammar EC1** | Pre-test | 30 | 64.3000 | 10.22893 | **1.86754** |
| | | | | | |
| | **Post test** | **30** | **69.0333** | **8.19370** | **1.49596** |

Cycle 2

**Table 3 Independent Group components Statistics**

| | | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Content CCI** | Pre-test | 30 | 66.6000 | 11.03787 | 2.01523 |
| | Post-test | 30 | 67.5667 | 10.46071 | 1.90986 |
| **Lexical CCI** | Pre-test | 30 | 65.3000 | 9.88259 | 1.80431 |
| | Post-test | 30 | 66.2667 | 9.70223 | 1.77138 |
| **Grammar CCI** | Pre-test | 30 | 63.9000 | 10.03906 | 1.83287 |
| | Post-test | 30 | 65.5333 | 8.86968 | 1.61938 |
| **Content ECI** | Pre-test | 30 | 69.8333 | 8.74183 | 1.59603 |
| | Post-test | 30 | 74.6333 | 8.29825 | 1.51505 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Lexical ECI** | Pre-test | 30 | 65.8333 | 9.28508 | 1.69522 |
| | Post-test | 30 | 68.6333 | 8.35209 | 1.52488 |
| **Grammar ECI** | Pre-test | 30 | 65.6000 | 9.31665 | 1.70098 |
| | Post-test | 30 | 69.6333 | 8.09633 | 1.47818 |

The students' T-Test was conducted to relate the pre-test and post-test marks of the target students. Tables 2 and 3 display the mean scores between students in the pre-test and post-test scores in the three writing components: content, grammatical, and lexical. As the descriptive data in tables 2 and 3 show, the mean scores of the students in the test in class are higher than those in all writing aspects of the students in the control class. In the meeting 2, we can see that learners improve most in the content aspects in the post-test. Their mean score of 69.8 in the pre-test was 74.6 in the post-test, and the mean score for lexical variety in the pre-test was 65.8 to 68.6 in the post-test. Similarly, the mean score 65.6 for grammar in the pre-test increased to 69.6 in the post-test. Each component in the experiment class has a significant increase between pre-test and post-test. There is increasing the means score in students, but the increase is not too significant in all aspects of writing. The mean score for content in the pre-test 66.6 increased to 67.5 in the post-test. The mean score for grammar in the pre-test 63.9 rose to 65.5 in the post-test, and correspondingly, the mean score for lexical 65.3 to 66.2 in the post-test. Students' error means in the control class higher than in the experiment class, as shown in tables 2 and 3. In the experiment class from meeting 1 to meeting 2 was reduced in the post-test. It can be said that the reading program is more effective in improving writing skills.

These findings are generally consistent with previous studies that showed a positive impact of reading in developing content for writing (Belcher & Hirvela. 2001). The findings are also supported by Tsang (1996), who found that reading and frequent writing practice improved writing performance, as we can see from the score in tables 2 and 3.

**Table 4. Students' Motivation of Using a Reading Program**

| **Student' Motivation** | **Frequency** | **Percent** |
|---|---|---|
| **High** | 24 | **80%** |
| **Low** | **6** | **20%** |

Table 4 shows the students' responses in the experiment class, where 24 students from 30 students have high motivation in reading programs, and the rest are low motivation in using this technique. In short, this technique is to motivate the student in writing.

The improvement of grammatical accuracy, sentence structure, and vocabulary knowledge through reading has also been reported in several studies (Catts et al., 1999). This was because of the uninteresting instructional performances in class that helped them remember the structures and contextual words used in their writing. The students feel easier in remembering the words from the text than write.

Generally, the results show a positive effect of the reading program in enhancing the students' motivation and the students' performance in writing skills in the aspects of content, lexical, and grammatical accuracy.

## Conclusion

This study investigates the process and the differences between Writing Narrative by translating L1 and Writing Narrative by Reading Program of undergraduate students from level one at the English Language and Translation, Qassim University. The findings showed that there is an improvement for students' motivation and teaching process of the students in the experiment class had significantly higher in the post-test scores for content, use of lexical diversity, and grammatical correctness in the cycle two of the experiment class which uses Reading Program. These findings of this study illustrate that students who are provided with the appropriate sample texts and vocabulary for writing narratives and are repeatedly exposed to similar narratives would be able to improve their writing performance. Moreover, by using this program, some students were motivated and more involved in the learning process than using translation L1 by using a dictionary or by searching from the internet. Their thinking process in comprehension the vocabulary is better than translation.

Although the means score differences in the lexical, content and grammatical aspects are quite small, the differences are significant. This is because, some of the students who had a higher level of anxiety in writing were able to engage in classroom discussions when learning process and provide some output in their writing tasks.

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# Improving Communicative English Skills Based on Sociolinguistics Competence of EFL Students

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**Abstract**

This study endeavors to examine the sociolinguistic competence of the Saudi EFL students at the different levels of the undergraduate program at the Department of English Language and Translation at Qassim University. This study's data were collected from a total of 80 students covering the four levels of the undergraduate program included in this study. From each level, a group of 20 students was considered. Precisely, it explores the students' profile, their level of sociolinguistic competence, and aspects contributing to the improvement of the sociolinguistic competence of the students in an attempt to improve their communicative English. The study applied the descriptive-correlational strategy with the use of a questionnaire and a standardized sociolinguistic competence test to collect the data students. The findings revealed a correlation between EFL students' categories in the four levels and their sociolinguistic competence. The results inferred from the findings that three enabling aspects in the improvement of sociolinguistic competence of the EFL students at the four levels comprise (1) the government encourages students to learn English at all Universities levels; (2) speaking in English provides one chance to work in Arabia or abroad; and (3) English teachers encourage students to use English correctly to the situation. The study's findings reveal several conclusions that were also suggested in order to emphasize on the aim of enhancing EFL students' communicative English competence at Qassim University.

**Keywords**: *communicative English, sociolinguistic competence, Saudi EFL students, Qassim University*

## Introduction

The goal of language teaching has become to enable learners use the language effectively in a social context(Alrefaee & Al-ghamdi, 2019).While the increasing necessity for English communicative skills is essential to occupation in the fast-developing context of Saudi Arabia and the Government's plans are starting the will to elevate the delivery of the English language within the educational organization, traditional grammar-translation teaching methods have been unsettled and still not succeeded. The need of English, and, therefore, its teaching and use, goes parallel to the growth of the oil industry in the Kingdom, with the influx of foreign workers and then the government's desire to bring the state's combination into the world method where English was an essential requirement. Thus, in the 1970s, sweeping changes took place in Saudi Arabia towards ELT, materializing all the desired developments. For example, in the 1970s "tens of thousands of Americans were employed in Saudi Arabia" (Zuhur 2011: 117), and the Ministry of Education planned a distinct program for English language teachers in 1973, and "English language teaching became part of training and curriculum at almost all the institutes of higher education" (Al-Abed Al-Haq, & Smadi 1996: 459). There has been a tremendous growth of ELT in Saudi Arabia since then. However, in spite of all these efforts and initiatives, Saudi Arabia falls, stated by Khalid Al-Seghayer (2011) and noted by the present researcher, and many other researchers as well, into the low ability (rather than the internal/great ability) circle country, to use B. Kachru's terminology denoting the level of English in various countries. As mentioned in the abstract, English is taught as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia. All university graduates must learn the language and have academic knowledge of English since English is the library language and the medium of instruction for all the general and professional university courses. However, commonly students joining universities are found lacking in the required proficiency in English. They are expected to follow university courses in English, and even the English language training courses provided to them in the Preparatory Year to bridge the gap expect from them some basic level proficiency so that they follow the course instructions. The problem gets complicated because they join the university after the critical age of language learning in a native or near-native environment, subconsciously internalizing the target language's latent grammar. Teaching English begins from a primary level in Saudi Arabia and continues to higher levels. Nevertheless, learners' comprehension of the language (reading, writing, speaking, and listening) commonly remains very low, as stated by Al- Seghayer (2011).

The essential goal of language acquisition is to have "meaningful interaction in the target language, natural communication in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the message they are conveying and understanding" (Krashen, 2007). Henceforth, evolving English language learners' communicative competence is a vital topic of language teaching and learning, and it is serious to learners' future growth.

Sociolinguistic competence is, in a way, defined as an individual's capability to generate and understand appropriate utterances within a given setting. Part of the dominion is the practice of speech acts, which are set utterances, used in certain conditions toward attaining actions like recognizing, greeting, demanding, replying, etc. It also contains an individual's understanding of correctness in a variety of societal conditions.

## Literature review

English Language Teaching (ELT) is beached on the viewpoint that the purpose of language attainment is Communicative Competence. The student's capacity to converse efficiently is eloquently motivated by the techniques used in the teaching-learning development. The statement for ground-breaking education techniques that would leave a place for an individual's self-expression and societal interface with others must influence the learners' competence.

To progress the skills of real communication, some examples of "communicative competence" have been proposed (Ellis, 1994). Chomsky (1965) to separate between "competence (individual's fundamental knowledge of the language) and performance (the understanding of language in definite circumstances)". Contrariwise, Hymes (1971), who laid the statement to the term "communicative competence," stressed the social cooperative and assigning preparation of the language. Hymes overextended Chomsky's term of "competence into communicative competence" by counting both rules of language use and grammatical rules. (Hymes, 1971; Taylor, 1983).

"Communicative competence" is impartial of language learning. It indicates making the student able to practice the language, refer to something, and receive meanings through written and oral skills. The impression of communicative competence was initially from Chomsky's individuality between "competence and performance". By the competence, Chomsky states that "the general knowledge of the normal speaker-listener conventional in an entirely regular speech community. Such essential knowledge allows a speaker of a language to yield and understand an endless predictable of sentences out of a finite set of rules". "The transformational grammar" proposed a clear clarification of this silent structure of knowledge of the language, which is classically not aware but is surely understood. Hymes mentioned that "the transformational theory transmits to its excellence the longing to contract in exercise only what is internal to language, however, to find in that internality that in theory is of the broadest or deepest human significance" (Hymes, 1972, Ohno, 2002 cited by Batang, 2010).

**Sociolinguistic Competence**

"Sociolinguistic competence" is the acquaintance of the socio-cultural language's rules and discourse. This competence obliges an awareness of the context of social in which language is applied: the structures of the contributors, the knowledge they have in common, and the tasks of communication. Merely in a filled context of this type can a choice be done on the suitability of a "particular utterance", as stated by Brown (2000). Bachman's (1990) "sociolinguistic competence" comprises structures, that contract with issues like "formality, politeness, metaphor, registers, and culturally associated parts of language".

"Sociolinguistic competence," as Brown (2000, p. 55) also states, "the skills and knowledge involved in using language functionally in a social context. Since language is a social phenomenon, its use needs the understanding of social standards and customs, which marks a significant point in linguistic communication between contributors of diverse cultures, even if the contributors are often unconscious of them. These social standards affect, amongst other issues, greetings and politeness, rules of address, how relationships between age group, sexes, people of diverse social rank, social groups are spoken through distinct language markers, linguistically organized rituals, dissimilarities in a register, dialect and accent, through vocal rhythms, for example".

**Communicative Language Teaching**

Richards (2006) proposes that in our day, the concern for the learning development is shared by mutually the teacher and the student. Thus, the teacher is not seen as a missing part of the truth but as a facilitator or moderator of communication between members in the learning development. Additionally, classroom accomplishments are concerned with cooperative rather than the characteristic model of learning. This requests an investment of time and energy both by the student and the teacher.

Richard and Rogers (1998) propose the following traits of communicative understanding of language:

1. Language is a system for the expression of meaning.
2. The primary function of language is for interaction and communicative.
3. The structure of language reflects its functional communicative uses.
4. The primary units of language are not merely grammatical and structural features, but categories of functional and communication meaning as exemplified in discourse.

Hence, Richards (2006) emphasized that an individual learns language greatest when using it to make common stuff rather than learning how language goes, works, and involved rules. Furthermore, individuals learn a language by speaking in it. So, classroom assignments should be expressive and should include actual communication. Afterward, for a teaching plan to be honestly creative, teaching materials have to accompaniment the communicative approach strategy (Richards 2006). This strategy needs the use of communicative-based assignments that come in the method of information-gathering assignments, task-completion assignments, opinion-sharing activities, information-transfer activities, role-plays, and reasoning gap activities. Task completion assignments come in the method of map reading, puzzles, games, and other types of classroom responsibilities in which the emphasis is on using an individual's language properties to finish a task.

Communicative Language Approach (CLT) is an approach to teaching second/foreign language that emphasizes communication as both of the methods and the eventual objective of learning a language. It is also mentioned to as "Communicative approach to the teaching of a second and foreign language" or the "Communicative Approach", as an allowance of the national-functional syllabus, communicative language teaching also places immense importance on assisting students to use the second/foreign language in a diversity of contexts and, places unlimited importance on learning language roles. CLT is frequently considered as a wide-ranging method to teaching rather than a teaching technique with a clear set of activities in the classroom.

## Objectives of the Study

This study aims to increase the sociolinguistic competence awareness, strengths, and weaknesses of Saudi EFL students in the different levels of the undergraduate program at the Department of English Language and Translation at Qassim University. Also, the study is lead to determine the level of sociolinguistic competence of students so that sooner they will surely be proud of themselves because of getting a feel for the language and finally be capable of conversing with the world without hesitation, in any situation, anywhere and at any time with the highest competence. Finally, this study aims to enhance the students' communication skills by letting them know the significance of the communicative approach.

## Research Methodology

### *Research design*

In order to accomplish the objectives of the study, the researcher applied the descriptive-correlational design wherein extensive evaluation was undertaken in order to decide the level of the sociolinguistic competence of the Saudi EFL students in the different levels of the undergraduate program at the Department of English Language and Translation at Qassim University. The study described the profile of the students on levels, place of residence, number of years in learning English, grade in English, and language exposure and the level of the respondents' sociolinguistic competence in terms of initiating a talk and responding to talk, features of communication situation and writing an application letter.

The study aimed at finding the correlation of the level of sociolinguistic competence to the profile variables of the EFL students as well as the variance among the students' level of sociolinguistic competence when gathered according to their outline variables and the association between the students' level of sociolinguistic competence, and the select profile variables as to average grade in English subjects, number of years in learning English and language exposure to English.

### *Research Instruments*

To establish credibility in investigating the issue of interest and answering the research questions, a questionnaire was distributed to the students in soliciting their profile variables. In terms of determining the sociolinguistic competence of EFL students, a standardized sociolinguistic competence test (adapted from Danao, 1987) was administered to all the students using the Saudi context.

The standardized test is composed of 50 items, divided into the three following subtests, namely:

1. 20 items for initiating a talk and responding to talk
2. 20 items for Features of the communication situation
3. 10 items for writing an application letter

***Data Collecting Technique***

The letter of demand was submitted to the Chairman of the Department of English Language and Translation. Then, the Chairman endorsed and set the schedule of time and place to start the study. As soon as the schedule was permitted, the researcher directly led the said questionnaire and test.

The adapted sociolinguistic competence test was validated by a pool of English teachers in the Department of English Language and Translation at Qassim University before administering it to the students. The researcher explained the directions to the students, and they were given ample time to respond to the sociolinguistic competence test.

The students were divided into three groups to go to three different classrooms to answer the test individually and independently. Each teacher was available to observe the testing process and to explain all the respondents' questions related to the test.

To decide the objectivity of the test in subtests 3 of the standardized sociolinguistic competence test, three English teachers were commissioned to do the inter-rater validity assessment using Carol's Academic Writing Scale.

To certify the test's reliability and validity, the researcher and a few English teachers managed and treated the results by using suitable statistical tools SPSS (ANOVA and T-test).

