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Forward by Copy Editor

Welcome to the January edition of the Asian EFL Journal in 2021. This inspiring edition contains six articles and two book reviews of quality.

Shurooq Talab Jaafar, Hisham Dzakiria and Manvender Kaur Sarjit Singh, in the first article *Survey Study of Borrowings in the Arabic Language Based on the Hierarchy of Linguistics Branches*, used a descriptive research strategy to demonstrate the fundamentals, principles and basics of borrowings in the Arabic language, based on the hierarchy of linguistic branches, i.e. from phonetic/phonemic borrowings to lexicography borrowing. Through the authors' careful analysis of the previous studies, they concluded that future research should shift the focus from the already studied basic branches to syntactic borrowings, semantic borrowings, pragmatic borrowings and semiology borrowings in the Arabic language.

Next, Jungyoung Park and Richard Schlight, two writing specialists offered their insightful instructional implications for teaching English writing to non-native postgraduates in *Creative Writing Workshop with Native and Non-native English-Speaking Graduate Students: A Comparative Study*. With the workshop and interview data, they identified the similarities and differences between the two groups of participants and advise on the importance of creating social and constructivist environments for non-native postgraduate writers, such as academically and analytically focused creative writing workshops.

To investigate the interrelationships among learners' beliefs about English language learning, language learning strategies and learner autonomy and whether the three factors can be effective predictors towards proficiency, Phitsinee Koad and Budi Waluyo, starting from individual differences and the differences between more and less proficient learners in the paper *What Makes More and Less Proficient EFL Learners? Learner's Beliefs, Learning Strategies and Autonomy*. Through questionnaire survey and English proficiency tests, the authors reported four important points: the modification of the survey instrument, the high level of beliefs of Thai learners which was driven by their motivation, the positive relationships of the three chosen factors and the effectiveness of the predictors toward English proficiency respectively.

Then, in *Language Learner Beliefs: EFL and ESL Contexts*, Mili Saha conducted a different study on learners' beliefs and attitudes regarding EFL and ESL(-like English major students) learners in Bangladesh. She used BALLI and six qualitative questions to collect data, in addition to the demographic survey. With her data, she listed in detail the differences between the ESL and EFL learners' needs and conformed that individually responsive and need-based pedagogies should be implemented.

In the following paper, *Enhancing Professional Development of Iranian EFL Teachers through Collaborative Reflection*, Parisa Zohdijalal and Mojtaba Mohammadi emphasized the importance of a supportive environment for professional development because it will help teachers to develop higher levels of reflective thinking and self-evaluation. With the carefully staged experimental design, their results suggested that

instructors can benefit from collaborative reflection through group discussions, followed by suggestions from the authors.

Then, Fazyudi Ahmad Nadzri, Zahariah Pilus and Ridwan Wahid, in their paper *Level Tones in the Narration of Serial Pictures by Malay ESL Learners*, after carrying out a well-designed study of 60 participants narrating a short story for tone observation. Their findings indicated that the level tone was the most often used and it was used when the speakers hesitated, felt inadequate while expressing thoughts and express new information. On gender differences, males used more level tones than female participants. The study also reported that the participants were unable to use proper intonation in spontaneously English.

The first book review, Khalid Al Hariri's review on *Culture and Identity through English as a Lingua Franca: Rethinking Concepts and Goals in International Communication* (Baker, 2017), is a strongly recommended resource book. It is a book that begins with the concept of English as a lingua franca and expands to intercultural communication and globalization, even to the language users' cultural identity development. The author emphasized communicative competence over linguistic competence for learners can accept otherness; as a result, language teachers should integrate intercultural awareness into the classes.

Finally, Adam Pritchard recommends *Teaching English at Japanese Universities: A New Handbook (eds.) (2019)* to English language teachers who are currently teaching or interested in teaching English in the Japanese higher education context. Over thirty experienced educators contributed to the handbook which covers a wide range of issues, including the setting, the entry point, advice on employment, cultural awareness, teaching pedagogy, technology, homework assignment and evaluation, learners (e.g. interaction styles and motivation), language policy, workplace dynamics, regulations, etc. The handbook provides a surprising amount of details yet manageable in just over two hundred pages. Those who are interested in Japanese higher education should read it.

Dr. I-Chin Nonie Chiang
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Survey Study of Borrowings in the Arabic Language Based on The Hierarchy of Linguistics Branches

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Abstract

Decades ago, borrowings had a significant role in linguistic studies. Different studies have been done on the interferences among languages. Each one had different forecasts and results from others. This survey study aims to cover the most recent studies of English borrowings in the Arabic language. A descriptive research strategy is used to collect data from previous studies, groups, situations, or communities for further information to demonstrate the main fundamentals, principles, and basics of borrowings in linguistics. Each study is analyzed according to the hierarchy of linguistic branches to explore which branches are covered adequately and which are not and need further investigation.

Key Words: Phonetic borrowing, Morphemic Borrowing, Lexical Borrowing, Code-Switching Borrowing, Pragmatic Borrowing, Semiotics Borrowing

Introduction

Traditionally, English studies drew on the university's internationally recognized strength in discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, stylistics, grammar, and applied linguistics (Jaafar, 2013; 2014; 2016; 2017). Recently, the focus is shifted to linguistic borrowings within two or more languages. Such borrowings occur when words are adopted from a language and used in another without translation. These borrowed words may be adopted with or without adjustment in their phonemic system (Jaafar, Buragohain, & Haroon, 2019). Many studies have concentrated on the influence of the first language on English language learning (Adamson, Coulson, & Fujimoto-Adamson, 2019; Jessie L. Labiste, 2019; Kusuma, Osin, & Anggabawa, 2019; Phuong & Phuong, 2019). Although the Arabic language differs from English in the writing system, Arabic reads from right to left while English is from left to right, but resembles English in having both vowels and consonants. Vowels in Arabic are not just letters like (ا, و, ي) pronounced as (alaf, wau, yeh) rather than symbols placed at the top or bottom of the consonants to create vowels like (fat'hah, Kasra, Zhama) (see figure 1).

Strictly speaking, there are 28 different sounds in Arabic with each one representing a letter while English owns 26 letters and 44 different sounds (Bouchentouf, 2013). These

differences cause adjustments on the borrowed words to resemble the writing system of the receiving language. The adjustment takes place when the receiving language uses its phonemes to make the new or 'borrowed word' easier or familiar in pronunciation. Some of these studies took one branch of linguistics and analyzed borrowings according to this selected branch. Other studies investigated two integrated branches of linguistic to analyze borrowed words. However, borrowing takes different forms based on different linguistic branches, (see Figure 2).

	Vowels in form of Letters		
	Yeh	Wau	Alaf
Long Vowels	ي	و	ا
Short Vowels	ـَ	ـُ	ـِ
	Kasra	Zhama	Fat'hah
	Vowels in form of Signs and Symbols		

Figure 1 Vowels in the Arabic Language

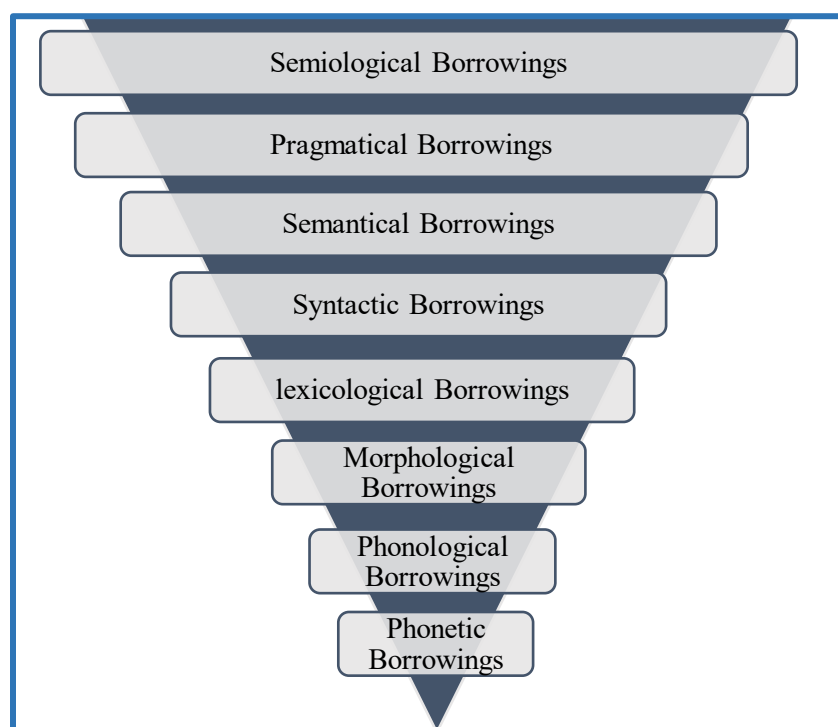


Figure 2 Borrowing Hierarchy According to The Linguistics Branches

Research Objective

This study aims to achieve a broad overview of the borrowings in the Arabic language by presenting the most recent studies in this field and divide borrowings in the Arabic language according to the hierarchy of linguistics branches to investigate which branches are covered and which are not and need further research.