***Data Analysis***

To determine the profiles of the students, frequency and percentage distribution were used in the study. On the other hand, mean and standard deviation were also applied to decide the level of sociolinguistic competence of the four levels of students. Furthermore, Chi-square was also applied to find out the significant correlation between the levels of sociolinguistic competence of the students and their profiles. ANOVA and T-test were used to decide the important difference among the students' level of sociolinguistic competence when gathered according to the profile variables.

**Findings**

From the data obtained, the following findings were discovered:

Distribution of the Students' Profile

The students' profile indicates that there is no equal number of variations in the students' levels in the study; the majority of them are from urban areas. The following tables present the frequency distribution of the student respondents as to equivalent categories.

**Table 1. Percentage Distribution of the Students' Profile in terms of levels**

| Levels | Frequency (n=68) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| **Level one** | 21 | 30.9 |
| **Level two** | 22 | 32.4 |
| **Level three** | 11 | 16.2 |
| **Level four** | 2 | 17.6 |

**Table 2. Percentage Distribution of the Students' Profile as to Place of Residence**

| Place of Residence | Frequency (n=68) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| **In the urban** | 59 | 86.8 |
| **In the rural** | 9 | 13.2 |

Moreover, the majority of them are learners of the English language for 10 to 15 years; most of them obtained a moderate average grade in English (Grade C); the majority is exposed to the English language at home for 1 to 2 hours and; they are sometimes exposed to mass media to learn English.

**Respondents' sociolinguistic competence in terms of initiating and responding to a talk**

As shown in Table 3 below, the mean score was 7.50, with a standard deviation of 1.90. The mean score of 7.50 in the scale is considered incompetent. This finding indicates that the respondents found difficulty in initiating and responding to talk in English. They could hardly start conversing in English with foreigners and their teachers. They also found difficulty handling situations where they had to respond in English, such as in applying for a job in an agency or office, responding to visitors in school, and leaving on a trip and other similar circumstances.

**Table 3. Performance of the students in initiating and responding to a talk.**

| Level of Performance (20 items) | Frequency (n=68) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| **Very competent (17-20)** | - | - |
| **Competent (13-16)** | - | - |
| **Moderately competent (9-12)** | 22.0 | 32.4 |
| **Incompetent (5-8)** | 42.0 | 61.8 |
| **Very Incompetent (1-4)** | 4.0 | 5.9 |
| **Mean=7.50 SD=1.90** | | |

**Students' sociolinguistic competence in terms of understanding the features of a communicative situation**

In table 4 below, 20 item features of the communication situation subtest, the students answered some questions related to the situation given. The mean score for this dimension was 9.09, with a standard deviation of 3.14. The data reveals that the respondents are moderately competent in responding to questions such as asking where a person is, asking for directions, asking for favors, and asking for reasons. They are also moderately competent in making an appointment, encasing checks, and answering directions.

A closer perusal of the data reveals that 33 or 48.5 percent obtained 9-12 scores (moderately competent), and 18 or 25.5 percent registered a score of 5-8 (incompetent). The respondents' moderate competence signifies that they can fairly respond to communicative situations such as asking where a person is, asking for directions, and asking for favors. On the other hand, those who are incompetent in communicative situations are hard up asking for reasons, making an appointment, encasing checks, and answering directions.

**Table 4. The Performance of the students in understanding the features of a communicative situation.**

| Level of Performance (20 items) | Frequency (n=68) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| **Very competent (17-20)** | 1.0 | 1.5 |
| **Competent (13-16)** | 9.0 | 13.2 |
| **Moderately competent (9-12)** | 33 | 48.5 |
| **Incompetent (5-8)** | 18.0 | 26.5 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Very Incompetent (1-4)** | | 7.0 | 10.3 |
| **Mean=9.09 SD=3.14** | | | |

**Respondents' sociolinguistic competence in terms of writing an application letter**

Using Brendan Carroll's Academic writing as a rubric, the students' performance in writing an application letter is shown in table 5 below. In 10 items writing application letter subtest, the students wrote an application letter in which they stated their qualifications aside from personal information and all the necessary parts to a person they thought should act favorably to their letter. As gleaned from table 6, it can be confirmed that a huge number of the respondents, 56 or 82.4 percent got a band 0-1, which has an adjectival rating of non-writer.

**Table 5. The Performance of the students in writing an application letter**

| Level of Performance (10 items) | Band | Frequency (n=68) | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Non-writer** | 0-1 | 56 | 82.4 |
| **Intermittent writer** | 2 | 6 | 8.8 |
| **Extremely limited writer** | 3 | - | - |
| **Marginal writer** | 4 | - | - |
| **Modest writer** | 5 | 1 | 1.5 |
| **Competent writer** | 6 | 2 | 2.9 |
| **Good writer** | 7 | 2 | 2.9 |
| **Very good writer** | 8 | 1 | 1.5 |
| **Expert writer** | 9-10 | - | - |

**Enabling Aspects in the Improvement of Sociolinguistic Competence of the students**

Table 6 below presents the enabling aspects in the improvement of the sociolinguistic competence of the students. The essential simplifying aspect is that "the government encourages citizens to learn English," which was revealed by 48 or 70.6 percent of students. This means that they perceived the government's encouragement to use English as a way of developing their sociolinguistic competence.

The second enabling aspect for improving the sociolinguistic competence of the students is "speaking in English gives one an opportunity to work abroad," which was revealed by 47 or 69.1 percent students. This facilitating factor implies that the students believed that anyone who has a good command of the English language had higher opportunities to land in a job overseas.

As revealed by 41 or 60.3 percent of students, the third enabling aspect is “English teachers encourage students to use English appropriately to the situation”. Such finding illustrates that they found their teachers to be essential in developing their sociolinguistic competence.

The fourth enabling aspect in improving the sociolinguistic competence of the students is “It is important to learn English to communicate with friends abroad,” which was revealed by 35 or 51.5 percent of students. This finding implies that the students had also obtained friends abroad who either used English as a first or second/foreign language.

The least aspect that enables the improvement of the sociolinguistic competence of the students is “all who speak English are more successful,” which was revealed by 22 or 32.4 percent of students. Probably, this may be the least facilitating factor, because all in Saudi Arabia are still earning substantially even if they are not very competent sociolinguistically.

**Table 6. Enabling Aspects that improve the sociolinguistic competence of the respondents**

| **Reasons** | **Frequency (n=68)** | **Percentage (%)** |
|---|---|---|
| **Friends are trying hard also to learn English** | 33.0 | 48.5 |
| **It is important to learn English to communicate with friends abroad** | 35.0 | 51.5 |
| **English teachers encourage students to use English appropriately to the situation** | 41.0 | 60.3 |
| **All who speak English are more successful** | 22.0 | 32.4 |
| **Speaking English gives one more opportunities** | 47.0 | 69.1 |
| **Speaking in English allows one to have clients among foreigners** | 32.0 | 47.1 |
| **Parents encourage their children to learn to speak in English** | 30.0 | 44.1 |
| **The government encourages citizens to learn English** | 48.0 | 70.6 |
| **Learning performance improves with a** | 31.0 | 45.6 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **knowledge of English** | | |
| **Knowledge in arts increases when one reads/speaks in English** | 25.0 | 36.8 |

**Conclusions and Recommendations**

This study decided the levels of sociolinguistic competence of the Saudi EFL students in the different levels of the undergraduate program at the Department of English Language and Translation at Qassim University and correlated it with their profile variables. Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are drawn:

Developing useful sociolinguistic competence among Saudi EFL students poses a significant challenge for English teachers in the country. The students' incompetent sociolinguistic performance demands more effort and time among students, teachers, and institutions if they desire to achieve high competitiveness and meet the competencies required in international integration. The crux to the matter is that today, the English language is still considered a foreign language and not embraced as a second language. One sound proof of this is that most students have less exposure to learning the English language and less exposure to learning English using the mass media.

In enhancing the students' sociolinguistic competence, the primordial concern must be given to the beginner students as sociolinguistic competence differs by levels and other factors. Level one students tend to perform lower sociolinguistic tasks than the three other levels. Moreover, the study has proven that the average grade in English plays a serious part in developing the students' sociolinguistic competence. This positive correlation between an average grade in English and sociolinguistic competence ushers the idea that improved academic performance in English is the right vehicle for sociolinguistic competence development. In short, the grade in English is already a reflection of their sociolinguistic performance. Thus, it merits that the teachers need to improve their English language instruction as this is a sound driver in making the students perform sociolinguistic tasks.

**In light of the foregoing findings, the following recommendations are given**

The Department of English Language and Translation at Qassim University must adopt the proposed workbook as this can enhance the sociolinguistic competence and English proficiency of the students in the university;

The Department of English Language and Translation at Qassim University should design and implement more English language communication programs that create an effective and useful language learning environment to enhance students' sociolinguistic competence. The programs could be in the form of teaching and learning activities designed to address the knowledge of cultures, the confidence in communication, etc. and build different communicative situations for students to experience and practice. These programs must be focused on the male students of the university who were found to perform lower sociolinguistic competence than female students.

A policy like "This is an English Speaking Campus" should be introduced to enhance language competence in general and sociolinguistic competence in particular. Such a policy will motivate and force the students to speak the English language more often as they stay inside the premises of the university;

Since the study found out that the average English grade is much related to sociolinguistic competence, there is a need to strengthen English language instruction in English subjects.

The government should make the English language a second language since English is the lingua franca of globalization and international integration. Only by doing this that students' sociolinguistic competence and English proficiency are enhanced.

Students have to give much consideration to the extent of the English language exposure to the mass media and actively take part in actual communications in the target language in the setting.

A similar study with a broader scope is recommended in the researcher's university and other Saudi universities.

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# Perception Analysis of English Language Teachers about Use of Contextualized Text for Teaching ESP

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**Abstract**

Teaching of English in general and teaching of ESP, in particular, has been a critical issue in non-native countries for quite some time. In countries like Saudi Arabia where status of English is of a foreign language, the matter becomes even graver. This paper concerns use of textbook in the class. Most of the non-native countries use foreign authored ESP books. Contextualization has been defined in many ways. Here, the researcher follows Mazzeo, Rab, and Alssid, "A diverse family of instructional strategies designed to more seamlessly link the learning of foundational skills and academic or occupational content by focusing teaching and learning squarely on concrete applications in a specific context" (Mazzeoet al., 2003, pp. 3–4). The Purpose of this descriptive study is to document, the perception of English Language Teachers about the use of Contextualized text at Tertiary Level in Saudi Arabia. A research questionnaire was used to collect the perception of the teachers and to test the hypothesis. The perception questionnaire administered on the teachers of randomly selected College of Business Administration in Riyadh. Data shows that contextualized books can help a great deal to learners of ESP in their learning. It also shows that there is a dire need of contextualization in education especially in the field of ESP for Saudi Arabia.

**Key Words:** *ESP, Contextualized text, Saudi Arabia, Perception Analysis, English Language Teachers.*

## Introduction

English is a language that is used as a common language without borders restrictions. "The majority of these countries still use English as an official language, and consider it their second language" (Miriam, 2001; Al-Ghamdi & Alrefaee, 2020). In the context of Saudi Arabia, the only foreign language taught in the schools is English. Alhawsawi, Al-Johani, and Rajab have contended that students devote nine years in schools learning English yet they fail to develop appropriate language skills. (Alhawsawi, 2013; Al-Johani, 2009; Rajab, 2013). The current study focuses on perceptions of English Language Teachers about use of contextualized text for teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) in Saudi Arabia. Most educators consider English Language Teaching a major area of education. ESP has progressed with a rapid pace in recent times and has a strong influence on different fields of life. English is taught to various fields like business, management, finance, science, technology and others with this ESP approach. In Saudi Arabia, constant need of developing skilled human resource in every field compels school teachers in general and university teachers in particular to work for methods helping developing such graduates. In order to fulfill this need, teachers have been trying to make use of different modern and effective ways of teaching English. There have been students of different social and educational backgrounds; therefore teachers always need to explore newer strategies of teaching these heterogonous groups. These students require basic language skills. Another important factor in this regard is availability of books. Most of the books that are used for teaching English are non-contextualized. Students do not understand the concepts and fail get benefit from these books. It results in rote learning. Most of the learners memorize the tasks only to pass their tests rather than developing certain skills. The situation is worse in ESP where they fail to learn target skills; hence they struggle in their corporate life. To cope up with this situation, teachers need to switch to an alternate and modern way of teaching that is CLT (Contextualized Teaching Learning).

## Purpose of the Study

The Purpose of this study was to explore and analyze the perceptions of tertiary level English Language Teachers about the use of Contextualized text.

## Literature Review

### *Background*

### *Overview of Saudi Arabia*

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, commonly known as Saudi Arabia, founded in 1932 is located in southwestern Asia. The country has a population of 29,994,272 (Central Department of Statistics and Information (2013)), including 9,723,214 foreigners. Saudi Arabia is among the fastest population growth rate in the world with a rate of 3.5% (Onsman, 2010). It has a diverse population with people belonging to different ethnicities from various parts of the world. The majority (90%) is Arab, while the (10%) are of Asian and African origins (Alhawsawi, 2013). Administratively the Kingdom is comprised of 13 administrative provinces with 2 ports namely Jeddah (on the Red Sea) and Dammam (on the Arabian Gulf).

### *Overview of the Education System in Saudi Arabia*

Education in Saudi Arabia has two divisions based on the learners' and the teachers' gender (Al-Zarah, 2008). There is no co-education system in the country which makes it one of the rare countries in the world managing single-sex education system along with Jordan and Bahrain. This system of education is usually prevalent in some Middle East countries with no room for co-education system at intermediate and secondary levels (Fryer & Levitt, 2010). The reason is not only religious but also cultural, social and traditional.(Wiseman, 2010). In spite of segregated education system in the KSA, both streams receive the same quality of education (Al-Johani, 2009). They are offered same curriculum with slight changes required to meet the needs of each gender.

### *Role of Government in the Modern Education System*

Saudi Arabia's government understands the importance of education. This is reflected in their plan namely "Vision 2030". The government has a well -chalked plan of "Professional Development of Younger Generation". There is a significant portion in the plan also given to the relationship between education and national economy and overcoming the challenges in order to connect these units. Although Saudi Arabia is going through a financial crunch these days, yet education seems to be the only governmental sector that has not been hit by a significant financial cut. In addition to the recent policy, the government of Saudi Arabia provides free education at all levels. (Alamri, 2011; Alsharif, 2011& Onsman, 2010). The students are also supporting by not only free books and technological equipment but also scholarships to study in all academically and technologically advanced countries. Children of foreigners residing in the kingdom are provided with funds in terms of school fees by their respective workplaces. As in all public sector schools, the mode of instruction is Arabic, international schools are common in the country for all those foreigners whose children cannot understand Arabic. All these steps taken by the Saudi government show their growing awareness for the education and development of human resource.

***Teaching and Learning of English in Saudi Arabia***

English is the only foreign language taught in schools of Saudi Arabia. According to Al-Shammary, English was introduced as a subject in the late 1950s (Al-Shammary, 1984). Al-Johani maintains that English was introduced in the 1930s but was used only for business (Al-Johani, 2009). It was adopted as an educational subject in 1950s. In early days English was taught at intermediate and secondary levels. It was not taught at the elementary level initially because of their fear of negative impact of learning of a foreign language on first language. The Saudi Government evolved an education system in 2010 that introduced English as a compulsory subject at elementary level as well. All textbooks are provided at the public schools for free. The English books integrate all four skills of the language, grammar, and vocabulary, however, the schools lack resources like language labs and trained teachers (Almutairi, 2008). Alfahadi notes that no prior training or experience is required to be a teacher at schools (Alfahadi, 2014). The Ministry of Education has set the following general objectives for teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) n the kingdom.