Research Problem

There are rare or few studies that observe and collect the most recent studies about the English borrowings in the Arabic language. Besides this gap, the present study will demonstrate the previous studies according to the hierarchy of the linguistic branches to enable the Arabic researchers to be aware which branches are sufficiently covered and which are not and need further investigation.

Studies of Borrowing Dependent on One Branch of Linguistics

Some studies took one branch of linguistic and analyzed the borrowed and loan words according to this selected branch, others integrate two branches of linguistics and used them to analyze borrowed and loan words. Strictly speaking, borrowing dependent on one branch of linguistics can be classified into the following:

1. Phonetic Borrowing

Phonetics is the first branch in the hierarchy of linguistics branches that studies the sounds of human speech, the equivalent aspects of sign, (O'Grady, *et al.*, 2017). Phonetic borrowings are most widely and prevalent in all languages. They are words borrowed with their spelling, pronunciation, and meaning. Then they endure assimilation that every sound in the borrowed word is replaced by the corresponding sound of the borrowing language. In some cases, the orthography is modified. The structure of the borrowed word can even be changed whereas the position of the stress is extremely influenced by the phonetic system of the borrowing language. Sometimes the sample of the word and the meaning of the borrowed word are also modified (Goodman, *et al.* 2012). For example, the words like *travel*, *table*, *chair*, and *people* are phonetic borrowings from French; *bank*, *soprano*, *duet* are phonetic borrowings from Italian; *alcohol*, *algebra* are

phonetic borrowings from Arabic; whereas *album*, *aluminum*, *alphabet* are phonetic borrowings from Latin.

Al-Athwary (2016) wrote about the adaptation in phonetic borrowing between English and Arabic. His study aimed to investigate the adaptation at the phonetic (syllabic or prosodic) level. To achieve the purpose of this study, Al-Athwary (2016) analyzed and described the loanword pronunciation which reflects in the areas and effects of phonetic and phonological interference between the two languages, English Language and Arabic Language. For this purpose, more than 300 English words borrowed by Modern Standard Arabic are analyzed. At the syllabic and prosodic level, mechanisms like cluster simplification, syllabic consonant conversion, gemination, etc. are found at work and by far systematic in Modern Standard Arabic borrowings. However, Al-Athwary's study discusses some problems presented through the research such as the modern technological and educational developments in the Arab world, and the different consonant cluster systems of English and Arabic. He concluded that Arabic speakers replace the exotic English phonemes with Arabic familiar ones, lacking in the Arabic phonetic system, and the absence of gemination in English may represent another area of interference that may repeatedly occur.

Another study of Abdullah (2012) also wrote about phonetic borrowing in the Arabic language stating that English is an international language that communicates with many languages in the world. So, it borrowed from those languages and at the same time has lent words to them. Examples of these words from Arabic are *kohl*, *cotton*, and *safari*. Abdullah (2012) argued that English has borrowed many words from Arabic which is shown the crucial influence of Arabic on English. The purpose of this study was to present and discuss Arabic loan words in English by comparing and analyzing the two forms in both languages to show that "English words are of Arabic origin". The hypothesis of this study states that Arabic has a great influence on English in all fields of life through Arabic loan words. The study depended on a new approach of analysis as well as the literature available in libraries, the internet, and dictionaries (Arabic and English). He had concluded that: the counterparts in English are proved to be of Arabic origin, English borrowed some Arabic words with some changes in the initial letter or last one. He focused on his study on the vital influence

that the Arabic language plays in English borrowings based on the technique of analyzing the words into their separate letters and gives the counterpart in Arabic as follows:

Table 1 Sample of Abdullah (2012) analyzing technique in borrowings

Letter NO.	1	2	3	4	5
English	C	R	I	M	E
Arabic	ج	ر	ي	م	أ

2. Phonemic Borrowing

Phonology, or the phonemic system in a language, is the second branch in the hierarchy of linguistics branches which studies the patterns of sounds in a language and across languages, (Kaye, 2013). Phonemic borrowing is more widely prevalent and used than Phonetics in all languages. Phonemic or phonological borrowing occurs when the foreign pronounced word is transferred into the language as closely as possible to create a borrowed word that sounds somehow similar to the source language. This system involves numerous phonetic and phonological processes, for instance, mapping the foreign phonemes to their nearest Chinese correspondents and eliminating foreign sound structures that are not allowed in Chinese (Chan, 2016).

Guba (2016) studied the phonological adaptation of English borrowing in Ammani (capital of Jordan) Arabic. Their study aimed to conduct a theoretical comprehensive analysis of the phonological adaptation of English loanwords. They argued that the first contact between the Jordanian Arabic language and the English Language date back to the nineteenth century when the British ran several academic and religious institutions in Palestine and Jordan which caused more influence of English during the British mandate over Jordan between 1917 and 1946. To achieve the purpose of the study, Guba (2016) gave a corpus of 407 established English loanwords which were analyzed as they were pronounced by 12 Ammani Arabic monolingual native speakers. The results showed that the adaptation process that occurred within Ammani Arabic was mainly phonological, although it was influenced by phonetics and other linguistic factors. It also showed the Ammani target language influenced on the phonological of their Source Language.

Showing that, English stress syllables were mostly neglected in the adaptation process according to Ammani Arabic stress constraints. At the end of his study, Guba (2016) argued that this study had given rise to new data invoked hidden phonological constraints in the Phonology of Ammani Arabic which led to better understanding.

Ruthan (2014) explored English phonemic borrowing in Saudi Arabic language. His study aimed to shed light on the borrowing of English loanwords into Arabic. He focused on the subject of an ongoing debate, whether adaptation processes were part of perception or production by investigating the phonological forms of English loanwords in Arabic. To achieve the purpose of his study, he discussed the phonetic and phonemic approaches that have been controversial in loanword adaptation. The study questioned whether the absence of phonemes in the Arabic phonemic inventory equivalent to certain English target phonemes affected English foreign Language and English Second Language learners' pronunciation of English loanwords differently. For this purpose, he presented a sample of two groups of speakers who used the same phonemes for a substitution or used different ones. A list of 29 loanwords was compiled and used to examine the productions of 15 English Foreign Language learners from Salman University and 15 English second language learners from the Center for English as a Second Language at Southern Illinois University. He concluded that Both English Foreign Language and English Second Language learners reflected native Arabic phonological processes, while only English Second Language learners reflected universal patterns, such as VOT approximation, that followed neither the phonological system of Arabic nor that of English. Consequently, the findings of the study contributed to a better understanding of how both phonology and phonetics are related to English loanwords in Arabic.

3. Morphemic Borrowing

Morphology, or morphemic system in a language, is the third branch in the hierarchy of linguistics branches that studies any of the minimal grammatical units of a language, each one constituting a word or meaningful part of a word, (Fabregas & Scalise, 2012). Morphemic Borrowing studies the transfer of grammatical borrowing from one language into another is a matter of dispute within the field of language contact. We can simply call

such transferring as a transfer of morphemic fabric from one language to another including the transfer of patterns. (Wiemer, *et. al.*, 2012).

Mangrio (2016) presented the morphology of Urdu loanwords in three languages: Persian, Arabic, and English. His study was the first attempt to investigate in this field. It discussed in detail Urdu morphology, which was, in fact, a composition of native Urdu, Persian, and Arabic morphological structures. Focusing on the morphological adaptation of loanwords in Urdu, a language rarely examined in terms of loanword adaptation. As well as the parallels and differences explored between the relatively recent adaptation of English loans and the older adaptation of words from Arabic and Persian into Urdu. This study is primarily descriptive, carefully teasing apart sometimes complex interactions between syntax, semantics, and linguistic function relative to loanword adaptation. In addition to such derivational processes, this study also considered various inflectional issues, e.g. gender and number morphology, the pluralization of English nominal loans, and the adaptation of English verbs through the use of Urdu dummy verbs. On the other hand, the study built a good foundation for a more in-depth examination of the data against the current morphological theory. However, he argued that this study is not only presented a large quantity of interesting data in pursuing the immediate question of loanword adaptation in Urdu, it also provided a fruitful starting point for a wealth of further investigations into Urdu and loanword adaptation more generally.

Bueasa (2015) argued that Loanwords were integrated into Classical Arabic from various languages such as English, Latin, Greek, Persian, Syriac, Turkish, and others. Although his study was not specialized only in English loanwords, it was able to show us some English borrowed words into the Arabic Language that could be used to support the present study by showing us when such words got borrowed into Arabic. He presented a deep analysis of the loanwords that were adopted, remaining as they were in the source language, or got adapted by undergoing certain phonological and morphological alterations. Such morph-phonological changed would be defined within an adaptability scale in three different positions. The first position is occupied by merely adopted (MA) loanwords, partially adapted (PA) loanwords, and fully adapted (FA) loanwords. He concluded that fully adapted (FA) loanwords were the most productive ones are the ones

in the adaptability scale. In other words, he proposed several criteria that determined the degree of alteration which loanwords in Classical Arabic went through. Analyzing an existing corpus of loanwords in Classical Arabic by comparing between the source language and the Arabic language.

3.1. Graphic borrowing

The graphic system, or Orthography, is a subfield of Morphology, the science that deals with the nature and the power of letters and correct spelling. A letter (grapheme) is a character used to represent an elementary sound (phoneme). In English, there are twenty-six graphemes but more phonemes to forty-four (Wright, 2017). Because some of the graphemes represent more than one phoneme, for example, the grapheme (c) gives five more phonemes like /k/ in cat, /s/ in cell, /ʃ/ in machine, /tʃ/ in church, and finally /dʒ/ in sandwich (Chan, 2016). The phoneme of the borrowed word is based on the phonemic system of the source language from which the word has been borrowed irrespective of the phonemic system of the reception language (De Voogt & Finkel, 2010).

Huneety and Mashaqba (2016) wrote about graphic borrowing by studying the stress rules in Bedouin Jordanian Arabic (placing in the north of Jordan). His study aimed to analyze stress patterns in loan words spoken by natives of Bedouin Jordanian Arabic in the north of Jordan within the metrical model proposed by Hayes (1995). Presenting a sample of 120 words spoken by 32 native speakers of Bedouins of the north of Jordanian, 16 males and 16 females, belonging to four Bedouin dialects: Bani Hassan Arabic, Sarhan Arabic, Bani Xalid Arabic, and ?ahl il-Jabal Arabic, all of them spoken by Bedouins in the north of Jordan. The researchers employed two methods to examine stress patterns in the collected sample. In the first method, conversations were recorded with 14 participants on topics that involve some loan words, e.g. cars, food, and modern life. Within these conversations, the researchers asked frequent questions that involved participants to speak about as many loan words as possible. In the second method, further 18 participants were asked to read a list of 120 loan words aloud embedded in the sentence “*ana widdi aštari*”, ‘I want to buy’. All data were then double-checked with the language informants by the researchers. However, they concluded that: BJAN have a moraic trochaic foot where foot parsing goes from left to right, there were contrasts with the Bedouin dialect of Wadi Ramm

Arabic where loan words have an iambic stress pattern ($\mu\mu$), and finally, loan words conform to the bimoraicity condition through vowel lengthening.

4. Lexical Borrowing

Lexicology, or lexicon, is the fourth branch in the hierarchy of linguistics branches which studies words, their nature and function as symbols, their meaning, and the rules of their composition from small parts such as morphemes and phonemes (Осиянова & Романюк, 2017; Quine, 2013). Lexical Borrowings is a special notable language behavior, particularly for the speakers that do not share similar learning experiences as the individuals that use them. The speakers often used them without even noticed or aware. It is both the target of and itself comprises evidence for ideological emphasis by politicians and everyday persons making demand about the social class, intelligence, level of education, or even work ethic of a person using them. Unofficially, such practice is sometimes referred to as code-switching and code-mixing (Varra, 2018).

Bahumaid (2015) focused on English loanwords that had penetrated the lexicon of the Arabic vernacular of Hadramawt in Yemen over the past few decades. He claimed that the process of borrowing from English occurred indirectly through the contacts of the inhabitants of immigrant Hadhramis in Arab Gulf countries. The study provided sufficient evidence of the lexical expansion of Hadhrami Arabic through borrowings from English especially in electric, mechanical and vehicle-related fields as Standard Arabic equivalents were either inaccessible to locals due to illiteracy or had not gained wider acceptability. He then collected 125 English-originated words in Hadhrami Arabic from oral and printed sources. The analysis had shown that phonological adaptation of those loanwords to the HA structure had involved certainly processed including sound nativization, pharyngealization, gemination, metathesis, and some consonants as well as the insertion of a vowel to break the word-initial consonant cluster. He argued that loanwords had been subjected to certain processes involving the narrowing, widening, or transfer of the meanings of their English counterparts. He stated that the sociolinguistic aspect of loanwords in Hadhrami Arabic would shed some light on the variation of their uses.

Darwish (2016) gave a historical preview from the first Arabic words in Old English to the latest few words in the last decades. His study was a surveying article of the English loan words from the Arabic language. It began with different conflicting views regarding the term “loan words” and the amount of the Arabic loan words in English from both points of view the English and the Arab linguists’. He argued that the scope of Arabic words in English was highly exaggerated by Abou Ghoush (1977), but he did not provide any evidence or dates about it. Besides, the deep study was ignored by the majority of English linguists except a few of them, such as Serjeanson (1935) and Taylor (1933). He claimed that there was an asymmetry where more words went from one side to the other. Based on the previous history of loaning, many factors influence the matter of loaning; these factors could be cultural, scientific, or political.

4.1. Code-Switching Borrowing

During the last fifty years, a lot of interests shifted towards bilingual communities who use certain phenomena of borrowing ‘code-switching’ to make their communication more effective, meaningful, and powerful. In linguistics, code-switching borrowing is the subfield of lexicology. It happens when a speaker alternates between two or more languages in the context of a single conversation. Multilingual speakers of more than one language, sometimes use forms of multiple languages when they conversing with each other. Thus, code-switching borrowing is the use of more than one linguistic variety in a manner of interest with the syntax and phonology of each linguistic variety (Auer, 2013).

Ismagilova and Palutina (2017) addressed Code-switching borrowing by arguing that the contemporary world witnesses the growing popularity of foreign language learning and its role in modern society. So, their article was devoted to the problem of mutual borrowings from English and Spanish languages. The article aims to investigate new tendencies in the English words borrowings, their establishment in the Spanish language, and the other way round. They added that ‘The Spanish language is one of the most widespread languages in the world and it is a native language for different nationalities. On the other hand, English has borrowed quite a lot of Spanish words as well’. They noted that ‘the number of borrowings in the magazines of the fashion industry is increasing. This phenomenon contributes to the emergence of new terms in the field of fashion in the

Spanish language. English language, in turn, is also under the influence of the Spanish language, although it is the main language of international cooperation'. They argued that the close relations between languages allowed guessing which led to many new borrowings in both languages. Moreover, the mutual enrichment of the languages makes the process of language teaching specific and it is important in the modern process of globalization where languages are the main resource of international cooperation. Their article contained both theoretical and practical materials dedicated to the investigation of this problem. They argued that their article may be useful for a wide range of readers, students, scientists, linguists in the study of modern Spanish and English languages.

Another study of AL Btoush (2014) also focused on the importance of code-switching in the life of bilingual people of two languages English and Jordanian Arabic. This study explored English loanwords and the reasons behind their increase in the daily speech of sample students chosen randomly at Mu'tah University in Jordan. The sample students were 25 males and 25 females of the faculties of sciences and humanities. To collect the data required, a questionnaire consisting of five questions was developed and given to the respondents. The study showed that students at Mu'tah University used English loanwords in their speech for reasons such as prestige, habits, study need, and modernity. The study also reports that English loanwords were used more by subjects of the scientific faculties than by those of the humanities. Besides, females tend to employ English in their daily speech more often than males do. The main reason behind the respondents' employment of English words instead of Arabic ones is that they assumed that such English words have no equivalents in Arabic and these words had become part of their habits. He argued that English loanwords were employed more by subjects of the scientific faculties than those of the humanities. He stated that English is required for the scientific study fields like medicine, programming, and engineering.

4.2 Code-Mixing Borrowing

Code-mixing borrowing is the subfield of lexicology. It is used to show the placing or mixing of various linguistic units (affixes, words, phrases, clauses) from two different grammatical systems within the same sentence and speech context (Sebba et. al., 2012).

Potet (2016) focused on the code-mixing using in the Tagalog language, spoken in Manila and the surrounding provinces, Luzon, Philippines as well, which can be considered as a major language of the western branch of the Austronesian family. The bulk of this study was devoted to parallel words found in Malay, a member of the same branch. These borrowed words are either cognate descending from Proto-Austronesian or borrowings from the same foreign languages. Other cognates were found in Javanese, Malagasy, Tahitian, and even Siamese. She tried to make the comparison easier by presenting the Tagalog in its unaccented form, then the full accentuated form was devised for didactic purposes. She gave it in what we called a “comparative form” in which the phoneme zero was to be indicated. She assumed that during the last ice age when water levels were at their lowest, Austronesian populations living in what is now Southern China, crossed the sea on boats to reach Formosa and others moved to Indonesia then to Borneo, the Philippines, and Formosa. She concluded that such waves made what was known as Proto-Austronesian as well as the large number of consonants attributed to it. Such an important discovery led to the conclusion that the variation of Tagalog borrowed words was due to this reason.