- “To enable students to acquire basic language skills (i.e., writing, reading, listening and speaking).
- To enable students to achieve the important linguistic competence needed in different life situations.
- To enable students to achieve the important linguistic competence needed in various professions.
- To allow students to develop positive attitudes towards the learning of the English language.
- To increase students’ knowledge regarding the significance of English as a medium of international communication.
- To increase students’ awareness about the religious, economic, cultural and social issues of their society and make them ready to take part in their solutions.

- To increase students’ linguistic competence that will enable them, in the future, to explain and present Islamic-related information and participate in spreading the religion of Islam.
- To develop students' linguistic competence that enables them to benefit from nations with citizens that speak the English language, which increases the idea of cooperation, respect, and understanding of differences in cultures between the nations.
- To enable students linguistically to allow them to take part in transferring scientific and technological advances of other countries to Saudi Arabia.”

(Al Zayid, 2012; urRahman &Alhaisoni, 2013).

At the higher education level, English is used as a medium of instructions usually in some scientific and technological courses while Arabic is used for Humanities. In case of Humanities, students are required to complete an EFL course as a pre-requisite of starting their university coursework.

***Challenges of Learning English in Saudi Arabia***

Students’ low level of English Language skills has been a major area of concerned in Saudi Arabia. Though the Saudi Government in general and the Ministry of Education, in particular, is exerting colossal efforts, in this regard still students' proficiency English language is unsatisfactory (Al-Johani, 2009; Fareh, 2010 & Khan, 2011). Alhawsawi, Al-Johani, and Rajab maintain that in spite of spending nine years learning English in schools, the students graduate with a low level of competence over English. This causes them a great deal of difficulty when they enter a university (Alhawsawi, 2013; Al-Johani, 2009 & Rajab, 2013). Major reasons of this problem include use of traditional teaching methodologies, reliance on rote learning, lack of motivation, lack of connection of the course contents with the real world, students’ unawareness of the usefulness of the language and their assumption of English language negating their own language and culture. Most of the teachers in Saudi education system use teacher centeredness, leaving little room for the learners to develop their language skills (Alkubaidi, 2014; Alrabai, 2014; Fareh, 2010; Rajab, 2013). There is a culture of considering teacher as the only source of learning which hinders their skill development process in the language (Alkubaidi, 2014; Alrabai, 2014). According to Farehthe class in general lacks learners' participation which makes them passive listeners. They lack pro-activeness and makes the whole process of language learning monotonous and tedious (Alkubaidi, 2014). Teachers focus more on completion of their curricula within stipulated time rather than students’ skill development. Teachers stress more on students’ writing or copying skills which is done with a purpose of record keeping only. (Al-Johani, 2009). Al Rabai suggests that the teacher-centered approached used in the class is making the students reproducers rather than effective learners (Al Rabai 2014). Teachers use the traditional method of Grammar Translation Method of teaching language skills which hinders their ability to develop proficiency in the language (Alhawsawi, 2013; Almutairi, 2008 & Fareh, 2010). Conducting the class in the first language takes away the opportunity from the students to expose much to the target language. (Fareh, 2010). The practice of using native language for instruction leaves no room for students' interaction in the target language during the lesson and the teaching-learning process going on in the class (Alhawsawi, 2013 & Rabab’ah, 2005). Alhawsawi and Raba’ah maintain that the reason of using native language in the class might be teachers' lack of competence over the target language, lack of confidence or their wish of taking the shorter route for teaching the language. Translating from English to Arabic hinders the students in language learning (Alfahadi, 2014). This technique has forced the students to use rote learning for the language class. They memorize language items without essentially getting the meanings or the context and reproduce during examination resulting in almost no skill development. By using this technique, they pass with high grades without any real knowledge or skill of the language (Alkubaidi, 2014; Rajab, 2013). Memorizing the contents stop students' ability of critical thinking and analytical skill development (Alkubaidi, 2014; Fareh, 2010). Students in Saudi Arabia lack motivation for language learning. The reason for this disinterestedness is their teachers' attitude toward language teaching. They usually do not encourage their students for active participation in the activities. This results in lack of motivate on among the learners. Usually, teachers control the class, not encouraging students to think independently, correcting their mistakes and errors immediately, which makes a hostile environment for learning making the students mere listeners. Usually, teachers do not follow up with their students to see their progress in the language (Khan, 2011). Besides lack of motivation from the teachers, the students also face lack of opportunities of social environment conducive to language learning (Alqahtani, 2011; Khan, 2011& Rabab’ah, 2005). English is taken as a foreign language in Saudi Arabia and hence there are not enough opportunities for the learners to use it in their daily life (Alrabai, 2014). Most Saudis use Arabic to communicate which makes the society even meeker for the learners of English language to use it. This social attitude has forced them to assume that English is a useless language for them and they need it if they become English teachers (Alqahtani, 2011; Khan, 2011). Non-Arab foreigners use English but they too try to learn Arabic language and communicate in the local language. For example, English is a language used at workplaces but many foreigner employees learn Arabic rather than continue communicating in English. This preference of Arabic over English in Saudi society has forced them to take English as an unhelpful language for them (Alqahtani, 2011). People consider Arabic as a sacred language being used in the Holy book The Quran and the teachings of their religion Islam. This religious factor has also somewhat contributed in not taking learning of English language seriously (Osailan, 2009).

***English for Specific Purposes***

Basic component of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course is learners' needs. This course is designed differently for different purposes. For example:

- English for Academic Purposes
- English for Medical Science
- English for Engineering
- English for Business etc.

Hutchinson and Waters believe that most of the ESP courses are not designed in isolation. The practitioners conduct a need analysis as a first step for designing their course to keep learners' needs foremost. (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987).

English for specific purposes means language used in specific fields and professions. Different organizations work differently. They have different work culture different norms for smooth functioning. But one element is common in all organizations that is the use of language. English language is used for most of business and trade carried on at international level. This is called English for Business Purposes. It has its own set of vocabulary. This type of language contains technical terms and sometimes jargons which are difficult for a public to understand. Only a business student can understand this. This also has subdomains. Like English for finance, English for marketing and English for law etc. One can find differences in the language used in these different fields. For example, language used in corporate law is different than the language used in the field of marketing and advertisement. These languages are taught in business schools and hence ESP has become a significant part of the syllabi. According to Hutchinson & Waters, "ESP came into being after the Second World War, which was the time of enormous and unprecedented expansion in scientific, technical and economic activity on an international scale".

ESP has emerged as an important branch of linguistics more rapidly in recent times because of advancement in linguistics. Language researchers have talked about use of language for different purposes and in different settings. Hutchinson and Waters state that ESP has become substantial after the distinctiveness between spoken and written language. Different type of language is used in different situations and for different purposes. They believe in change in language with the change of its purpose of use. They say that adaptation becomes significant with the change in setting. They focus on methods of language learning more than the way it is delivered which means they regard students' needs most important aspect of teaching ESP. Learners usually are in a heterogeneous groups, with different sets of skills, different personality types and various educational and financial backgrounds. Therefore it can safely be said that learners' needs are equally important along with teaching methods and techniques.

Strevens defines the characteristics of ESP as being

> "… designed to meet specified needs of the learner; related in content (i.e. in its themes and topics) to particular disciplines, occupations and activities; centred on the language appropriate to those activities in syntax, lexis, discourse, semantics, etc., and analysis of this discourse; in contrast with General English". (Strevens, 1988)

Later Dudley-Evans presented an adapted definition of the variable characteristics of ESP.

> "ESP may be related to or designed for specific disciplines… ESP may use, in specific teaching situations, a different methodology from that of General English; ESP is likely to be designed for adult learners, either at a tertiary level institution or in a professional work situation. It could however, be for learners at secondary school level…. ESP is generally designed for intermediate or advanced students" (Dudley-Evans, 1998).

Anthony comments that at some occasions the difference between teaching ESP and general English becomes too narrow. (Anthony, 1997). English language teachers may also use the technique of need analysis before setting up a course. They also use their experience and background knowledge in the class. But ESP is still different than ESL. One main difference is the purpose of the course. ESL focuses more on mechanics of the language while ESP deals with the use of language in different perspectives. ESP has a variety of purposes and needs of language usage. One of the biggest challenges that teachers face in general is maintaining students' motivation for learning. If they use ESP technique, they can use students' interest in their specific fields as a motivation factor for teaching not only English language but also any other subject. Teachers of ESP are required to adapt to their learners' aptitudes. They have to develop a set of skills in order to fulfill various responsibilities. They act as a motivator, a psychologist and a curriculum expert. When a teacher sets his Learning Outcomes (LOs) he has to work intelligently to achieve these goals. This requires teachers to accept their multifaceted roles rather than mere dissemination of knowledge in the classrooms. Teacher is a center point who creates an environment congenial to learning and keeps his learners motivated. He cannot tag a student as an underachiever and move on. He has to think that if his student is an underachiever it is a failure on his part. Students come from various backgrounds. They have different intelligences and skills. They can learn through interaction and collaboration where ESP technique can help a great deal.

***ESP in Saudi Arabia***

ESP is considered as one of the teaching methods used for teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). This method engages a learner-centered approach. It is pivotal for ever-growing global economy and technology. Saudi Arabia is also highlighting the importance of ESP in academia, though it is still a new field in the kingdom. Saudi Arabian development sectors as well as engineering, business, management, and medical institutions also require ESP as an important part of the curriculum. Knight, Lomperis, van Naerssen and Westerfield categorize ESP learners into two groups. Those learners who need to learn skills in their respective fields along with development of English language skills required for organizational and business communication, and the learners who possess technical skills and need only language skills to function effectively at their workplaces (Knight, Lomperis, van Naerssen &Westerfield, 2010). Saudi students fall in the first group who need to develop professional and technical as well as language skills to prove their competence in ever challenging corporate world. To learn a foreign language, students' attitude is one of the most imperative factors towards their performance in learning. Gardner states that an attitude is "an evaluative reaction to some referent or attitude object, inferred on the basis of the individual's beliefs or opinions about the referent" (Gardner, 2006). Few researchers have conducted hand full of surveys on Saudi students to measure their attitude towards learning of ESP. Congreve, measured attitude of 179 Saudi students studying at King Fahad University of Petroleum and Minerals in 2005 (Congreve, 2005). He found a majority of the subjects interested and motivated in English language learning. Alhuqbani advocates that ESP students learn the English language for practical reasons in order to excel in their professional life (Alhuqbani, 2005). As need analysis is a core requirement for setting up an ESP Curriculum, this method is to be applied to Saudi students too. To fulfill this need of ESP in the kingdom, teachers are required to expose to the training and experience of being an ESP practitioner. There is no advancement in this field and Saudi teachers teaching General English usually teach ESP courses. Mostly foreigners are engaged in ESP teaching. Though there has been a grave need for local ESP practitioners, in spite of attractive rewards offered, there are hardly and Saudi ESP practitioners found in the universities. This need can be catered by introducing professional training for them at all academic levels. Government in general and Ministry of Education in particular needs to take serious measure in this regard to develop such experts in the kingdom.

***Contextualization***

E. Baker, Hope, and Karandjeff point out that there are several definitions of contextualization. There are numerous terms for contextualization, including “contextual teaching and learning” (E. Baker et al., 2009; Johnson, 2002), “contextualized instruction” (Parr, Edwards, &Leising, 2008; Wisely, 2009), “content-area literacy” (McKenna & Robinson, 2009), “embedded instruction” (Simpson et al., 1997),”writing-to-learn” (Klein, 1999), “integrative curriculum” (Dowden, 2007), “situated cognition” (Stone, et al, 2006), “theme-based instruction” (Dirkx&Prenger, 1997), “anchored instruction” (Bottge, et al, 2007), “curriculum integration” (Badway& Grubb,1997), “academic occupation integration” (Grubb &Kraskouskas, 1992; Perin, 2001), “infused instruction” (Badway& Grubb, 1997; Perin, 2001), “developmental education learning communities” (Weiss et al, 2010), “workplace literacy” (Mikulecky& Lloyd, 1997), and “functional context education” (Sticht, 2005). Here, the researcher follows the definition proposed by Mazzeo, Rab, and Alssid, “A diverse family of instructional strategies designed to more seamlessly link the learning of foundational skills and academic or occupational content by focusing teaching and learning squarely on concrete applications in a specific context” (Mazzeoet al., 2003, pp. 3–4).

In a particular program, contextualization of basic skills instruction includes one or more of the following components: “interdisciplinary learning” (Berns& Erickson,2001, 2010), “use of students' informal, out-of-school knowledge” (Goldman & Hasselbring, 1997), “active, student-centered learning” (Dirkx & Prenger, 1997; Dowden, 2007), “student collaboration” (Johnson, 2002), “authentic assessment” (Johnson, 2002), and “teacher collaboration to identify real-world examples” (Orpwood et al., 2010).

Dewey and Dowden at different places suggest that contextualization focuses on providing learning friendly environment which helps in better understanding of the concepts and skill development in the learners. All types of learning, contextualized or non-contextualized, has to be connected with constructivism to make the learning process interesting and a worthwhile experience. (Dewey, 1966; Dowden, 2007). One basic problem that most teachers face while teaching in the classroom is unavailability of contextualized books. The researcher contacted many teachers as subjects to find their perceptions regarding this issue. Most of them were of the opinion that contextualized teaching is en effective tool but unavailability of such material makes it difficult to implement. This is one of the reasons why teachers usually do not use Contextualized teaching Learning (CTL) in spite of their willingness. “Do ESP textbooks really exist?” Johns addresses this fundamental question. One of the basic problems he presents is that “ESP teachers find themselves in a situation where they are expected to produce a course that exactly matches the needs of a group of learners, but are expected to do so with no, or very limited, preparation time" (Jones, 1990).

**Objective(s) of the Study**

Objectives of the study are given below:

- To provide research in the Saudi Arabian context regarding teaching learning of ESP through contextualized/non-contextualized text.
- To provide empirical evidence regarding perception of teachers in Saudi Arabia about teaching ESP.
- To provide curriculum developers tested suggestions regarding contents of ESP at tertiary level.

**Research Design**

As critical educational research, the purpose of this study was to examine the teachers’ perception of teaching ESP in Saudi Arabia about use of contextualized text in the class. Descriptive research design has been used to conduct the research. A research questionnaire was used to collect the perception of the teachers. The data was analyzed to find the answers to the research questions and findings of the research hypothesis.

**Research Question**

Does teaching through contextualized text facilitate teachers in teaching ESP at the tertiary level?

**Hypotheses:**

Ho: Contextualized text does not facilitate teachers in teaching writing of English for business purposes.

H1: Contextualized text facilitates teachers in teaching writing of English for business purposes.

**Population and Data Collection**

The accessible population for this study was all undergraduate students of public Sector Colleges of Business Administration of Riyadh Region while the target population of the study was all undergraduate students of public sector colleges of business administration of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. One public sector college of Riyadh was randomly selected for the study using Simple Random Sampling technique. All the teachers teaching ESP/Business English/Business Communication were the subjects of the study. A perception questionnaire was administered on all teachers teaching these courses. This questionnaire was developed by the researcher. Expert opinions of three subject specialists were taken about the questionnaire and necessary changes were made on their advice and after pilot testing. Pilot testing was done on sample like population to make it valid and reliable. This questionnaire focused on teachers' perception about their teaching experiences of ESP. This questionnaire was consisted of ten items. Each item had five options as response. The subjects were supposed to choose one of these five options. The responses were measured on Likert Scale. The options were:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Undecided
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Items of this questionnaire have been describes below:

**Item # 1: usefulness of the text for comprehension and application of concepts**

Item 1 of the questionnaire was to find out students' ability of comprehension of the concepts and application of the topic taught through the text book. Statement of item 1 is "Foreign adopted situations available in the text used for teaching business writing in the class instead of local cases make it difficult for my students to understand the application of the concepts". 90% respondents strongly agreed with the statement. 10% chose the option "Agree". This means students in ESP class find it challenging to grasp the concepts and their application through the books written in foreign context.

**Item # 2: reproduction of knowledge in local context**

Item 2 was about reproduction of the knowledge. Students, after learning the concepts were required to apply or reproduce it in their local context. Statement of item 2 is “foreign authored text used for teaching business writing in my class develops in students, expertise, and skill of when and how to apply in local context what has been learned". 90% respondents chose “Strongly Disagree” while 10% selected “Disagree”. It suggests that foreign authored text is unhelpful for the students’ leaning of new knowledge and its application. It means that the text does not support in developing students’ writing skills.

**Item # 3: students’ motivation in using foreign authored text**

Item 3 targeted the point of motivation or lack of motivation in the students while using a foreign authored text. The item states “the text used for teaching business writing in the class makes it difficult for me to keep my students highly motivated”. 80% participants strongly agreed and 20% disagreed. This result shows that teachers struggled in keeping their students motivated during their class. The cases and situations used in the text were unfamiliar for the students which made them loose their interest in the class.

**Item # 4: vocabulary in the textbook:**

Item 4 was to check the effectiveness of vocabulary used in the text. It states “vocabulary used in the text is difficult for the students to comprehend the topics taught in the class”. 50% respondents strongly agreed and rest 50% agreed with the statement. It shows that the teachers consider that the vocabulary used in foreign authored text is unfamiliar for the students, which is hindering them from developing their concepts.

**Item # 5: language use in the book for students’ motivation**

This item was used to check the response of item # 4. This item states “the students remained disinclined towards reading the text used for teaching because of its unfamiliar language”. 60% respondents agreed strongly while rest 40% agreed with it. This clearly shows that the language used in foreign authored text is ambiguous for the students which caused demotivation among them; as a result they seemed disinterested in the class.

**Item # 6: text used in the class helps students’ knowledge and its application**

Item # 6 focuses students’ acquisition and application of learning. The item states, “The foreign situations in the text used for teaching business writing in the class enabled the students only for the acquisition not the active application of knowledge and skills”. Half of the respondents strongly agreed while other half agreed with the statement. This result suggests that the foreign authored text fails to help students develop application of the knowledge they acquire in the class. It means that the text can develop only knowledge acquisition but not application of the concepts.

**Item # 7: rote learning**

Item # 7 is about students' use of rote learning. The item states, "The text used for teaching forced the students to memorize rather than to think". 40% respondents agreed strongly and 60% agreed with the statement. This result concluded that the text used in the class written by a foreign author caused a habit of rote learning in the students. They memorize the content only to pass the exams and get good grades. This habit hinders the development of writing skills among the students.

**Item # 8: Social and ethical development**

This item focused on development of social and ethical norms among the students. This item states, "Tasks that were comprised of foreign situations given to the students developed their personal association with the problems which resulted in their social and ethical development". 70% respondents agreed strongly and 30% agreed with the statement. It means that the text failed to develop social and ethical norms among the students.

**Item # 9: memorization of the contents**

Item # 9 was used as a cross-check of item # 7. Statement of Item 9 was, "Teaching through the foreign authored text urged the students to memorize for better performance". 80% respondents strongly agreed while 20% agreed with the statement. It does not only verify item # 7 but supports the idea strongly that a foreign-authored text only makes students memorize the contents rather than developing their skills to use it in different situations.

**Item # 10: usefulness of the language**

This item was to verify the responses of item # 5. Item # 10 states, "Language used in the situations provided in the text was very difficult to understand". 90% strongly agreed with the statement while 10% agreed with it. This verifies that the language used in the text is difficult for the students to understand the concepts and therefore it hinders development of writing skills.

The percentage of the responses for each item is also shown in tabular form below:

Table.1

| Item No. | Strongly Agree | Agree | Undecided | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 01 | 90% | 10% | - | - | - |
| 02 | - | - | - | 10% | 90% |
| 03 | 80% | 20% | - | - | - |
| 04 | 50% | 50% | - | - | - |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 05 | 60% | 40% | - | - | - |
| 06 | 50% | 50% | - | - | - |
| 07 | 40% | 60% | - | - | - |
| 08 | 70% | 30% | - | - | - |
| 09 | 20% | 80% | - | - | - |
| 10 | 10% | 90% | - | - | - |

Table. 2. One-sample Statistics

| | N | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error Mean |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Teacher's total score obtained | 10 | 46.4000 | 2.36643 | .7483 |

Table.3. One-sample test

| Test Value = 40 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | T | Df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | 95% Confident Interval of the Difference | |
| | | | | | Lower | Upper |
| Teacher's total score obtained | 8.552 | 9 | .000 | 6.40000 | .7483 | |

Tables 2 and 3 are regarding perception questionnaires administered on English language teachers. Analysis of the tables is as under:

**Hypotheses:**

Hypotheses of the study are mentioned below:

$H_o$: "Contextualized text does not facilitate teachers in teaching writing of English for business purposes".

$H_1$: "Contextualized text facilitates teachers in teaching writing of English for business purposes".

**Statistical Description of Hypotheses:**

$H_o$: There is no significant difference between teaching writing of English for business purposes through contextualized and non-contextualized texts.

$H_1$: There is significant difference between teaching writing of English for business purposes through contextualized and non-contextualized texts.

$H_o$: $\overline{x} = \overline{x}$

The above equation suggests that there is no significant difference between teaching writing of English for business purposes through contextualized and non-contextualized texts.

$H_1$: $\overline{x} \neq \overline{x}$

This equation suggests that there is a significant difference between teaching writing of English for business purposes through contextualized and non-contextualized texts. In the light of data obtained, shown in table 3, $H_o$ is rejected and $H_1$ is accepted which suggests that contextualized teaching of writing English for business purposes facilitates students' learning. In table 4.3 P-Value is 0.00, which represents that the result is significant, and there is no probability of acceptance of $H_{o.}$

Figure 1.

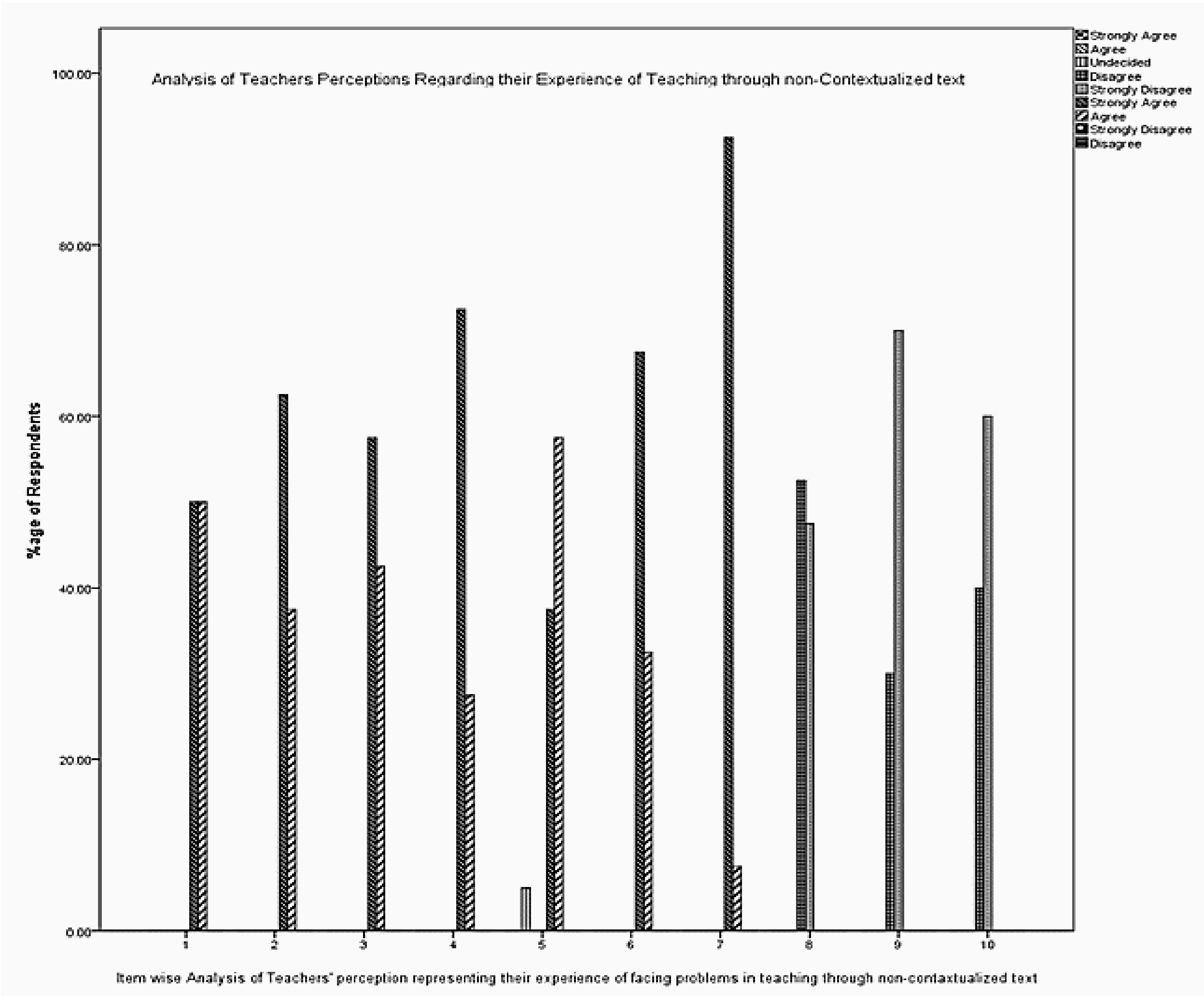


Figure.1 shows teacher's perception regarding their experience of using foreign-authored text in the class. Percentage of the subjects is on X axis and items are on Y axis.

## Findings and Discussion

Teaching of English in general and teaching of ESP, in particular, has been a critical issue in non-native countries for quite some time. In the countries like Saudi Arabia where status of English is of a foreign language, the matter becomes even graver. Learners and teachers both face various problems in this context and researchers continue to find newer and effective ways of teaching ESP. The paper concerns use of textbook in the class. Most of the non-native countries use foreign-authored ESP books. To find the perception of the ESP teachers, a perception questionnaire was developed and administered on the teachers of randomly selected College of Business Administration in Riyadh. The questionnaire was developed and piloted on a sample like population. Necessary adjustments were made in the data collection tool after the pilot testing. This survey was conducted to find out the answer to the research question and findings of the research hypothesis. The research question was: "Does teaching through contextualized text facilitate teachers in teaching ESP at the tertiary level?" The analysis of the responses shows that the majority of the subjects believes that the foreign-authored text hinders students' learning of ESP. The hypothesis for the research was “Contextualized text does not facilitate teachers in teaching writing of English for business purposes”. As Ho has been rejected, it suggests that contextualized text facilitates students' learning. The answer to the research question and finding of the hypothesis leads to the fact that there is a need of a contextualized text in Saudi context so that not only ESP technicalities but other learning variables can also be achieved and teachers can concentrate on students' comprehension of the concepts rather than mere traditional teaching. It also suggests a need for training and development in the field of teaching in general and teaching of ESP in particular in Saudi Arabia to develop ESP practitioners. Some work has been initiated in this regard through pieces of research in this context but a lot needs to be done. Professionals and other stakeholders need to come forth and contribute to the progress of education in general and ESP in particular.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The research conducted on Saudi teachers teaching ESP regarding their perception about use of contextualized text in the classroom for teaching ESP. Data shows that contextualized books can help a great deal to learners of ESP in their learning. Based on the findings of research, following recommendations are put forth.

- Research and development sector needs to be strengthened and used for education sector in general and ESL/EFL in particular.

- ESP practitioners need to be developed for teaching these courses.
- There is a grave need of research in the field of ESP in Saudi context to explore this area of teaching of English; therefore, substantial research may be conducted focused on this area.
- Teachers and researchers need to be encouraged practically for development of contextualized material for ESP.
- Teacher Education may offer awareness and training session for all teachers free of cost regarding Contextualized Teaching Learning (CTL).

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# The Impact of the EFL Undergraduate Students' Integration in Distance Learning with its Various Platforms

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**Abstract**

This study endeavors to investigate the impact of undergraduate students' integration in distance learning with its various platforms on their achievement from their point of view at the Department of English Language and Translation, Qassim University. To accomplish the aims of the study, the descriptive method was used by constructing a questionnaire; the validity and reliability of the study were verified, and the study sample consisted of 80 students from level one and level two EFL students at the Department of English Language and Translation, Qassim University. The study concluded the following results: there is a statistically significant effect of the level of integration of undergraduate students through a distance learning on the total score in academic achievement and integration accounts for (59.2%) of achievement. As for the domains level, the results showed that there was a statistically significant effect of the

dimensions related to the student and the ones linked to the teacher in academic achievements and the absence of the effect of the technical related dimension. The results also showed that the extent of undergraduate students' integration in distance learning with its various platforms in Qassim University was very high, the student field occupied the first place, and in the second place came technical aspect related dimension, in the third and last place came the aspects related to teacher dimension. The results also showed statistically significant differences regarding the extent of integration of undergraduate students taught through distance learning at the total score and fields according to variables (level, educational platform). Based on the results, some recommendations were offered. The most significant of them are the necessity of encouraging undergraduate students to follow educational platforms to improve their achievements in understanding academic subjects. Another recommendation is teacher training on the optimal use of synchronous and asynchronous a distance learning is needed.

**Keywords:** *integration, undergraduate, distance learning, educational platforms, Qassim University.*

## Introduction

The current era is witnessing a significant challenge and a fundamental change in the education system due to the spread of Corona Virus, which transferred education overnight from regular education linked to the university, the teacher, and the real classroom, to distance learning within virtual classes. The use of distance learning (synchronous or asynchronous) has become the only alternative to education in the current period.

Amer (2018) mentioned that distance learning is one of the most prominent modern trends in education, which has gained increasing importance as it relies on the help of the teacher represented in overcoming the obstacles in front of the learner. Also, it is not seen as merely supplemental or compensatory for many aspects of formal education. It is also considered one of the most prominent manifestations of educational development and renewal. The optimum use of means of communication is implemented to convey information that has developed similarly as a result of technological development, and distance education means diversity in the methods of teaching as well as its means.

Before electronic platforms are used for distance learning, they were initially used to introduce news and information about universities and the surrounding environment(Al-Ghamdi & Alrefaee, 2020). Electronic platforms constitute a fertile ground for displaying any educational content and contributing to additional and interactive dimensions to teach concepts, values, and phenomena in social studies (Al-Jarf, 2008).

## Literature Review

The challenge that the world has faced today and the rapid changes that occurred in all areas of life due to the spread of Corona Virus suddenly engaged all parts of the educational process in distance learning with its various platforms to ensure the continuity of the educational process. At first, everyone initially experienced the shock of transportation from the actual rooms to the virtual rooms and face-to-face learning with a teacher and a board and a desk to screen, platform, and programs.

A study conducted by (Al-Enzi, Al-Karasneh, and Tawalbeh, 2017) designed to investigate the role of school electronic platforms in enhancing the values of citizenship for secondary school students in Saudi schools, where the semi-experimental approach was used. The sample contained (120) secondary female students from two schools for girls in Al-Qassim directorate of Education. They were distributed to experimental groups where a proposed model for electronic platforms was applied to develop the values of citizenship and a control group that did not go through the proposed model. A pre and post measure of awareness of citizenship values was applied to both groups, and the results showed an active role for electronic platforms in developing the values of citizenship. They recommended activating it because of its positive role in developing citizenship among female students.