5. Syntactic Borrowing

It is the fifth branch in the hierarchy of linguistics which studies the set of rules, principles, and processes that govern the structure of sentences in a quite given language, usually containing word order (Chomsky, 2014). Syntactic Borrowings explore issues in the reconstruction of Borrowing by examining the role of speakers’ individual grammar in language change and its effect on traditions generative syntax (Ferraresi & Goldbach, 2008; MaLaughlin, 2017).

Hence, Poplack (2017) wrote on syntactic borrowing in the Speech Community of Canada. She focuses on lexical borrowing that occurred in the discourse of bilingual speakers, based on more than three decades of original research. Her study is based on vast quantities of spontaneous performance data and a highly ramified analytical apparatus. She characterizes the phenomenon in the speech community and the grammar, both synchronically and diachronically. This study differs from other studies in dealing with the product of borrowing, which examined how speakers incorporated foreign items into their

bilingual discourse, how they adapted them to recipient-language grammatical structure, and for how long did these phenomena last. To conclude that the major mechanism underlying borrowing, is universal.

6. Semantic Borrowing

It is the sixth branch in the hierarchy of linguistic which studies the process of reasons under uncertainty of the taking expressions. It is interesting in the relationship between signifiers (for example words, phrases, signs, and symbols) and what they stand for, their denotation. (Lappin & Fox, 2015). Semantic Borrowing is a very typical form of old English. It is usually accepted by scholars that semantic borrowing from Latin was a much more common process in old English than other forms of borrowings and seeing no good reason to doubt this view as well as the causes behind such a type of borrowing (Durkin, 2014).

Kadim (2016) focused his study on the semantic borrowing between English and Arabic. His study aimed to investigate the phenomenon of linguistic borrowing in the English language. This study showed that all languages change over some time that speakers are not even aware of the changes until a century or more has spread. These changes occur in all aspects of language –in pronunciation, syntax, and the lexicon. Lexical changes are the most noticeable and may be observed almost daily in any language. An important type of lexical change in the English language is “linguistic borrowing”. It is an addition to the lexicon of a word from another language. He argued that the English language has borrowed so many words from so many languages that it is almost impossible to see any text without using a least one borrowed word. According to the researcher’s view, the first time Arabs used borrowing was after the year of 150 AH. In this period, metaphors and terminologies appeared in the language. Later on, the terms Al-dakhil (English words were given to Arabic) and Arabization (Arabic words were given English) were grown. He concluded that: there are different types of borrowing like “phonemic, phonetic, morphological, syntactic, and graphic”. He classified them according to different models of 1) English borrowed words are formulated according to specified Arabic formula and weights, 2) English borrowed words occurred in standard and non-standard dialects, and 3) their conditions by syntactic, morphological, and phonological weights of Arabic.

Aygun (2015) also wrote on semantic borrowing in the modern science of linguistics by studying the reasons behind borrowing words and their theoretical problems in linguistics. He based his study on many scholars for analysis; among them, there are French and other European scientists, scholars of the post-Soviet period. He found that the contacts cause the mixture of languages despite the language borders. The various social events, nomadic life, campaigns, and military services, trade, cultural exchange, and other factors favor linguistic loans. He considered and studied different conceptions of matter “language contact”. He also approached and studied scholars' views on the matter of linguistic borrowing for the remote languages that were structurally related. The issue of bilingualism has been studied and studies allowed him to conclude about the different possibilities of the typology of bilingualism such as the linguistic typology of bilingualism, the sociolinguistic typology of bilingualism, and the typology of psychological bilingualism. He ended his study with an assumption that his study did not pretend to fully reflect all theories that exist on linguistic borrowing, but it tried to convey it.

7. Pragmatic Borrowing

Pragmatic is a subfield of linguistics and semiotics which can be defined as meaning in use, speaker meaning, or meaning in context but the most acceptable and global definition is utterance interpretation. It can be classified into two levels: the abstract meaning and the utterance meaning (Thomas, 2014). Pragmatic Borrowing studies the pragmatic features transfer from the source language to receipt language. It observes a set of different structures and procedures, such as the interjection ‘duh’, the emphatic and attitudinal ‘yes’, discourse marker ‘as if’, and ‘yeah right’ borrowed from English to Norwegian (Aijmer & Rühlemann, 2015). Strictly speaking, no study is presented in the Pragmatic Borrowing in Arabic.

8. Semiotics Borrowing

Semiology, also called Semiotics, was first defined by Saussure (1916) as the science of signs of (mental) and (material) worlds. The sign is an abstract object, which consists of the signifier (the form or the name of the sign) and signified (concept, meaning, or the referred idea in the mind). Unlike Semiology, semiotic studies the triadic relation between

(the sign, the object, and the mind). It argued that we cannot reach the material fact or reality by our abstract experiences but by "deep learning" (Chandler, 2017; Coward & Ellis, 2016). Semiotics Borrowing studies the Semiotics features transfer from the source language to receipt language. It concerns how people convey meaning by developing a vocabulary that borrows for their benefit. This new vocabulary used as trophies to impress the others with obscure words that they do not know but only the speaker knows its meaning (Leeds-Hurwitz, 2012). So, Semiotics Borrowing can be considered as scholars borrowing since it is so complicated type of borrowing that needs a deep knowledge of signs, objects, and mind tricks. Strictly speaking, no study is presented in the Semiotics Borrowing in Arabic.

Studies of Borrowing depended on Two Different Branches of Linguistic

The primary interest of linguistic studies lies strongly in borrowings theories that surrounding the linguistic branches such as phonetics, phonology, morphology, lexicology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and semiology. Recently, there is an orientation towards studying borrowings according to the sub-branches of linguistic. Although there is a plethora of studies written in different branches of linguistics, but yet, there are some neglected branches that need further research for additional results and forecasts.

1. Morphophonemic Borrowing

Morphophonology, or morphophonemic, is the subfield of linguistics that studies the interface between two branches of morphological and phonological or phonetic rules. Its main focus is the sound changes that take place in morphemes (minimal meaningful units) when they combine to form. It involves an attempt to give a set of formal principles that successfully portend the regular sound changes occurring in the morphemes of a particular language (Mürter, 2010). Morphophonemic Borrowing denotes a change of intonation in the syllables of the source language and target language. It refers to the concrete use of a language, the actual utterance of individuals in a specific situation, in contrast to language considered as an abstract linguistic system of a community. Morphophonological borrowing interests of phonemes (which are then subject to ordinary phonological principles to produce speech sounds or phones), or it may bypass the phoneme stage and

produce the phones by itself (Schultz, 2013). Strictly speaking, no study is presented in the morph-phonemic borrowing in Arabic.

2. Morph-syntactic borrowing

Morph-syntactic is the subfield of linguistics that studies the interface between two branches Morphology and Syntax. It studies the grammatical relationship between subject and object of transitive verbs like the cat chased the rat, and the single argument of intransitive verbs like the rat ran away. English has a subject, which merges the more active argument of transitive verbs with the argument of intransitive verbs, leaving the object distinct; other languages may have different strategies, or, rarely, make any distinction at all. Distinctions may be made morphologically (through a grammatical case or verbal agreement), syntactically (through word order), or both. Some scholars argued that adult language change involves the addition of new discrete grammar, not the modification of the existing ones (Ferraresi & Goldbach, 2008). Morph-syntactic borrowing happens when an adult travels from one country to another. By the passage of time, he will notice several syntactic and morph-syntactic borrowing involve in his speech by the discourse influence of the most dominant language he used and he will use them as if they are part of his native language (ibid, 2008). Strictly speaking, no study is presented in the morph-syntactic borrowing in Arabic.

3. Lexical Semantics Borrowing

Lexical Semantic, or lexico-semantic, is a sub-branch of linguistic semantics. The unit of analysis in lexical-semantic is the lexical unit which includes not only the selected words but also the sub-words or even sub-units like affixes, compound words, and phrases. Lexical units make up what we know by the bibliography of words in the language, the lexicon. Lexical semantics analysis looks at how the meaning of words (the lexical units) gathers with language structure or syntax. (Hovav et. al., 2010). Lexical Semantic Borrowings analyze the borrowed words taken as the point of departure and study their different meanings, how they are related despite their differences (Zenner & Kristiansen, 2013).

Laks (2014) studied lexical-semantic changes in Arabic in the Plural Formation of the Loan Words. His study aimed to examine the formation of plural forms of borrowed nouns in Palestinian and Jordanian Arabic. He argued that Arabic has two types of plurals, suffix-based sound plural (e.g. mat_a:r – mat_a:ra:t ‘airport sg.–pl.’) and template-based broken plural (e.g. maktu:b – maka:ti:b ‘letter sg.–pl.’), see the following table:

Table 2 Laks (2014) Types of Plurals

N.	Borrowed word	Singular	Sound plural	Broken plural
1	Fax	Faks	faksa:t	#
2	Million	malyo:n	malyo:na:t	mala:yi:n

He claimed that the selection of plural forms can be partially predicted, based on morpho-phonological constraints, as well as a semantic criterion. His study was based on a collection of 153 examples of foreign plural nouns provided by native speakers of Palestinian and Jordanian Arabic. While in most cases the -a:t suffix was selected as the default plural marker, there was a noticeable number of cases where plural templates were selected. From the morpho-phonological point of view, he argued that properties of the loan word like stress, vowels, and the number of syllables, as well as resemblance to existing Arabic nouns, determine which word-formation strategy was selected and within the template plural forms, were favored over others. On the semantic dimension, he argued that when the foreign noun denotes a human being, broken plural was almost exclusively selected.