As for Al-Zahrani (2019) study, which meant to classify the female students' attitudes and their scientific achievement in adopting the synchronous and asynchronous education method, this study was applied to (80) male students in the preparatory year at the University of Hail. The results indicated no statistically significant differences in scientific achievement in favor of the synchronous and asynchronous education group. Also, there are statistically significant differences regarding the attitudes of female students in favor of the synchronous and asynchronous education group. Accordingly, the researcher introduced several recommendations, such as conducting studies to determine the role of the learning system in education and how a faculty member integrates technology in public education and e-learning. The results indicated the importance of training for students and faculty members to implement the technology.

**Statement of the Problem and its Questions:**

As a result of the rapid and sudden change in the whole world and the direct impact on all fields, including the field of education, without any prior preparation of infrastructure for teachers and students' technical potentials. Not all teachers received training on distance learning programs, and students used to learn at universities with their teachers receiving direct education. Then, everything changes without preparation and gradation, but through the direct transmission to virtual classes and educational platforms, and their communication with their teachers became through technology.

All these reasons have generated concern about the real challenges and obstacles that students face in general, and undergraduate students in particular, as it is a crucial stage in the life of any student to determine the future. Distance learning is still a new experience, and platforms do not work well. It is necessary to obtain students' feedback to ensure their learning and improve it.

**Research Questions:**

This study tries to response to these following questions:

1. Is there a statistically significant effect at the level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) for level one and two undergraduate students' integration extent in a distance learning in academic achievements?

2. To what extent undergraduate students are integrated into distance learning with its various platforms in the Department of English Language and Translation, Qassim University?

3. Are there statistically significant differences at the level of ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) regarding the extent of undergraduate students' integration during distance learning with their different platforms?

**The Significance of the Study:**

1. The significance of the study lies in that it is among the first researches that share out with distance learning in line of the spread of Corona virus (COVID19).

2. It gives feedback to all those interested in learning and teaching, taking into account the developments of the status quo and the educational mechanism achieved by distance learning with its various platforms.

3. Contribution to educational programs and platforms design mechanism and improvement of the education provided to undergraduate students at Qassim University.

4. Knowledge of the training programs that teachers must be able to do to be involved in the distance learning process.

**Procedural Definitions:**

- **Integration:** is the delicate behavior in the field of personal awareness on the cognitive and emotional aspects due to its importance in the social behavior of individuals and the possibility of developing this concept and developing it because of its impact on individuals, their self-awareness, and their capabilities to have access to a successful working life. What is meant here is secondary stage students' behavior, awareness, and perceptions of distance learning.

- **Distance learning:** It is learning that occurs when there is a distance between the teacher and the learner. Platforms and educational materials are prepared in advance, and the learners are separate from their teachers in time, place, or both. It is either a synchronous or asynchronous teaching.
- **Study limitations:** The Study limitations are as follows:

**Objective limitations**: This study was restricted to the integration of level one and level two EFL undergraduate students at the Department of English Language and Translation, Qassim University during the study with distance learning with its various platforms.

**Time limitations:** This study was confined the academic year 2019/2020.

**Place limitations**: This study was restricted to level one and level two EFL undergraduate students at the Department of English Language and Translation, Qassim University.

**Methodology:** The study adopted the descriptive method to its suitability to achieve its goals.

**The Study Sample:** The study population consisted of 80 students from level one and level two EFL undergraduate students at the Department of English Language and Translation, Qassim University. The questionnaire was distributed to them electronically, and then subjected to statistical analysis SPSS. Table 1 shows the characteristics of the sample.

**Table 1: Sample of Study Characteristics**

| **Variable** | **Variable types** | **Number** | **Percentage** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Level** | 1st Leve3l | 40 | 55.77% |
| | 2nd Level | 40 | 44.23% |
| | Total | 80 | 100.00% |
| **Platforms** | Black board | 40 | 23.20% |
| | Zoom | 40 | 21.90% |
| | Social media | 40 | 18.19% |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | E-learning | 40 | 16.23% |
| | Others | 40 | 20.48% |
| | Total | 200 | 100.00% |

Data in table 1 shows that level one students account for (55.8%) of the study population while level two students account for (44.2%). Blackboard attendants are (23.2%). Zoom platform attendants are (21.9%). Social media attendants are (18. 19 %), E-learning attendants (16.23%), and others (20.5%).

**Study Instrument**

A questionnaire was constructed to accomplish the aims of the study based on theoretical literature and previous studies that dealt with technology of education and distance teaching as (Amer, 2018) and (Slameto, 2014) and (Yilmaz, 2017). It consisted of the following sections:

1. The first section: consists of the following personal information: (Level, educational platform).
2. Items that measure the extent of the integration of undergraduate students into distance education platforms, and they were distributed in the following areas.

a. Technical field: It was represented in items (1-5).

b. Teacher related field: It is represented by items (1-10).

c. Student related field which was in items (1-10).

The Likert five-point scale was used to scale and to estimate the response weight (always, often, sometimes, rarely, very rarely), and the weight of scores was distributed according to the following order: 5 always, 4 often, 3 sometimes, 2 rarely, 1 very rarely. Arithmetic means were used as a standard to the magistrate the extent of integration where the average which was less than 2.33 shows a low integration, the average between (2.33-less than 3.67) indicates an average integration and the arithmetic mean 3.67 or more indicates a high level of integration.

**Validity of the Study Instrument:**

The validity of the instrument was verified using the arbitrators' validity. The questionnaire was presented to (6) arbitrators specialized in technology of education in Qassim University to know their views and proposals on the appropriateness of the items of the scale and the integrity of its linguistic formulation and its measurement of what it was constructed to measure. The

(80%) agreement or more was adopted to delete, keep, or amend the item, and notes were taken into consideration.

**The Reliability of the Study and its Instrument:**

The reliability of the study instrument was verified using the reliability of internal consistency by applying the Cronbach's alpha reliability equation, after applying the tool to an exploratory sample from the study population and outside its sample. Table 2 shows the values of the coefficients of reliability and the total score and fields:

**Table 2: Reliability Coefficients of the Study Instrument**

| **Domain** | **Cronbach's Alpha** |
|---|---|
| **Student** | 0.85 |
| **Teacher** | 0.93 |
| **Technical** | 0.92 |
| **Total** | **0.95** |

Data in Table 2 shows that the total reliability reached (0.95) and for the fields it was between (0.85-0.92), and this indicates the reliability of the instrument and its stability.

**Study Procedures:**

1. Going to the relevant authorities in Qassim University to obtain an official letter directed to Department of the English Language and Translation to facilitate the task of the researcher conducting the study.
2. Referring to the Department of English Language and Translation to obtain an official letter to facilitate the researcher’s study.

**Statistical Treatment:**

1. To answer the first question, the Pearson correlation coefficient and Multiple Regression Analysis were extracted to test the study model's appropriateness and the influence of the autonomous variable on the dependent variable.
2. Variance Inflation Factory and Tolerance to certify that there should be no high correlation of Multicollinearity.
3. Skewness test to certify that the data follow normal distributions.

4. Scheffe' Test for post comparisons to disclose the difference direction according to the educational platform variable.
5. To check the reliability of the study instrument, Cronbach's coefficient was used.
6. To answer the second question, arithmetic means and standard deviations were extracted.
7. To answer the third question, Multiple Anova was performed.
8. To define the features of the study's sample, iterations and percentages were extracted.

**Results and Discussion:**

**To test the validity of the first hypothesis, which reads:**

**"Is there a statistically significant effect at the level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the level of integration of secondary stage students in distance learning on their academic achievement?"**

Before applying the regression analysis to test the result of the integration of EFL undergraduate students of level one and two in a distance learning on their academic accomplishments, the researcher showed some tests for the confirmation of the compatibility of data with regression analysis expectations, as "it was definite that there was no great correlation between the independent variables (Multicollinearity) by using the Variance Inflation Factory and the Tolerance test for each of the study variables, taking into consideration that the VIF could not go beyond the value (10) and the Tolerance value is greater than 0.05". It was also confirmed that the data followed the ordinary distribution by calculating Skewness, and the data followed Ordinary Distribution if Skewness methods (0).
Table 3 shows the test results.

**Table 3: Variance inflation factory VIF test, tolerance and skewness coefficients**

| **Independent variables** | **VIF** | **Tolerance** | **Skewness** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Student- related aspects** | 1.635 | 0.612 | 0.312 |
| **Technical- related aspects** | 1.684 | 0.594 | 0.242 |
| **teacher- related aspects** | 1.756 | 0.570 | 0.137 |

It is illustrious that the values of the variance inflation coefficient (VIF) test for all variables is less than (10) and ranges between (1.635 - 1.756), and that the values of Tolerance test ranges between (0.570 - 0.612), which is higher than (0.05) and this is a sign of no high correlation between the independent variables (Multicollinearity). Subsequent the ordinary distribution has proved the data by calculating the Skewness coefficient, where the values were close to the value (0), and the validity of the model is also verified. Table No. 4 shows the results.

**Table 4: Results of the Analysis of variance to ensure the validity of the model**

| Dependent Variable | Source | $R^2$ | Sum of squares | Mean of squares | Calculated F value | Level of F significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Achievement** | **Regression** | 0.592 | 73.992 | 24.664 | 121.851 | 0.00** |
| | **Error** | | 51.007 | .202 | | |

***** Statistically significant at the level of significance ($\alpha \geq 0.01$).***

Table 4 displays the reliability of the expectation model "in relations of the calculated (F) value of and the level of associated with significance at the level of significance (a $^{3}$0.01), as a level of integration of undergraduate students in a distance learning as a whole account for (59.2%) of the variance in the total independent variable (Academic Achievement). This result designates the effect of integration of level one and two EFL undergraduate students in distance learning on their academic achievements. Consequently, a multiple regression analysis tests were carried out to test the effect of the dimensions of the independent variable (integration in distance learning) in academic achievements," and table 5 below clarifies the results.

**Table 5: Results of multiple regression analysis to test the effect of the dimensions of the independent variable of the level of integration in a distance learning in academic achievements**

| Independent Dimension | B | Standard Error | Beta | Calculate T value | Level of T significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Technical- related aspects** | 0.089 | 0.077 | 0.060 | 1.165 | 0.245 |
| **Student- related aspects** | 0.330 | 0.067 | 0.259 | 4.952 | 0.000* |
| **teacher- related aspects** | 0.575 | 0.049 | 0.626 | 11.739 | 0.000* |

It is obvious from "the statistical results stated in Table 5, from the follow up of (Beta) coefficients, and test (t) that the following sub-variables correlated to (the student-related aspects, the teacher-related aspects) have an effect on academic achievement", in relations of Beta coefficients for these variables as revealed in the table and terms of the high calculated values of (T) from its level value at the equal of significance (a ³0.05), while there was no statistically significant effect of the sub-variable (aspects related to the technical domain) in academic achievement.

To decide the significance of each independent variable distinctly in donating to the mathematical model, which signifies the impact of the integration of students in a distance learning with its scopes (aspects related to the technical side, aspects related to the student, aspects related to the teacher) in academic achievement, Stepwise Multiple Regression was performed .as shown in Table 6.

**Table 6: Results of "Stepwise Multiple Regression" analysis to predict academic achievement through the dimension of students' integration into distance learning**

| The order of independent elements entrance into prediction equation | Value of $R^2$ | Calculate T value | Level of T significance |
|---|---|---|---|
| **teacher- related aspects** | 0.552 | 12.155 | 0.000* |
| **Student- related aspects** | 0.590 | 4.827 | 0.000* |

**** Statistically significant at the level ($\alpha \geq 0.05$)***

Out of the regression equation: aspects related to the technical field.

Table 6 displays the order of entry of the independent variables in the regression equation. "Aspects related to the teacher" has come the first rank with 55.2% of the variance in the dependent variable. It is followed by "the aspects related to the student" constitutes with a dimension "Teacher-related aspects" (59.0%) of the variance in the dependent variable, and originated out from the variable regression equation "aspects related to the technical aspect".

The researcher considers that high academic achievements require a professionally competent teacher who possesses information and can convey it to the students clearly, and it will be better acquired if the teacher can use teaching strategies.

Also, the acquisition of concepts and the ability to implement them and thus achievement improvement requires educational aids, so the teacher's use of educational methods improves academic achievement, as the students' improvement requires individual differences to be taken into account by the teacher. The explanation of the result is based on the fact that teachers use useful assessment tools to assess the students' capability to captivate the material, and thus the achievement; this result can be as well understood in terms of high motivation to learn and a motivation to improve achievement.

The result can also be understood based on the students' ability to use distance learning tools and non-anxiety about the inability to obtain an immediate answer from a teacher, as they may use other means such as the Internet to obtain answers. The appropriateness of time to explain the material may improve the achievement because there is free time exploited by learning. Students may use other means to communicate with the teacher after attending the lessons on the platform. Distance learning may satisfy the cognitive motivation that parallels traditional learning, and this result is consistent with the results of the Salamito study (Salamito, 2014) that education using online platforms has a positive effect on student achievement.

**Presentation and Discussion of the Results**

**The first question, which reads: "What is the extent of the integration of level one and two EFL undergraduate students in distance learning with its different platforms at the Department of English Language and Translation, Qassim University?"**

To answer the above question, the mean and standard deviations were extracted for the responses of the individuals in the study sample, and Table 7 shows the results

**Table 7: Arithmetic means, Standard Deviations, Rank, and level of integration of level one and two undergraduate taught by distance learning with its Different platforms at the Department of English Language and Translation, Qassim University**

| **Domains** | **Arithmetic mean** | **Standard Deviation** | **Rank** | **Level** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Student- related aspects** | 4.01 | 0.50 | 1 | High |
| **Technical- related aspects** | 3.53 | 0.57 | 2 | Average |
| **Teacher- related aspects** | 3.51 | 0.61 | 3 | Average |
| **Total** | 3.68 | 0.72 | - | High |

It is clear from Table 7 that the total arithmetic means of the extent of integration of level one and two EFL undergraduate students during distance learning with its various platforms at the Department of English Language and Translation, Qassim University is high and reached (3.68), a standard deviation is (0.72), and at the level of fields, the level of the extent of integration ranged between high and medium. The field of the student comes at "the first rank with arithmetic mean (4.01) and a standard deviation (0.50) and with a high degree, came second” “the aspects related to the technical aspect” with average arithmetic (3.53) and a standard deviation (0.57) with an average degree, and in the third and last rank is the teacher-related aspects “with arithmetic mean (3.51) and a standard deviation (0.61), and with an intermediate degree as well”. Figure (1) shows the distribution of the arithmetic mean.