4. Syntactic and Semantic Borrowing

Syntactic and Semantic is the subfield of linguistics that studies the interface between two branches Semantics and Syntax. This subfield of linguistic suggests that the form of lexical units stored or saved together with the syntactic and semantic contexts in which they frequently occur. The syntactic features of auxiliaries are an extremely close type of verbs that have great importance semantically; it is the property of the modals that

English speakers express completely different prepositions and auxiliaries in their utterances (Sabir, 2016).

Khrisat and Mohamad (2014) studied the syntactic and semantic changes in Borrowed and Arabized Words in the Arabic Language. Their study aimed to investigate the origin of the borrowed words and their meanings without analyzing the syntactic and semantic changes of these words. The researchers studied the meaning of 'Arabization' and the role of Arabized and borrowed words in enriching the Arabic language, the difference between the Arabized words and the borrowed ('dakheel') ones by examining and analyzing samples for every type. They argued that Arabic words were derivative from the base form, which applied to "wazen", three-letter, 'fa', 'a', and 'la', three-syllable, and three-sound words. The words, which will be studied, are used among speakers of Arabic, and have equivalents in Arabic, besides they follow Arabic rules in a variety of methods, syntactically, morphologically, and phonetically. In the process of Arabization, these words show that a change happened by the addition of a letter, deletion or replacement of a letter, or by a change in the manner of articulation. Moreover, they exist in more than one phonetic form which permits the Arabic language to adopt one of these forms and Arabize it.

5. Lexicography Borrowing

Lexicography is the science that deals with the theories and practice of dictionaries, such as dictionaries, lexica, glossaries, encyclopedias, terminological knowledge bases, vocabularies, and other information tools covering the area of knowledge and its corresponding language. In other words, reference and information tools that deal with things, facts, and languages (Fuentes-Olivera, 2018). Lexicography Borrowing is used in etymologically oriented in dictionaries of borrowing. In those dictionaries, the lexicography treatment of borrowing needs to give close attention to dating. Particularly, when the source language benefits from well-documented historical records of the borrowing language by lending credit to the suggested etymology- the new etymon needs to be documented even before the loan one (Durkin, 2016).

A former study of Durkin (2014) focused also on the etymology of the English borrowed words. It appealed to a wide general public and at the same time offered a

valuable reference for scholars and students of English history. Philip Durkin examined how, when, and why English took words from other languages and explained how to find their origins and reasons for adoption. His monograph dealt with loanwords, thousands of which had been absorbed into English ever since the fifth century A.D. Given the pervasive nature of loanwords, particularly those representing the major input in English development. His full and accessible history showed how to discover the origins of loanwords, when and why they were adopted, and what happened to them once they have emerged. He described these and other historical inputs, introducing the approaches each requires, from the comparative method for the earliest period to documentary and corpus research in the modern. His discussion was illustrated at every point with examples taken from a variety of different sources. Finally, it is worth to say that the framework of Durkin can be used to explore lexical borrowing in any language.

Conclusion

Through a deep historical review of linguistic borrowings according to its branches, the researchers noted that borrowed words in the Arabic language come in three forms: borrowed words that kept all their original phonemes, borrowed words with a slight adjustment on their phonemes to be familiar to the target language (Arabic) and borrowed words with complete adjustment to form a new word different from their origin. Furthermore, the researchers discovered that other types of borrowing did not yet cover through deep research in the Arabic language. Most previous studies are surrounding the basic branches of linguistic (Phonetic Borrowings, Phonological Borrowings, Morphological Borrowings, and to certain extents lexicological Borrowings) and neglected the other linguistic branches. So, the interests, according to these outcomes, need to shift from these branches (because they are studied sufficiently) to Syntactic Borrowings, Semantic Borrowings, Pragmatic Borrowings, Semiology Borrowings which need further research for additional results and forecasts.

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Creative Writing Workshop with Native and Non-native English-Speaking Graduate Students: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

This study compared the impact of a creative writing workshop on native versus non-native English speaking graduate students' perceptions and practice of English writing. We conducted semi-structured interviews with 11 graduate students of education. A constant comparison analysis of the interview data revealed that participants from the two different language backgrounds agreed that the workshop positively influenced their perception and practice of English writing. However, we also noted clear differences. While the non-native speakers' responses pertained mainly to anxiety, confidence, and other affective factors, the native speakers reported concern with creative self-expression, developing and organizing their ideas, and enriching their perspectives. Based on the findings, we outline instructional implications for teaching English writing to non-native speaking graduate

students. We argue that writing instructors should consider adopting key components of this writing workshop when designing and implementing writing instruction for non-native English speaking graduate students.

Key words: process-based writing, creative writing, writing workshop, graduate-level English writing instruction, non-native English-speaking students

Introduction

The 21st century requires that graduate students produce scholarly writing that is acceptable to their disciplinary communities as well as global audiences in need of specialized knowledge. Understanding key elements of writing such as audience, context, and purpose is therefore increasingly important for graduate students and particularly for those who are not native English speakers but who will need to effectively communicate with English speaking global audiences. Despite this, graduate level writing instruction, and especially EFL writing, includes sparse opportunity for interactions with reading audiences, and writing thus tends to be a solitary endeavor. As Hyland (2003) noted, writing instruction that focuses on the individual writer has contributed few insights about how language functions in human interaction, and about the construction of meaning in social contexts.

The writing workshop is a model of process-based writing instruction intended to address this deficit. Unlike traditional models of process-based writing instruction, which have primarily focused on the individual writer and the basic process of writing, the writing workshop establishes a community in which writers interact. Although the scope and structure of the writing workshop varies according to educational context and institution, the key components typically include mini-lessons, conferencing, and sharing. The *mini-lesson* is a 5 to 15-minute lesson that provides explicit and direct instruction. Mini-lessons focus on improving a given aspect of writing, such as prewriting, revision, and editing (e.g., word choices, sentence construction, paragraph development) (Calkins, 1994). According to Calkins and Mermelstein (2003), effective mini-lessons should be multilevel, focused, and responsive to the needs of students so they can immediately apply new concepts to their writing. An additional component known as *conferencing* is intended to model the writing process and provide individual instruction. During the various steps of the writing

process, which include gathering ideas and raw materials, drafting, revising, and editing, the teacher's role is that of observer and responder. In this capacity, the teacher listens, asks questions, and provides feedback, which Calkins (1994) described as a "magnetic force between the writer and the audience" (p. 232). The final component of the writing workshop is *sharing*. Students share their writing in front of an entire class whose participants listen and respond with comments and/or discussion (Atwell, 1987). With this frequent peer interaction, students come to identify external factors, such as the reading audience, which need to be considered in the production of effective writing.

This social approach to process-oriented writing instruction has been widely adopted for young students (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1994; Graves, 1983), but its application at the graduate school level is relatively limited. In particular, most graduate students whose work requires academic writing have limited opportunity to engage in creative writing. In an effort to understand this important yet neglected area, we investigated the effect of a creative writing workshop on native and non-native English-speaking (NS and NNS) graduate students' perception and practice of writing. Specifically, we analyzed interview data obtained from NS and NNS graduate students and highlighted the similarities and differences in their respective workshop experiences in relation to those practices and perceptions.

Literature Review

The modern writing workshop is difficult to clearly define, not because of a scarcity of definition but rather because of the wide spectrum of its implementation. In order to convey a more complete understanding of the writing workshop, we will overview its history, scope and objectives, applications, criticism, and strengths.

A brief history of the writing workshop

Writing workshops began as a distinctly American phenomenon, and their roots can be traced to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. One of the earliest models of the creative writing workshop was conceived by Norman Forester at the University of Iowa to which "young, polished writers could come for a year or two and have their work critiqued" (Swander, 2005, p. 168). The rigorous and critical atmosphere at Iowa's program was a far

cry from the many contemporary writing programs that aim at enhancing students' self-esteem by creating safe spaces (e.g., Chandler, 1999; Searcy, 2007).

What has been termed the "democratization" of the writing workshop (Bishop & Starkey, 2006) refers to its application to teaching students with varying academic levels and English language proficiencies. During the 20th and early 21st centuries, this democratization opened workshops to writers with limited writing experience and dubious motivations (Donnelly, 2010). Aside from the workshop's spread to undergraduate English departments, the workshop has also been used to teach writing at many secondary and primary schools and has spread overseas. Despite being viewed with distaste by some scholars in Britain, workshops are practiced there at the graduate and undergraduate levels and have taken hold in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the Philippines (McGurl, 2009).