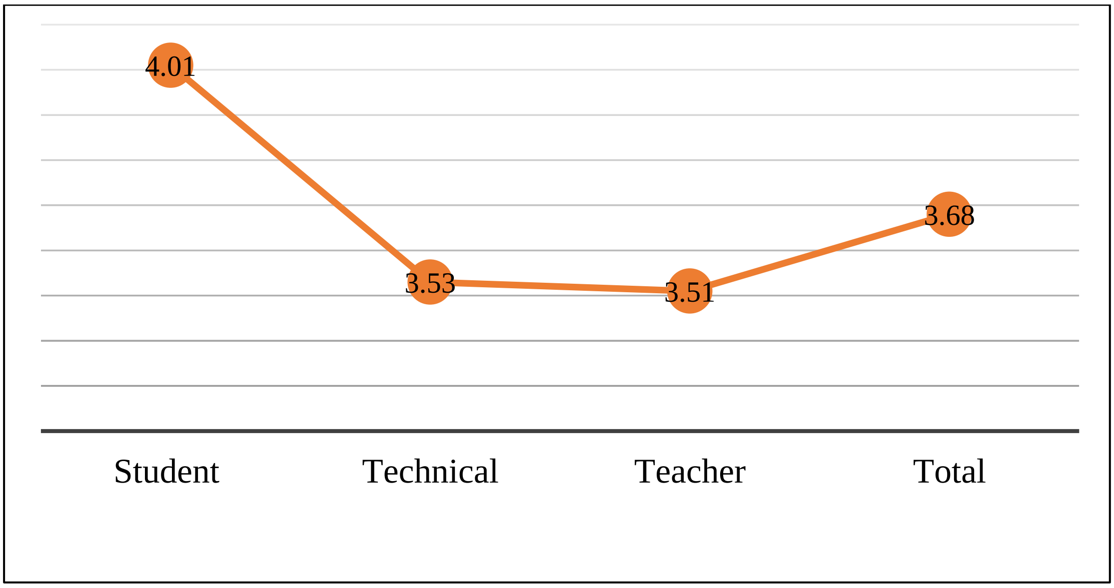


**Figure 1: The variance in the extent of Undergraduate students’ integration during distance learning according to the fields.**

The researcher interprets this result based on the interest of the Department of English Language and Translation, Qassim University and students in the undergraduate, especially the level two students, being one of the crucial stages in determining students' future. The result also indicates the seriousness of Qassim University and its keenness on the student's interest by emphasizing the continuity of education during the corona pandemic, one of the most serious crises the world has faced in the modern era. The use of distance learning indicates the advanced technological level of the use of education technology in Saudi Arabia, as distance education has proven that it is one of the best alternatives to maintain the continuity of teaching during crises, as the researcher may explain this result based on the attractiveness of distance teaching that enabled students to integrate fully. This result shows that students can interact technically with educational platforms and have access to them.

The students’ positive attitude towards these platforms stems from teachers' competence and ability to communicate information to students and attract their attention and stimulate their motivation to learn through these platforms. Teachers’ use of clear and comprehensible teaching strategies takes into account the students' mental potentials, as distance learning in itself is an educational strategy that provides information to the student in a situation in which he is in a state of psychological stability and physical comfort. The teachers' observance of the students' economic and technical conditions, and dealing with their problems arising during the use of the platforms has increased the students' integration. The tasks are not immediate, and there is sufficient time for the student to send them to the teacher at any time. It allows the student to communicate with the teacher and discuss it at any time.

The educational platforms allow the teachers to easily offer the satisfied he needs and that is suitable for the learner at home without the interference of the controller or administration, the choice that educational platforms offer for the student can be elucidated its high integration in them, and this result agreed with the study of Al-Enazi, Al-Karsana, and Talabah, ( 2017) whose results displayed that there is an energetic role for electronic platforms in developing the values of citizenship, and Slameto study (2014), which showed that the electronic platforms have a positive influence on students' achievements but varied with the results of (Yilmaz, 2017) study that showed that the exam held remotely is not reliable.

**Question 5: "Are there statistically significant differences at the level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in undergraduate students' assessments of their level of integration during the distance learning with its different platforms that are attributed to the variables (Level, educational platform)"?**

Arithmetic means and standard deviations were extracted from undergraduate students' assessments of their integration level during distance learning according to variables such as (Level, educational platform). Table No. 8 displays the results and answers to the mentioned question.

**Table 8: Mathematical means and standard deviations for undergraduate Students for Their Level of integration during distance learning according to Study Variables.**

| Domain | Variables | Variable Types | Arithmetic Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Student –related aspects** | Level | 1st level | 3.88 | 0.91 |
| | | 2nd level | 4.18 | 0.97 |
| | Platform | Black board | 4.28 | 0.32 |
| | | Zoom | 3.63 | 0.44 |
| | | Social media | 3.66 | 0.45 |
| | | E-learning | 3.59 | 0.43 |

| Domain | Variables | Variable Types | Arithmetic Mean | Standard Deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Others | 3.56 | 0.44 |
| **Technical –related aspects** | Level | 1st level | 3.42 | 0.63 |
| | | 2nd level | 3.68 | 0.78 |
| | Platform | Black board | 4.36 | 0.28 |
| | | Zoom | 3.52 | 0.34 |
| | | Social media | 3.50 | 0.36 |
| | | E-learning | 3.51 | 0.34 |
| | | Others | 3.50 | 0.36 |
| **Teacher –related aspects** | Level | 1st level | 3.33 | 0.88 |
| | | 2nd level | 3.75 | 1.03 |
| | Platform | Black board | 4.40 | 0.29 |
| | | Zoom | 3.47 | 0.46 |
| | | Social media | 3.44 | 0.51 |
| | | E-learning | 3.49 | 0.51 |
| | | Others | 3.48 | 0.53 |
| | | Female | 3.74 | 0.61 |
| | Level | 1st level | 3.59 | 0.51 |
| | | 2nd level | 3.79 | 0.80 |
| | Platform | Black board | 4.35 | 0.22 |
| | | Zoom | 3.54 | 0.33 |
| | | Social media | 3.53 | 0.35 |
| | | E-learning | 3.53 | 0.33 |
| | | Others | 3.51 | 0.36 |

The data in Table 8 shows the presence of apparent differences in the assessment of level one and two EFL undergraduate students for the extent of their integration during distance learning according to the study variables. With the help of triple variance analysis (Multiple Anova), it was revealed whether these differences were significant or statistically significant. The following table 9 displays the results.

**Table 9: Results of Multiple Anova to detect the differences regarding the extent of the integration of secondary stage students during distance learning according to the study variables**

| Domain | Source of Variance | Sum of squares | d. f | Mean of squares | F value | Significance Level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Students | Level | 3.156 | 1 | 3.156 | *26.614 | 0.000* |
| | Educational platforms | 12.512 | 4 | 3.128 | *26.377 | 0.000* |
| | Error | 108.030 | 911 | 0.119 | | |
| Technical | Total | 15086.620 | 918 | | | |
| | Level | 11.471 | 1 | 11.471 | *159.334 | 0.000* |
| | Educational platforms | 27.203 | 4 | 6.801 | *94.468 | 0.000* |
| | Error | 65.583 | 911 | 0.072 | | |
| Teachers | Total | 15136.002 | 918 | | | |
| | Level | 11.970 | 1 | 11.970 | *93.442 | 0.000* |
| | Educational platforms | 37.723 | 4 | 9.431 | *73.620 | 0.000* |
| | Error | 116.699 | 911 | 0.128 | | |
| Total | Total | 15328.755 | 918 | | | |
| | Level | 8.262 | 1 | 8.262 | *148.325 | 0.000* |
| | Educational platforms | 24.382 | 4 | 6.095 | *109.431 | 0.000* |
| | Error | 50.744 | 911 | 0.056 | | |
| | Total | 15134.170 | 918 | | | |

The data offered in Table 9 shows that there are statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in undergraduate students' assessments of their level of integration during distance learning according to the variables (level, educational platforms) at the overall level as well as at the level of each field, and to reveal in favor of whom are differences in accordance with variable, level. To detect in favor of whom the differences according to the variable of the educational platform, Scheffe test was used for the post comparisons as Table (10) shows.

**Table 10: Scheffe test results for post comparisons to detect differences according to the educational platform variable**

| Domain | Arithmetic mean | Educational Platforms | Black board | Zoom | Social media | E-learning | others |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Student domain | 4.28 | Black board | - | 0.65* | 0.62* | 0.69* | 0.72* |
| | 3.63 | Zoom | | - | -0.03 | 0.04 | 0.07 |
| | 3.66 | Social media | | | - | 0.07 | 0.1 |
| | 3.59 | E-learning | | | | - | 0.03 |
| | 3.56 | Others | | | | | - |
| technical domain | 4.36 | Black board | - | 0.84* | 0.86* | 0.85* | 0.86* |
| | 3.52 | Zoom | | - | 0.02 | 0.01 | 0.02 |
| | 3.50 | Social media | | | - | -0.01 | 0.01 |
| | 3.51 | E-learning | | | | - | 0.01 |
| | 3.50 | Others | | | | | - |
| teacher domain | 4.40 | Black board | - | 0.93* | 0.96* | 0.91* | 0.92* |
| | 3.47 | Zoom | | - | 0.03 | -0.02 | -0.01 |
| | 3.44 | Social media | | | - | -0.05 | -0.04 |
| | 3.49 | E-learning | | | | - | 0.01 |
| | 3.48 | Others | | | | | - |
| Total | 4.35 | Black board | - | 0.81* | 0.82* | 0.82* | 0.84* |
| | 3.54 | Zoom | | - | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.03 |
| | 3.53 | Social media | | | - | 0 | 0.02 |
| | 3.53 | E-learning | | | | - | 0.02 |
| | 3.51 | Others | | | | | - |

The data in Table 10 shows that there are statistically significant differences at each field level and the total field between the assessment of students who use the Blackboard platform and the rest of the other platforms in favor of the blackboard platform.

The researcher believes that level two students more integration in distance learning platforms are due to the motivation of learning among students, greater understanding, more interested than level one.

The reason that differences in favor level two is due to the department's importance as it determines their future and academic fate. Their anxiety about the future and the department's importance constitute an additional pressure that motivates them to follow up on what the educational platforms offer, as well as their inability to attend private lessons during the curfew. Teachers' competence on the blackboard platform is an attraction, and the absence of technical breakdowns on this platform has increased its follow-up and use. Students’ interest in solving the homework that teachers send may explain the students’ integration.

**Recommendations:**

Based on the results of the analysis, the following recommendations can be offered:

1. Encouraging students to pursue distance learning, which is presented in educational platforms, as it is the best alternative that maintains the continuity of the educational process during crises.
2. The necessity to train students and teachers to use distance learning technology such as educational platforms, and deal with problems that occur during the lesson on e-learning platforms.
3. The need to expand the use of educational technology, and to provide free internet packages to students to enable them who are unable to follow what is presented on educational platforms.
4. Conduct more studies on the effectiveness of the various educational platforms in the educational process, and the extent to which students benefit and integrate with them in education directorates, and other academic stages, to take advantage of the results of the current study generalize it.

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# The Covid-19 Crisis and Distance Learning:
# E-Teaching of Language between Reality and Challenges

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**Abstract**

The current study aims at investigating the influence of Covid -19 crisis on teaching English as a second language. As it is universally admitted, every aspect was affected by this unexpected crisis, and teaching was one of the most influenced fields where teachers found themselves turned into distant teaching or the so called on-line teaching. This phenomenon has been referred to as "distance learning, or education, e-learning, and online learning". Both teachers and students found themselves engaged in virtual classroom by joining an on-line distant virtual teaching environment by joining audio and video conferences such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom video conference systems. Some countries adopt a dual technique mixing the traditional face-to-face method with the on-line method. This study aims at investigating how the shift to the new methods influenced teaching process. Probably, this new reality has its advantages and disadvantages if compared with the traditional ways of teaching. The study intends to verify that the on-line teaching is of a great stagnant importance in consideration to the quick mechanized retort. This helps, the study argues, in developing students' skills; the propinquity of teaching environment and the timing system allow the student to concentrate and focus on their answers in light of time limits. The study concludes that on –line teaching is of great benefits by offering a chance for effective teaching and therefore results in a clear advance in the students' scholarly accomplishments.

**Keywords:** *Covid-19 crisis, Distance learning, electronic learning, electronic teaching, On-line Learning.*

## Introduction

Nowadays, much attention is paid to the wide spread of Covid-19 and its influences on education represented by the sudden transformation of education to the new on-line distant technological teaching environment. One of the fields that were influenced greatly by the Covid-19 is educational activities. Most of the academic institutions adopted new methods of teaching all over the world; no doubt then; the distant teaching new reality requires a wide spread of new educational methods as well as a knowledge of programming and computerized apps.

Also, the study aims to prove that on-line teaching has many benefits such as it is easy-to-use, with high academic outcomes. Distant teaching is adopted by many of our universities and academic institutions because of its great positive outcomes. So, this study is going to focus on –line teaching its scopes and challenges. The study aims to investigate the scopes of the e-learning teaching aids; such as the computerized feedback which helps in improving students' skills especially with regard to checking tools and the direct virtual teaching environment which depends on the timing technique. This aspect allows the students to pay much more attention to time and therefore, the chance of wasting time during the teaching process is decreased if compared with the traditional teaching methods. In other words, this new method, the researcher argues; keep students more focused and engaged in classroom by joining real teaching virtual reality mixing the audio and video conferences such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom video conference systems.

**Literature Review**

Distance learning, which is also called distance education, e-learning, and online learning On-line teaching …etc. became an urgent reality after the wide pandemic spread of Covid-19. Many studies were conducted to investigate how on-line teaching proved to be helpful in students' understanding due to its social interaction dimension which enhances the role of social interaction in increasing the learners' cognitive abilities.

In *What has the covid-19 crisis taught us about online teaching?* , Anna Maria Volpe and David Crosier (2020) discussed the challenges that faced the universities after the spread of the corona virus .They pose a question regarding how can educational institutions go on teaching if face to face classes and lectures are closed. To answer this question, they discussed the advantages of the complete transformation to online "synchronous learning" environment. The study states that it is totally possible that students may develop a" sense of community" if they used the e-learning method. At the end of their article, they offer some advises and tips for teachers to use the on-line teaching in a professional way(2020:https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/focus-what-has-covid-19-crisis-taught-us-about-online-teaching_en).

In *Redesigning the English Classroom Towards Fourth Industrial Revolution, Are the Students Motivated?* (2020), the researchers discussed the role that technology plays in enforcing and developing the worth of education which is in by examining "the motivation level of Arab EFL students in redesigning the traditional classroom to technology-based where the students use technology learn English".(2020, 6)

The new method require an assigned lecturer for each course, the student has a direct contact with his teacher, who usually gets in touch with his/her students by direct video conference. On the other hand the students can also contact with the teacher by telephone, or e-mail to help with inquiries related to the teaching materials. Also, students may also attend live face-to-face classes run by their tutor, and they may choose to form peer, self-help groups (e.g. Whatsapp , Telegram groups). For instance, Anggraeni predicted somewhat kind of revolution will involve students to be mastering of the so -called "adequate data and digital literacy". The writer goes further to declare that all students in all knowledge aspects are required to attain a knowledge of those digital and data to have the best results(Anggraeni, 2018).

In *Academic Issues And Future Directions* (2016), the researchers considered these on-line "sessions" as "the core aspects of this educational model". The instructors and communications between "individual students are meant to compensate for the lack of face-to-face lectures" in the e-learning system which “supported open learning” rather than distance learning.(2016: https://www.britannica.com/topic/distance-learning) This new variety of education includes "physical separation" of both teachers and students during tutoring process and the application of diverse technologies to assist student-teacher and student-student communication.( Michael Simonson and Gary A. Berg: 2016)

Taking teaching English as a second language as an example, the current study investigated the importance of distance learning/ teaching as helpful resources that enhance the second language acquisition (SLA). For instance, Gas and Selinker (1994) supports the use of such techniques because the social interaction during the learning process and thus makes the learning process straightforward and pleasant. Also, Long and Porter (1985) promote e-learning because the students have to use the language that they study because this will help them in SLA. Kitishat and al-Freihat (2015) accentuate the role of social communication in aiding learning /teaching because the active process of teaching /learning depends on the degree of the interaction between the lecturer and learner. Thus, in this context, e-learning/ teaching is an active technique because of its immediacy as well as to its use of audio and visual aids the fact which makes both teaching and learning useful and enjoyable.

In *Lecturers’ Attitude on Blended Learning-Based Instruction in Teaching English for Business in Indonesian Vocational Higher Education(2020),* Andi Musdariah *et.al* discuss the lecturers’ attitude toward blended Learning; or as the researcher call hybrid teaching. The writers examined teaching English for Business in vocational higher education. They conducted a case study of an online survey research to collect data on lecturers’ attitude on Blended Learning.