The writing workshop owes much of its privileged status as a contemporary pedagogical model to Graves (1983) and others (e.g., Graves, & Murray, 1980). They codified the workshop and popularized it among primary and secondary school writing teachers. Later, Calkins (1994) introduced a more student-centered approach for the K-12 classroom with peer conferencing to assist in the organization and practice of writing.

Scope and objectives

The writing workshop, used for a variety of writing genres, has typically had three key goals: to provide writers with an audience; to build a sense of community; and to create a safe space for social interaction among peers. Another critical objective is to construct a writer's voice by building his writing skills and ability to identify and use different registers. As the workshop has been increasingly applied in ESL pedagogy (Peyton, Jones, Vincent, & Greenblatt, 1994), a number of researchers have alluded to its value as a confidence builder and means of overcoming writers' anxiety (Ostrow & Chang, 2012). This view is consistent with Bertolini's (2010) description of writing groups inside and outside of academia as places for healing and even a substitute for psychotherapy.

The wide scope and abundance of objectives have led to a lack of rigid protocols for the writing workshop. Donnelly's (2010) survey of more than 100 creative-writing teachers

at 75 undergraduate institutions highlights the difficulty in defining the writing workshop. About half of the respondents stated that they adhere to the basic workshop model while the other half stated they conduct their workshops in ways that, to varying degrees, diverge from that model. Instead of using a more rigid definition, Donnelly bases her definition on what she terms the “tradition of the workshop” and defines the writing workshop as “...a forum for sharing and commenting on stories and poems by teacher and student readers; with varying rules of operation, the most prominent being the silence of the author during the peer review process” (p. 3).

Applications of the writing workshop

Generally, writing workshops are assumed to consist of learners who wish to improve their writing skills, and are guided by an experienced facilitator (e.g., Calkins & Mermelstein, 2003). Having read aloud a piece of writing that they have authored, writers receive feedback both from the facilitator and from their workshop peers. During peer feedback sessions, protocol often dictates that the recipient remain silent while absorbing the commentary. On a given day or during a given unit, the category and genre of writing is typically specified by the facilitator.

Selected genres range from the short story or novel excerpt (often based on personal experience) to drama or poetry, and students are typically afforded a good deal of latitude in the specific topics they decide to write about (e.g., Fletcher & Portalupi, 2001). After receiving feedback and reflecting on their piece, writers are encouraged to revise their work—in some cases, multiple times. Writing workshop pedagogy usually includes a mini-lesson presented by the facilitator, covering aspects of good writing for students to emulate in class or as homework.

Although there is little consensus on how exactly to conduct a workshop, most workshops privilege the *process* of writing by encouraging multiple revisions. Despite this, practitioners still tend to focus on issues of craft versus content; the importance of morphosyntactic correctness; and the degree to which workshops ought to maintain a friendly and supportive environment.

The amount of outside reading assigned in writing workshops varies significantly. James (2009) described her institution's three-level creative writing program in which students read extensively at the beginning of the program but write very little and progress to writing extensively in the third level of the program while reading much less. Responses to Donnelly's survey (2010) of undergraduate-level creative-writing teachers confirmed that there could be a sizeable range in the amount of reading assigned to students. Among the creative writing researchers, most focused on the theory of workshops, Bizzaro (2010) recommended reading assignments that "...elucidate genre [and] foster understanding of the era in which we write" (p. 39), and Abbott (2010) was concerned that students may be intimidated and demotivated if asked only to read great works of literature. As such, he includes pulp novels and, as a means of exposing his learners to quality dialogue, film clips.

Criticisms of the writing workshop

To date, a number of researchers have enumerated the weaknesses of writing workshops. Some have questioned the workshop's ability to produce good writers. For example, Graham and Perin's (2007) meta-analysis of writing instruction for adolescent writers found that the process-based writing approach (i.e. the workshop) underperformed in comparison with most other types of writing instruction (e.g. explicit grammar instruction and strategy instruction). In addition, Graham and Sandmel's (2011) meta-analysis of process-writing instruction of first to twelfth grade writers found only modest improvements in writing quality.

Other criticisms have included the problem of poor-quality feedback. Irvine (2010) asserted that a major problem lies in the way the human mind takes in information while reading, and that workshop feedback too often focuses on faulty grammar, punctuation, and other sentence level issues. Roe (2010) suggested that tertiary-level writing workshops admitted too many students who lacked the requisite tools to closely read, analyze, and intelligently discuss a work of creative writing. She noted a default, reflexive mode of encouragement among participants, coupled with a hypersensitivity about engaging in any critique which may offend an author's feelings. This environment can lead to workshops populated by over confident writers who value emotional response over technical knowledge.

Another common complaint is that writing workshops tend to produce writers who reproduce the prose styles and ideological positions of their instructors. Royster (2010) described a “monologic” type of workshop critique which tends to “... [create a] uniform type of product based on an in-house aesthetic” (p. 106). A similar process may occur with ideological reproduction in workshops. For example, Wilson (2010) argued that the workshop model has suppressed radical feminist writings and served to perpetuate the status quo. Cain (2010) viewed the workshop as inherently political, advocating third-space theory as a means of helping students break free from their ideological bondage. Power relations have been seen as affecting style as well as content.

Strengths of the writing workshop

Despite the prolific criticism, the writing workshop remains the dominant model of creative writing instruction and continues to grow in popularity among students of all backgrounds (Donnelly, 2010). There is no shortage of writing teachers who offer practical solutions and advice for instructors wishing to improve their praxis (Abbott, 2010; Bertolini; 2010; Cain, 2010; James, 2009; Vanderslice, 2010; Wilson, 2010). Goldstein and Carr (1996) found that student writers whose teachers had adhered to the principles of writing processes were better overall writers. Sadoski, Wilson, and Norton (1997) also found improvements in children’s writing after they had received instruction in process-based writing.

Additional research on writing workshops for children suggests a number of indirect benefits. Troia, Lin, Cohen, and Monroe (2011) pointed out that the workshop creates a sense of community in which writing is viewed holistically rather than as a collection of discrete elements. When teachers recognize the importance of this approach and tailor instruction accordingly, novice writers can overcome their preoccupation with surface level conventions. Jasmine and Weiner (2007) found that writing workshops created a positive social atmosphere for writing among first grade students which led to increased confidence, increased motivation to write, and easier generation of ideas. They concluded that the author’s chair facet of the workshop, in which participants shared their writing in front of the entire class and listened to feedback from the class, enabled young writers to view writing from the perspective of both author and reader.

Notwithstanding legitimate concerns about the quality of peer feedback, a unique strength of the workshop lies in its tendency to cultivate the perspectives of both writer and reader among its participants. Caffarella and Barnett's (2000) study of an academic writing project involving 45 doctoral students found that the students perceived preparing and receiving critiques from professors and peers to be the most influential element in helping them understand the process of dissertation writing and produce better texts. These students believed that two factors integral to the critiquing process were responsible for building their confidence as academic writers: personalized face-to-face feedback and the iterative nature of the critiques they received.

The process of revision based on group feedback is a primary strength of the writing workshop. Peyton, Jones, Vincent, and Greenblatt (1994) stated, "Revising a piece – reading it over, taking audience feedback into account, and making revisions – is at the heart of the writer's craft..." (p. 480). In fact in an early study by Fitzgerald (1987), writers of high school age and above who revised their work were, perhaps unsurprisingly, found to produce higher quality compositions than those who did not. More recently, a growing body of research points to the importance of revision in the production of varying types of quality writing (Goldring, Russell & Cook, 2003; Graham & Perin, 2007). Because the act of revision in conjunction with direct audience feedback is so integral to the writing workshop, the emphasis on revision might be the ultimate source of its endurance and resilience.

The writing workshop may be a powerful model that can help both native and non-native English-speaking students become proficient, independent writers capable of flourishing in tertiary contexts. However, at present there is relatively sparse research into the application of writing workshops at graduate levels or with non-native speakers. This study investigates a creative writing workshop as experienced by a group of NS and NNS graduate students of education. We examined whether participation in the creative writing workshop influenced the two groups of participants differently with regard to their perception and practice of writing in English. This examination made it possible to analyze the strengths and weaknesses inherent to the current workshop model, specific to graduate students of both native and non-native English language backgrounds.

Methodology

Using a constant comparative method (Boeije, 2002), this qualitative study drew on semi-structured interview data from 11 graduate students as well as their writing samples from the writing workshop. The context of the workshop, its participants, and data collection and analysis procedures are described in detail in the following sections.