Sulisworo(2018) discusses the benefits of Blended learning for students .He states that Blended learning develops the students' "accessibilities to materials and promotes individualized learner".

Other studies point out to the importance of social context and social interaction in increasing the motivation of the students to learn the second language. For instance, Capan (2012) investigates the attitudes of Turkish EFL teachers' towards ICT use in Blended Learning. He found that access of computerized aids, and computer accessibility at home and in University campus are vital components affecting EFL teachers' attitudes.

No Doubt the sudden breakthrough of the pandemic disease of Covid-19 transformed our life style radically. When we refer to education, we find ourselves in front of direct shift to e-learning or the so called on-line teaching. In other words, education witnessed a rapid development, classrooms lectures were carried out using the internet facilities, where people can commune straightforwardly; and therefore, teaching methods have advantaged from these advances.

**Method of Research**

Analytical and descriptive methods are used in this study. The researcher analyzes the advantages and disadvantages of e-learning to identify the validity of the use of the on-line virtual classrooms, visual, audio lectures for educational purposes. Besides, the descriptive method is used to evaluate the interaction of the students with the distance e-learning in general and the hybrid teaching method which mixes the e-learning and the traditional learning of the in particular if compared with the traditional class environment. Nowadays, the researchers and the students can benefit from this educational revolution where a heavy emphasis is put on internet as a major source of teaching. The study aims to answer the following question:

Does full On-line teaching have a positive influence on students' achievements if compared with the traditional methods with regard to academic achievements and interaction?

**Results and Discussion**

The research aims at exploring the electronic teaching to see if this method is useful in teaching English in comparison with traditional techniques which mainly depend on the traditional class room environment. The study aims to find out which method is more active by making a comparison between the students who studied by direct lecturing technique and those who used the modern on-line teaching program. Finally, the study aims to investigate if there are any possible dangers which threaten the teaching process by using the on-line teaching method or not.

Having in mind, the mass development in technology, the need to make education up to date is urgent. Considering this fact, academic institutes must adopt the modern teaching techniques and provide a more effective teaching environment that expresses the spirit of the age. Accordingly, there is an urgent need to apply on-line teaching as a support of teaching languages in general and English. On-line teaching has benefits for both students and instructors. Regarding the students, they have the ability to communicate with the native speakers which improves their pronunciations as well as their oral skills. As for the instructors, on-line teaching provides a solution for the lack of references by offering the on-line libraries which is a faster and a cheaper way to have resources.

**Advantages of E-Learning/ Distance Learning**

The results of the study demonstrate that the e-learning (distance learning) can have a positive influence on students' concentration and motivation level during their teaching and learning process. These findings are in line with the past studies (Anggraeni., 2018; Hussien Mohamad Alakrash and Norizan Abdul Razak., 2020, Kitishat et al., 2015) who found that majority of students are positively influenced by the on-line or e-learning classroom sessions.

In light of the results concerning the on–line teaching, which includes the new electronic methods in teaching, such as the visual/audio meetings , the enhancing internet tools, educational apps, recorded lectures and related electronic teaching apps results positively in the innovation of the learners' skills. The application of the on-line teaching virtual reality affixes the teaching environment and stimulates students' to obtain more comprehension and opens the doors for more live practice if compared with early conventional methods.

Another positive aspect of e-learning is time management, in this system every course is scheduled according to a specific time, the instructor sent a link or a code for students to join the scheduled session. Thus, this aspect allows the students to pay much more attention to time and therefore, the chance of wasting time during the teaching process is decreased if compared with the traditional teaching methods.

According to Innes & Wilton, (2018) the major benefits of E-Learning/ Distance Learning for students are best summarized in the possibility of providing both the students and the teachers with the chance to collaborate virtually, and this will led to creating a more flexible interaction. In other words, this environment will help in enabling learners to achieve better results, and so; this improves students' skills.

Moreover, many instructors find that E-Learning/ Distance Learning offers a chance to increase the student-teacher communication. E-Learning method, the researcher argues; keep students more focused and engaged in classroom by joining real teaching virtual reality mixing the audio and video conferences, the teacher can Share his screen, and the students' screen can share their screens (presentation, writing),too. Hence, there are many ways students and teachers communicate with each other as well using the virtual internet benefits which include, but not all direct conferencing, instant messaging, chatting, direct feed-back and immediate assessment tools.

Anna Maria Volpe and David Crosier (2020) state that the covid-19 crisis taught us many positive things about online teaching, perhaps the best thing we learn from this experience is that It helps to keep a direct contact with students and to inspire them. They state that immediacy is the key benefit of this system: with "synchronous teaching, students get immediate feedback, immediate answers to their questions without any break in the learning momentum"(Anna Maria Volpe and David Crosier: https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/eurydice/content/focus-what-has-covid-19-crisis-taught-us-about-online-teaching_en).

**Challenges of E-Learning/ Distance Learning**

There are many challenges of Distance Learning, like other methods, there are advantages disadvantages. Though we found many benefits of e-learning, still Distance Learning has its challenges.

To be specific, there are technical issues related to Distance Learning, or Blended Learning which are mostly problematic. For the Lecturer perhaps time challenges come in the first time if we take into consideration preparing the power point slides and the recording of the lecture .All these preparations took a long time. The evaluation procedures are also difficult if compared with the traditional ways. In the computerized virtual class rooms, students have to submit their homework electronically, after that the teacher has to correct every written assignment individually which took a long time.

Another problematic issue that challenges teachers is the electronic exams, which mainly depended on multiple choice questions, which for many students are considered easy to cheat.

For the students on the other hand, there are also many challenges such as the breakdown of the internet connections or the slow connections that led to bad technical connections like the sound might not be clear, or even more the students found themselves unable to complete the lecture to the end .Other students who complained that they don't have access to internet, or even worse, they don't find to pay for the expanses of the internet to attend their electronic classes.

## Conclusions

The study finds out that both lecturers and students have shown positive attitudes and awareness about Distance-learning teaching environment. For students, there is a readiness for this teaching method; they favored Blended Hybrid Learning rather than full-Electronic or Distance Learning. This is due to the degree of benefits they could attain if the facilities were available. For teachers; there was a positive attitude of adopting the Blended or E-Learning in their classroom communication though they encountered serious challenges. Another important point is the role played by the academic institution since it should provide teachers with Internet Technological knowledge by giving recurrent training courses to update the lecturers' level and IT skills. The study found that most of the schools infrastructures were not prepared for Blended Learning which increased the burden put on the shoulders of the lecturers.

## Recommendations

Taking into considerations the results of the study, which were in favor of the Electronic-Distance learning; the study recommends further studies to trace a comprehensive evaluation of all the aspects involved in the E-learning process. Moreover the study recommends providing the academic institutions with equipment, tools and labs needed in the application of the on-line teaching program. However; the researcher suggests having supervision on the students who use on-line electronic sources to help them if they encountered any technical problems. Finally, the researcher stresses the importance of having the qualified instructors who can employ all possible aids, apps and techniques required in the applications of the on-line teaching. In other words, the study recommends that a training course must be given to teachers especially Zoom workshops to get familiar with the expertise which includes share screen, white board, chat, poll and assignments. Also, teachers might train themselves before giving the on-line lesson by asking family member to practice the new method. Another important thing is to learn how to share a Google doc where the instructor can post his ideas, lesson plans, and lectures. Finally, it is advised that lecturers upload the recorded on-line session on many internet platforms such as You Tube. This will help in sharing knowledge and make a permanent reference to it where it will be available for students any time. Finally, the study recommends that universities and other educational institutions must provide instructors with the needed training courses and services so that they could be familiar with the educational technological development in the field of distance teaching. To conclude, the study argues if instructors use all the possible electronic techniques in their teaching methods, the future of e-learning will be constructed in a motivating and interactive environment. Teaching will be informative and fun as well; it might look difficult and challenging at the first time, but it worth that effort.

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# An Investigation of the Near-Synonyms in the Quran: A collocational Analysis

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**Abstract**

This qualitative corpus-based study aimed at investigating whether two pairs of near-synonym words hold similar or different meanings. To this end, a new method of corpus analysis -collocational analysis- was used to explore the dis/similarity among a number of noun + conjunction + noun (synonym) near-synonyms that were chosen from different chapters from the Holy Quran. The discussions of the examples have revealed that near-synonyms in the Quran have entirely different meanings. It was shown through their co-occurrence adjacency where each lexeme appears to carry an independent meaning from its company. More specifically, every single word has its semantic meaning and features in comparison to its neighboring lexeme. Analyzing the co-occurrence of near-synonym pairs in the Holy Quran revealed that they are distinct and each lexeme has its own meaning where it cannot be used interchangeably with its neighboring. Thus, we claim here that there are no two lexemes in the Holy Quran carrying the same meaning, especially those words that collocate with each other. Such an analysis could be useful for translators in which they can have a better understanding of the precise meaning of the closely related words.

*Keywords: Collocational Analysis, Quran, Synonyms, Near-synonyms*

## Introduction

One of the essential semantic lexical relations is synonyms which reflect the fluency and rhetoric of the speakers of a certain language. The issue of true synonyms existence in language, and in Arabic, in particular, does not seem to meet a consensus among linguists and semanticists. For instance, some Arab linguists rejected the existence of perfect or complete synonyms in Arabic, and argued that there are precise distinctions between the so-called synonymous words (Al-Thaʿālibī 1981, Al-ʿAskarī, 1998, Ibn Fāris 1963, and Al-Zamakhsharī

,1966). For instance, *"maṭar, ghayth, and wadaq* are all different kinds of *rain"* (Al-Sowaidi, 2011, p. 25). Nevertheless, each word has a precise, independent meaning where it cannot replace the other one in all linguistic environments (ibid, p.26). Some other linguists, by contrast, argued that it is possible for two lexemes to carry the same meaning and can substitute each other contextually (e.g., Sibawayh, 1977, Ibn Jinni, 1988). The proponents of this view attributed the existence of synonyms to the different dialects of Arabic that led to different names of the same item (Sibawayh, 1977, Ibn Jinnī, 1988). For instance, *qamḥ (قمح)* and *ḥinṭah (حنطة)*(wheat) are used interchangeably among Arabs (Al-Shāya', 1993, p, 123)

Likewise, the existence of synonymous words in the Holy Quran, according to some linguists and scholars, is a disputable issue since the language of Quran is derived from Arabic. However, there is a strong consensus that Quranic lexemes are not synonymous for two reasons. Firstly, the Quran is not part of human speech, but it is the speech of ALLAH the Almighty. Secondly, it is agreed that the Quran is a miracle so that no one can come up with something similar to it (Bint al-Shati, 1971). Based on this, it is clear that every lexeme in the Quran has its own meaning including the near-synonym words. However, seeking the differences between partial synonymous words from a linguistic point of view sounds more invaluable rather than relying on logic only.

To test whether two words have the same or almost the same meaning or not, a number of linguistic means were used in the literature, including substitution and oppositeness (Palmer, 1986). The former indicates that "true or total synonyms are mutually interchangeable in all their environments" (Palmer, 1986, p. 63). Cooper (1979) also argued that "two expressions are synonymous if they may be interchanged in each sentence without altering the truth value of that sentence" (p.167). The latter is associated with the fact that if "two words appear to have the same antonyms is a reason for treating them as synonyms" (Palmer, 1986, p. 63). Below are some studies that have been conducted attempting to explain the notion of near-synonyms in the Quran with some illustrative examples.

Recently, it seems that there is a considerable body of literature about the investigation of the notion of synonyms in Arabic, in general, and in the Quran, in particular. For instance, Al-Omari and Abu-Melhim (2014) studied synonyms in English and Arabic comparatively revealing the differences and similarities between the two languages with a particular focus on the different views of synonyms existence in the Quran. Some other studies were conducted to analyze single pairs of near-synonyms in the Quran like *Rayb* and *Shakk*, and *Alba'th* (upraising) and *AlIrsal* (sending) revealing the semantic differences of each word (Al-Rajhy, 2009; Dawood, 2007, respectively), to name but view. Based on the literature, all the means of analyzing the distinctions between near-synonymous lexemes in the Quran were through a semantic explanation of the differences between partial synonyms and their distinct uses in a linguistic context. Nonetheless, to the best of our knowledge, no literature has existed to examine differences between near-synonyms in the Quran using a collocational analysis.

**Research Question**

This study aims at answering the following main research question:

To what extent are near-synonyms in the Quran similar/different?

**Research Theoretical Framework**

1. **Synonyms in Arabic and the Holy Quran**

A synonym can be defined as "a term used in semantics to refer to a major type of sense relation between lexical items which have the same meanings" (Crystal, 2008, p. 470). Similarly, Leech (1981) considered synonyms as "more than one form having the same meaning" (p. 102).

The notion of synonym in Arabic is known as (*Attaraduf*). Al-Suyūṭī (1986, p.402) defined synonymy (*Attaraduf*) as "*hiya l-alfāẓ al-dāllah ʿalā kull shayʾ bi-iʿtibār wāḥid",* (different *lexical words that denote one meaning*), (Cited in Al-Sowaidi, 2011, p. 23). Sibawayeh (1977) defined synonyms as many words that have almost the same meaning.

As mentioned earlier, the phenomenon of synonymy (Attaraduf) has no obvious base in Arabic. Nevertheless, this phenomenon is still a disputable matter among linguists; one reason is that, there are two different views regarding the existence of synonyms in Arabic. Some Arab linguists supported the idea that Arabic language is rich in synonymy while others denied the existence of synonyms in Arabic.

**1.1. Types of Synonyms in Arabic**

Unlike other languages (e.g., English), synonyms in Arabic are classified into different categories: complete synonyms, partial or near- synonyms, semantic synonyms, deictic synonyms and cognitive synonyms (Abu-Syadeh, 2007). Near synonyms, the focus of this study, refer to two lexemes that share almost the same meaning that is seen identical and substitutable by non-linguists. An example of the near-synonymous words is the pair "*albaʔsa wa alddarra"* (البأساء والضراء) both are used in the Holy Quran. These two words, *albaʔsa wa alddarra,* at first glance, appear to be similar since they both refer to adversity; however, a deep look at them shows that they are semantically distinct and cannot be used interchangeably in all contexts (Abu-Syadeh, 2007)

## 2. Collocation

It was Firth (1957) who first coined the term collocation in linguistics. According to Firth (1968), collocation is “the company that words keep” (p. 182). Based on Firth’s definition, it is clear that collocation works at the syntagmatic level rather than the paradigmatic one (Firth, 1957, p.196). After Firth’s (1957) work on collocation, some other salient linguists (Halliday 1966; Sinclair 1966) expanded this term further to be included under the grammatical level of language, too. For example, Halliday (1966) considered collocation as “a linear co-occurrence relationship among lexical items which co-occur together” (p. 153). As for Sinclair (1991), collocation can be analyzed both lexically and structurally.

Thereupon, collocations are classified into two categories: grammatical collocations and lexical collocations, (Benson, et al, 1986). These two categories were divided into subcategories by Benson et al. (1986). Grammatical collocations consist of a content word, be it a noun, an adjective, or a verb with a preposition or grammatical structure such as an infinitive or clause (Benson et al., 1986).

Unlike grammatical collocations, lexical collocations, which concern us in this study, lack functions (i.e., prepositions), or grammatical structure, but instead they consist of content words (e.g., adjectives + noun, verb + noun, noun + verb, verb + adverb). In short, in this paper, collocations are defined as a lexical adjacency among words that inherently co-occur in a language where the meaning of a certain word can be understood.

### 2.1. Collocations in Arabic

Collocation is a linguistic phenomenon that exists in all languages, and among them is Arabic. In Arabic, collocation is known as /*almutalaazimaat al-lafDiyyah* or *Al-muSaaHabah al-lugawiyyah*/ (المتلازمات الفظية أو المصاحبة اللغوية) (Ghazala, 1993) and (Husamaddin,1985), respectively. Husamaddin (1985), defined collocation as “*al-muSaaHabatu al-i3tiyaadiyyatu li-kalimatin maa fee al-lugati bikalimaatin ?uxraa mu3ayyanah/* (المصاحبة الاعتيادية لكلمة ما في اللغة بكلمات أخرى معينة) (Husamaddin,1985, p. 257). (The habitual accompany of a certain word with other words in a language) *[Authors’ translation]*

According to (Husamaddin, 1985) there are a number of principles that govern collocations in Arabic, including *tawaafuqiyyat al-muSaaHabah* (association agreement), *madaa al-muSaaHabah* (collocational range) and *tawaaturiyyat al-muSaaHabah* (co-occurrence) (pp. 258-259).

### 2.1.1. Types of collocations in Arabic

In general, collocations in Arabic are categorized into four classes. Emery (1991) grouped them into four classes: open, restricted, bound collocations and idioms. Emery (1991) explained the differences between these categories as follows:

> In open collocations, a lexeme might co-occur with many other lexemes like /*qāma bidawrin*/ قام بدور /*qāma bimahammatin*/ قام بمهمة , and /*qāma bimajhūdin*/ قام بمجهود , whereas in restricted collocations, they are bilexemes or polylexemes used in one or more of their regular non-idiomatic meanings, following certain structural patterns. They are restricted not only by a set of syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic constraints holding between their constituents, but also by usage for example /'iqāmatu al-salāti/ إقامة الصلاةand /'ītā'u al- zakāti/ ايتاء ا لزكاة . Bound collocations are between restricted collocations and idioms. They are limited in occurrence for example /'addA mahammatan/ أدى مهمة/nahaDa bidawrin/ نهض بدور and /'asdA Khidmatan/ . أدى خدمة. Idioms consist of a fixed group of words with a special meaning which is different from the meaning of the individual words (Emery 1991, cited in Brashi, 2005, p. 43).

As discussed above, collocations can be classified on the basis of their association into lexical and grammatical collocations. The former, which is the focus of this study, tend to have company of lexical morphemes (e.g., nouns, verbs, adjectives or adverbs) that co-occur inherently with each other. For example, / *alba*?*sa wa alddarra* / (البأساءوالضراء), / *albath wa alhuzn* / (البث والحزن).

#### 2.1.1.1. Types of lexical collocations in Arabic and the Holy Quran

Syntagmatically, lexical collocations in Arabic can be classified into three main categories**;** (1) noun + noun, (2) verb + verb and (3) verb + noun. Salman (2005, p. 7) sub-divided the noun+ noun collocations into three types:

1. noun + coordinator + noun (*alm?tuf wa alm?tuf ?lihi* / المعطوف والمعطوف عليه)
2. Noun + adjective ( *Alsifah wa almwsuf* / الصفة والموصوف)
3. The genitive construction of possessed+ possessor (AlmuDaf wa almuDaf ?lihi/ المضاف والمضاف إليه)

The noun + coordinator + noun (*alm?tuf wa alm?tuf ?lihi* /المعطوف والمعطوف عليه) according to Salman (2005, p. 8) are of three types:

1. collocations expressing complementarities: الحج والعمرة ، الشمس والقمر ، الدين والدنيا
2. collocations denoting opposition (noun + antonym): الليل والنهار ، الموت والحياة، الذهاب و الاياب
3. collocations expressing assertion (noun + synonym): البأساء والضراء، العذب والفرات، الخوف و الخشية

As can be seen in the third category, noun + and + noun collocations, some words collocate with their synonyms. Strictly speaking, this type of collocation is the focus of this study to investigate the existence of near-synonyms in the Quran. It is worth mentioning here that most of the collocations used in Modern Standard Arabic are found in the Holy Quran.

**3.2. Functions of Collocations**

Like other semantic lexical relations, collocations have different functions and properties. Proponents of the lexical approach such as Firth (1957), Halliday (1966) and Sinclair (1966) suggest that the co-occurrence of words manifests the meaning of these lexemes that accompany each other. For instance, Halliday & Hasan (1976) consider them “crucial to the interpretations of a text" (p. 287). Similarly, collocations, according to Newmark (1988, p. 213) are “nerves” of a text: “If grammar is the bones of a text, collocations are the nerves, more subtle and multiple and specific in denoting meaning and lexis is the flesh.” A further function of collocations is that they “play an important role in the coherence and cohesion of language and they are present in all text types” (Brashi, 2005, p. 2). In the research line, collocation studies, according to Cantos-Gómez & Almela-Sánchez (2019) are “one of the most productive areas of research over the last five decades, judging by the abundance of literature dealing with the topic and by the multiplicity of theoretical insights, methodological frameworks, and practical applications that have resulted from this field of research” (P, v)

In the domain of Arabic lexical relations, collocations are considered essential in manifesting the semantic differences of the meaning of synonyms. Arabic, in general, and the Quran in particular, are rich with collocations in which meaning of near-synonymous words can be detected through their adjacency. That is, a “language that is collocationally rich is also more precise” (Oxford Collocation Dictionary; cited in Sarikas, 2006, p. 36).

In brief, collocations can be used as a means of finding out the subtle distinctions between synonymous lexemes in language. Based on this role of collocations, this study aimed to fill in the gap since most of the studies in this regard were concerned with collocations themselves rather than deploying them so as to get the precise meaning of the near-synonymous words.

## The Study

### Corpus

To address the research question, a number of near-synonyms were chosen from different chapters form the Holy Quran for the purpose of investigation. In this study, eight pairs of lexical near-synonyms are chosen from different chapters from the Holy Quran to investigate their similarities and differences in meaning. One type of lexical collocations is used which is the (noun + conjunction + noun (synonym) (*alm?tuf wa alm?tuf ?lihi* / المعطوف والمعطوف عليه) since this type of collocations occurred frequently in the Holy Quran with near-synonymous words.

### A collocational Analysis of the near-synonyms in the Quran

The following examples are chosen from the Quran for the purpose of discussion. Each example is presented first along with its transliteration, followed by a qualitative discussion of the distinctions between the two targeted near-synonyms.

1.البأساء والضراء (*alba*?*sa wa alddarra*)

(Baqara: 177) (**وَالصَّابِرِينَ فِي الْبَأْسَاءِ وَالضَّرَّاءِ وَحِينَ الْبَأْس**)

Transliteration: *Wa alssabireena fee alba?sa-i wa alddarra-i wa heena alba?si*

Discussion

In this verse, the pair near-synonymous words (*alba*?*sa wa alddarra*) co-occurred sharing the general meaning of adversity; however, they have some semantic differences. According to Ibn ManDour (1999), *alba?sa* could be a sort of poverty and indicates a state of war whereas *alddarra* could mean adversity which is a state of serious or continued difficulty or misfortune (Dictionary of Merriam Webster, 2015). Precisely, these two lexemes, *alba*?*sa wa alddarra*, refer to extrinsic and intrinsic states adversity, respectively where *alba?sa refers* to poverty and *alddarra* refers to pain in the body. Briefly speaking, the two terms, *alba*?*sa wa alddarra*, have two different meanings as they collocate with each other, and they are not synonymous.

2.البث والحزن (*albath wa alhuzn*)

(Yūsuf: 86) (**إِنَّمَا أَشْكُو بَثِّي وَحُزْنِي إِلَى اللَّهِ**)

Transliteration: *Innama ashkoo baththee wa huznee ila Allahi*

Discussion

The two words, *baththee wa huznee,* occurred accompanied to each other to indicate two different meanings. At first glance, a reader would think that these two lexemes hold the same meaning whereas they do not since they co-occurred. That is, according to Ibn ManDour (1999), *albath* could indicate distraction in which a person is very annoyed and upset so that s/he cannot keep this sort of distraction and tells or complains to others regarding his situation. On the other hand, *alhuzn,* implies a grief caused by pain or deep disappointment (Ibn Faris, 1963). Based on Al-Askari (1998), *albath* can't be kept inside the person while *alhuzn* can be controlled. Based on the explanation of these two collocations, it can be said that *albath* is a result of *alhuzn* since a person can't conceal it.

3.الخوف والخشية */alkhawfu wa al kheshyah/*

**(لَّا تَخَافُ دَرَكًا وَلَا تَخْشَىٰ)** (Ta-Ha: 77)

Transliteration: *la takhafu darakan wala takhsha*

Discussion

*Alkhawfu wa al kheshita* occurred collocationally to indicate that they do not carry the same meaning. *Al kheshyata,* accoring to Al-Zarkashī (1957), is more than *Alkhawfu.* This means that *Al kheshyata* is state of being very afraid from someone who is very strong and powerful whereas *Alkhawfu* is a result of the weakness of the person himself (Al-Askari 1998). Yet, *Al kheshyata* is associated with something or someone who is feared by others while *Alkhawfu* is related to an instance of being afraid because of the lack of bravery and strength. Thus, these two words cannot be used interchangeably since they do have differences in meaning.

4. الدعاء والنداء (*Adu?a wa Annida?*)

**(وَمَثَلُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا كَمَثَلِ الَّذِي يَنْعِقُ بِمَا لَا يَسْمَعُ إِلَّا دُعَاءً وَنِدَاءً)** (Baqara: 171)

Transliteration: *Wamathalu allatheena kafaroo kamathali allathee yanAAiqu bima la yasmaAAu illa duAAaan wanidaan*

Discussion

Another noun + noun (synonym) that exists in the Holy Quran is *Adu?a wa Annida?* that both appear to indicate talking and speaking; nevertheless, they carry semantic differences in their meaning as they co-occurred. Ibn Ashur (1972) made a distinction between these pair of collocations, *Adu?a wa Annid?.* That is, *Adu?a* can be used to call someone who is very near to you, but *Annida? is used to call someone who is far away from you. Yet, Adu?a, according* *to* Ibn Ashur (1972), can be heard while *Annida? cannot.* Al-Askari (1998) also differentiated between these two lexemes stating that *Annida?* is a state of rising the voice for something meaningful, but *Adu?a* could indicate rising and falling voices. So, it can be that *Annida? could refer to "speaking in a loud distinct voice so as can be heard at a distance" (Merriam Webster Dictionary, 2015 ),* and *Adu?a* could refer to a manner of calling with a less degree of loudness.

5 . السر والنجوى *(Assirru wa Annajwa)*

**(أَلَمْ يَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ سِرَّهُمْ وَنَجْوَاهُمْ)** (Tauba: 78)

Transliteration: *Alam yaAAlamoo anna Allaha yaAAlamu sirrahum wanajwahum*

Discussion:

*Assirru wa Annajwa* are another example of the Quranic lexemes that collocates to each other denoting secrets and hidden concealments. However, they have significant differences since they came accompanied with each other. Based on Ibn ManDour's (1999) explanation, *Assirru* is what can be hidden from people and it refers to guarded thoughts that are inside someone. *Annajwa*, in contrast, is a type of secrets that is shared by two people where one can tell someone else about his covert thoughts (Ibn MnDour, 1999). A further difference between them is that *Assirru* denotes counsels that are kept inside one's mind while *Annajwa refers to secrets between two people* (Al-Askari, 1998). Accordingly, it can be seen clearly that *Assirru* refers to extremely covert intentions within a person's mind whereas *Annajwa* indicates confidential thoughts shared by two people. Since these two lexemes have different meanings, they co-occurred in the Holy Quran collocationally indicating two different ideas.

6. السادة والكبراء *(Assadatu wa alkubaraau)*

**(وَقَالُوا رَبَّنَا إِنَّا أَطَعْنَا سَادَتَنَا وَكُبَرَاءَنَا فَأَضَلُّونَا السَّبِيلَا)** (Ahzāb: 67)

Transliteration:

*Waqaloo rabbana inna ataAAna sadatana wakubaraana faadalloona alssabeela*

Discussion

One more example of controversial near-synonymous words is the pair of *Assadatu wa alkubaraau.* Some scholars like (Assiyuti, 1986) believed that these are two synonymous words and they appeared together to reveal emphasis. They co-occurred to indicate two different meanings, although. *Alkubaraau is a term that* describes the head of the family or tribe and it usually refers to most important people in the family due to their age or nobility (Ibn Ashur, 1972). On the contrary, *Assadatu* is associated with people who are the chiefs and lead other people due to their influence and authority (Al-Askari, 1998). Yet, *Assadatu* are leaders who manage others' issues regardless of their age or education while *Alkubaraau* are the heads of groups of people since they are the oldest and most educated ones. Again, the co-occurrence of these two near-synonyms reveals their precise independent meaning so that neither of them can be substituted.

7.الشرعة والمنهاج (*Ashshir*AA*tu wa alminhaju*)

(Māïda: 48) **(لِكُلٍّ جَعَلْنَا مِنكُمْ شِرْعَةً وَمِنْهَاجًا)**

Transliteration: *Likullin jaAAalna minkum shirAAatan wa minhajan.*

Discussion

*AshshirAAtu wa alminhaju* is another lexical collocation that exists in the Holy Quran, and that reveals two complete different meanings so that each one is semantically significant. That is, *AshshirAAtu* has to do with the laws that Allah has legislated, such as prayers, zakat and fasting; however, *alminhaju* refers the obvious path or way that people can go on (Ibn ManDour, 1991). Moreover, according to Ibn Ashur (1972), *ashshirAAtu* can be used to indicate rules and regulation while *alminhaju* denotes beliefs. Based on these distinctions of these two lexemes, it can be said that *ashshirAAtu* leads to following *alminhaju*, the right way.

8. العداوة والبغضاء (*alAAadawata wa albaghdaa*)

(Māïda: 64) **(وأَلْقَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ)**

Transliteration: *waalqayna baynahumu alAAadawata wa albaghdaa ila yawmi alqiyamati*

Discussion

These two near-synonymous lexemes appear, at first glance, similar to each other in meaning since they both can be used superficially to express dislikes. Nonetheless, in the Holy Quran, each lexeme has its own meaning as it collocates with its neighboring word. *AlAAadawata* is said to be more general than *albaghdaa* and it leads to *albaghdaa.* Thus, *alAAadawata*, according to Ibn Ashur (1972), is a sort of enmity that can be open or concealed, but *albaghdaa* is a feeling of dislike that is inside someone. Moreover, *alAAadawata* is always accompanied by aggression, ignorance, and attacks either verbally or physically whereas *albaghdaa* is a kind of unspoken hatred, which is a sort of inside deep unfriendly feeling that is not expressed physically (Ibn Ashur, 1972). In short, *alAAadawata* can be said to be an extrinsic enmity that shows itself in attacks while *albaghdaa* is thought to be an intrinsic feeling of hatred inside one's mind.

## Conclusion

A new approach, a collocational analysis, was used in this study to qualitatively investigate whether two pairs of near-synonym words hold similar or different meanings. A number of noun + conjunction + noun (synonym) near-synonyms were chosen from different chapters form the Holy Quran for the purpose of investigation. The qualitative analysis of the examples above revealed that near-synonyms in the Quran have complete different meanings. This was shown through their co-occurrence adjacency where each lexeme appears to carry an independent meaning form its company. More specifically, every single word has its semantic meaning and features in comparison to its neighboring lexeme. Thus, we claim here that, there are no two lexemes in the Holy Quran, which carry the same meaning, in particularly those words that collocate with each other. Such an analysis could be useful for translators in which they can have a better understanding of the precise meaning of the closely related words. Yet, they should make distinctions between these words that show superficial similarity during translations.

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