Context

This two-semester study was conducted at a university in the southern United States. The participants were enrolled in a graduate writing course that was part of the university's language and literacy education program. A key component of the course was the writing workshop. The participants met once each week for a duration of eight weeks. In this writing workshop, participants practiced multi-genre creative writing, which consisted of several stages. First, the students were asked to draw on personal experience to generate free writing style narratives. Second, they were encouraged to explore linguistic choices and voice by converting their personal narratives into poetry. Third, the students transformed their narratives into fiction. The workshop's main objective was to help the graduate students better understand writing processes and thereby improve as writers. A typical workshop schedule consisted of:

1. A mini-lesson: 10-15 minutes in the beginning of the workshop, about writing strategies and skills
2. Individual conferences: one-on-one instruction through either oral or written feedback on students' drafts
3. Group sharing: 15-20 minutes, pairs of students sharing their writing and providing constructive feedback
4. Whole class sharing: 15-20 minutes

Participants

Workshop participants consisted of 11 graduate students working on either a master's or PhD, divided into two groups: native English speaking (hereafter NS) and non-native English speaking (hereafter NNS) students. Seven of the participants in the NNS group

were from China, Korea, or Taiwan. The remaining four constituted the NS group and were all from the United States.

According to the participants' self-reported data, the average stay in the US for the NNS students was 3.4 years with a range of two to six years. Most of the NNS students had started learning English writing in middle school, typically in preparation for standardized university entrance exams. Most had practiced with formal templates instead of engaging in authentic writing exercises. They reported that their attitude toward writing in English was generally not positive due to pressure to use perfect grammar; their association of writing with high-stakes testing; and prior experiences with written, point-based teacher feedback. Their average self-assessed writing proficiency level prior to beginning the workshop was 3.3, with reported scores ranging from 2.5 to 4. A score of 1 was classified as 'low' and 5 as 'excellent.' No NNS students had previous experience with or knowledge of the writing workshop.

The NS students' experiences of learning to write varied, but all recalled positive experiences from their K-12 education. All had experienced the writing workshop as undergraduates. The self-reported data demonstrates that the NS participants had more positive attitudes about their English writing in comparison to their NNS counterparts. Generally, writing had been a means of intrinsic or extrinsic self-expression. Their average self-assessed writing proficiency level was 4.6, with reported scores ranging from 3.5 to 5. For the entire group of participants, prior teaching experience ranged from practicum only to eleven years of experience.

Data collection

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in order to systematically capture data across all interviewees. The interview protocol (Appendix 1) was constructed and reviewed by an expert from the field of English as a foreign language education, with specialized experience in writing workshops. The 11 participants were interviewed after the end of the course. The average interview duration was 53 minutes. All participants consented that their writing samples would be used as supplementary data for this study.

Data analysis

To obtain details about similarities and differences among the sample groups, we used the systematic steps of Boeije's (2002) constant comparison analysis, a qualitative method used exclusively to analyze interviews (p.395). We structured the analysis for comparison within a single interview of an NNS; between interviews within the NNS group; and between interviews from the NNS and NS groups. The procedure for our constant comparison analysis is described in detail in Table 1.

Table 1 Procedure for the constant comparison analysis for the interviews

Step	Goal
1. Comparison within a single interview	Summarize the core message of the interview with an NNS
2. Comparison between interviews within the same group	Formulate criteria for comparing interviews with the other NNSs
3. Comparison of interviews from different groups	Examine similarities and differences between NNS and NS groups

Following the aforementioned procedure, the interview data were analyzed using the in-vivo coding method, which places emphasis on the actual spoken words of the participants (Manning, 2017). In-vivo coding was chosen because it allows researchers to explore and highlight how participants use specific words, phrases, and sentences in their interaction in given contexts. Accordingly, we coded sections of the interview data by using a short phrase or sentence taken from the interview data in each section. This is reflected in the subtitles of our Findings section.

Findings

Our analysis indicated that six key elements of the creative writing workshop – revision, peer feedback, multi-genre writing, register choices, and voice – had had a significant impact on both NS and NNS participants' writing. Their experiences of each element's positive effects differed, however.

It was my first true revision

At the first stage of the workshop, the graduate students generated personal narratives. Surprisingly, both NS and NNS graduate students reported that the iterative revision process based on constructive feedback had been a relatively new experience, regardless of their reported proficiency and workshop experience. The new experience with revision helped the participants learn to distinguish composing from editing, and both groups pointed to the workshop's revision component as among the most valuable and significant part of their writing experiences but for differing reasons.

The NNS participants' experience with revision was closely informed by their English writing anxiety. For example, one NNS student reported that she had learned to use first drafts as a means of producing clearer, better prose, rather than a perfect piece of writing to make a good impression on her professors. Other NNS participants reported that recognizing the process of generating a text from start to finish as an interactive process reduced their English language writing anxiety. One NNS student said:

Now I will... just kind of brainstorming and write everything I want to say. Then I read again and pick up my focus. Before, I was ... thinking what... how I'm gonna start, how I'm gonna...then it's so hard. I never type. I just think. And then I think 'Oh! I cannot write anything!' But now, I just start writing first. And then, ok, what is important to keep and what is...to take out. And then just start writing. Get as many ideas as I can. And then if it's important and relevant to each other, I can keep it. If it's just too much or trivial, I can just take out.

NS students, in comparison, stressed that the rigorous revision process stimulated them in developing and organizing their ideas. They valued their experience with revision highly because it helped them view their writing more critically and in a way that helped them learn to distinguish composition from editing. One NS student said:

(In other writing classes), my revision process was not as thorough as a revision should be. Hey, let me go and check for grammatical errors. It was more... quick editing versus actually, true revising [...]Because we had one...we worked on that one paper and we just kept revising it, revising it, revising it. Like I can specifically

remember... completely changing.... my approach and what I want to do with my paper. That was first time in a long time that I had done true... true revision, not just editing.

Both NS and NNS participants' comments suggest that the workshop had caused many of them to re-conceptualize the writing process as one involving multiple stages of revision. These comments are perhaps surprising and run counter to the expectation that graduate students, with significant writing experience, might have experienced a fully-defined practice of revision.

Being comfortable with discomfort

As comparative analysis continued with subsequent interviews, we found the benefits of revision were closely associated with the workshop's social element, peer feedback and sharing. The students' revision experience had been significant and meaningful because they had given and received peer feedback for the primary purpose of revision. All were able to cite reasons that the peer feedback and sharing had had a positive influence on their writing practice and skills.

The benefits from peer feedback and sharing reported by the NNS participants centered mostly on increased confidence. They appreciated the interactive atmosphere, which helped them gain sufficient confidence to share their unfinished work and, in particular, accept feedback from their NS peers. In comparison, most NS students valued feedback and sharing as a way to discover alternate perspectives and foray into new writing styles. The NS students emphasized that feedback sessions had enhanced their thinking processes and consequently led to improved writing practices. One NS student responded:

You know it's good to hear and read different styles of writing. [...], and just being comfortable with that discomfort that having people read your unfinished work. We give feedback and people would ask questions and you talk about it. I feel like definitely talking about it helps you a lot, because then you start to think about your writing in a way that you probably wouldn't have.

Poetry writing was liberating

The second stage of the multi-genre writing was to transform personal narratives into poetry. Poetry, a relatively new genre for the participants, was a liberating writing experience for various reasons. Most NNS students had considered themselves incapable of writing poetry in English. The poetry writing experience, however, encouraged lexical and prosodic risk taking, and they welcomed the sense of freedom brought by an absence of the rules and restrictions they had come to associate with second language writing. Indeed, many expressed excitement about having written poetry in English for the first time because they did not think it was something they could have done.

Here, we present the process of one NNS student's poetry writing. Living in America and away from her homeland, the participant wanted her poem to express her homesickness. Students who had no experience writing poetry in English were encouraged to emulate English poems they had read in the past. The NNS student said that she had a dim recollection of Frost's, *The Road Not Taken*. This memory, along with her homesickness inspired her first English language poem:

Title: Home

*Here comes the fall with falling leave
Have I seen the same ones at my home
Same color, Same shapes, but felt different
Long I stood,
Feeling as empty as if I saw paper*

*I doubt if I would ever feel home here
I perhaps refused to feel home here
I perhaps longed to return there*

*Then took a trip, just two days away,
And I returned, being here again*

*I paused and stood, feeling something familiar
Something warm, something safe*

*Here comes the fall with the high blue sky
Oh, I have seen the same one at my home
Looked as high as I could
Different wind, different smell
But feeling as full as I were home
I perhaps long to find home here
Stop wandering, but settling down*

Having produced this draft, the NNS student recited it in front of the class. After conferencing and sharing, she was encouraged to condense the poem and incorporate rhyme. During the mini-lesson, she was advised to write some key words that conjured images and expressed her feelings. Below are the key expressions from her notes:

*-fallen leaves
-home
-home in America, empty
-refuse
-other city
-feeling home*

Finally, she wrote the final draft of her poem as follows:

Title: Homesick

*Fallen leaf
Same color
Same shape*

But

Different from home

Interestingly, most of the NS participants reported struggling with poetry writing while their NNS counterparts reported no such struggle. One NS reported a discomfort with breaking her language's rules and said that doing so felt unnatural. Another said that writing poetry was his biggest weakness and struggled to express discrete ideas in only a couple of short lines. In spite of or perhaps because of their personal challenges, all NS participants stressed that they did enjoy the poetry writing. And the two NS students who had been employed as professional writers expressed a newfound satisfaction with creative writing, a satisfaction that had eluded them as professional writers. As one NS participant commented, the poetry writing allowed the graduate students, whose majors involved writing, to feel free. That participant said, "whatever I do (in writing) is... like...playing."

I struggled with switching perspectives

In the third stage of the workshop, the graduate students converted their personal narratives to fiction, and both NS and NNS participants reported difficulty switching from an internal to external perspective. For one task, the students were encouraged to write fictional accounts from the audience's perspective and to use expressions to 'show' their personal feelings rather than directly 'tell' what happened. One NS described struggling with this fiction writing below:

[...] one of the most difficult things about [fiction writing] was switching perspectives in writing 'to show, not tell.' I really struggled with it, and the time I was sitting home and writing it, and just like, I just can't do it. I couldn't make that switch in my brain to make it showing and not telling. I don't know. It's not that I didn't enjoy it. I just struggled with it and it was frustrating for me.

Despite the struggle, this NS student produced the fictional text presented below. It describes her nervousness on her first day at a dance class that she had not wanted to attend. Instead of using adjectives to describe her nervousness, she used verb phrases (*clasp my hand*) and noun phrases (*hummingbird flitting around*) to convey feelings to her audience:

I clasp my hands in front of me, let them fall to my sides, and clasp them again. My eyes dart around the room, avoiding meeting the eyes of the other girls, but looking for cues as to what to do with myself. [...] my heart beating quickly in my chest, a little hummingbird flitting around.

According to the graduate students, their struggles with fiction writing may have resulted, in part, from not considering readers' perspectives. Based on their comments, we believe that both NNS and NS graduate students may need to develop a better understanding of various registers as a means of creating different kinds of texts and effectively communicating with their readers in varying contexts. And in the interviews, they all suggested that more explicit and systematic instruction would help them improve their register conformity and improve the writing workshop model.

My academic voice is missing

In a similar vein, the graduate students suggested that the greatest improvement to their writing skills would likely come from learning to make linguistic choices that are appropriate for varying tasks, situations, and audiences. They clearly distinguished their academic voice, or tone, from the voices they used in narrative writing. Possessing a strong academic writing technique nevertheless remained the primary concern for the NNSs. One shared her thoughts:

I feel I have my own voice in my creative writing now. It reflects my personality, who I am, my specific skills are in it. [...] But my academic voice is pretty weak compared to my voice in other writing. I don't have luxury for creative writing, like spending a whole afternoon to write a poem. I have to focus on my academic writing, I feel like I'd lose my voice (in creative writing) again."

While the NNSs showed great concern for their academic voice, NSs wanted greater experience with various types of creative writing that would help them construct their personal voices. All of the NNSs thought they needed more experience reading academic papers in order to grow as better writers with their own voice, while the NSs placed a higher priority on reading creative genres in order to improve their writing ability for creative self-

expression. Similarly, many of the NNS graduate students expressed their desire for future workshops to include mostly academic writing, while the NSs added that a creative writing workshop would afford them a better chance to fully express themselves.

Taken together, the differences we found between NS and NNS groups not only highlight the differences in their perceptions of writing, but also provide a glimpse into how the writing workshop may influence the writing practices of NNS graduate students in comparison with their NS counterparts. The differences reflect the multi-layered challenges that NNS students face in graduate school, where they must acquire, evaluate, transmit, and construct academic knowledge in their recently adopted fields while using a language other than their native language.

Discussion

This study investigated whether participation in a creative writing workshop influenced NS and NNS graduate students of education differently with regard to their perception and practice of writing. By conducting semi-structured interviews and using a constant comparison analysis with that data, we identified similarities and differences in the writing workshop experiences between the NS and NNS students. Overall, participants from the two different language backgrounds agreed that the workshop had benefited their writing and writing praxis. They viewed the rigorous revision process based on constructive feedback as the primary strength of the writing workshop, a view which is supported by previous research (e.g., Caffarella & Barnett, 2000; Fitzgerald, 1987). Our findings also indicated clear differences between the NS and NNS experiences. While the NNS responses were related mainly to anxiety reduction, increased confidence, and other affective improvements, the NS responses related mainly to creative self-expression, developing and organizing ideas, and enriching their perspectives.

The differences suggest several important instructional implications for L2 graduate level writers. Firstly, the results indicate that even graduate students may need instructional scaffolding to reduce English writing anxiety. We found that the cause of language anxiety is not simply a lack of linguistic knowledge and skill, and similar findings have been reported in other studies of language anxiety. A number of studies have found that L2

writing anxiety is often related to affective factors such as students' personal expectations (Spielmann & Radnofsky, 2001); self-confidence (Cheng, 2002; Cheng, Horwitz, & Schallert, 1999); perceptions of their own abilities (Onwuegbuzie, Bailey, & Daley, 1999; Williams & Andrade, 2008); and perfectionism (Gregersen & Horwitz, 2002). As Bocskay (2014) reported, NNS graduate students' high self-imposed standards (i.e. of native-like prose) may lead to exaggerated perceptions of their own shortcomings and to high anxiety in English writing. Therefore, it is important to help graduate students overcome their anxiety toward writing in English and free them from the pressures associated with prior experiences with high-stakes tests and grammar-focused, point-based feedback.

As we reported, the creative writing workshop was effective in reducing the NNS students' English writing anxiety. The workshop created a place for the NNS graduate students to 'play' with the language. During the workshop, the NNS students were allowed to explore language use in various genres and freely express themselves by writing in English without fear of critical corrective feedback. Aligned with previous research (e.g., Chamcharatsri, 2009), we found that the workshop's multi-layered revision process allowed the NNS students to be more spontaneous, take risks, and try new approaches toward expressive personal writing. They became able to view the quality of writing in terms of their own voice and tone, organization of content, or purpose of writing rather than grammar correction and adherence to rules. Further, sharing provided them with opportunities for comparison with their peers' writing processes, allowing them to recognize that similar struggles are experienced by other writers. As Zhao and Brown (2014) reported, the creative writing process can provide NNS graduate students with a self-empowering tool to build self-esteem in social contexts.

Another finding was that the social elements of the writing workshop (i.e. constructive feedback and sharing) caused participants to consider audience reactions and to compare their views to those of their peers. This was a departure for writers who had viewed writing as being inner-directed (Bizzell, 1992). The ability to write with readers in mind is critical for graduate students. Producing acceptable, discipline-specific scholarly writing is central to graduate students' acculturation (e.g., Casanave, 1995; Li, 2007; Prior, 1998). To this end, the workshop may be particularly salient for current graduate students who need to be

socialized into their respective disciplines and familiarized with a given discourse. Writing workshops can thus build systematic networks of support for graduate students as they acquire the discourse patterns needed for success in their disciplines.

Within the socialized instructional framework, multi-genre writing raised the students' consciousness of register differences from genre to genre. In their comments, we found that both the NS and NNS graduate students continued to lack experience writing in diverse genres, and their ability to make appropriate lexical and grammatical choices in text construction was limited. During the workshop, the students benefited from multi-genre writing by developing their ability to draw upon linguistic resources appropriate to effectively externalizing their voice, feelings, and thoughts. The workshop provided students with access to new discourse patterns and new possibilities for variation in valued texts (Hyland, 2007). Researchers (e.g., Badger & White, 2000) have suggested combining the process and genre approaches to writing instruction in complementary ways. Indeed, genre approaches conceptualize the varying types of writing as purposeful, socially-situated responses to particular contexts and communities (Hyland, 2003). Workshops can be further developed by designing mini-lessons that focus explicitly on linguistic requirements for particular genres.

It is worth noting that the multi-genre writing focus of the workshop did contribute to the students' recognition of their academic voice. Unlike voice in personal narrative writing, which often infuses an *affective stance* with attitudes, feelings or emotions (Biber, 2004), voice in academic writing is distinctive in that it takes an *epistemic stance* (Biber, 2004; Biber *et al.*, 1999) on knowledge claims based on evidence indicating a level of certainty (e.g., without doubt, demonstrate), doubt (e.g., maybe, perhaps, assume), or actuality (Hyland, 2008). These linguistic choices typically result in an academic voice which is more distanced, impersonal, and authoritative. This distinction does not, however, mean that types of voice are discrete. According to Elbow (2000), good academic writing can and should be done with a more personal voice. The different types of voice exist on a continuum that writers control with regard to audience, purpose, and context. In this respect, it is understandable that the graduate students recognized the importance of their academic voices through the process of creative writing. Further research with multi-genre writing

workshops will provide additional data about their effect on construction of voice by graduate students from varying language backgrounds.

The NNS students' concerns with academic writing reflect the challenges they faced. Biber and Gray (2010) have noted that present-day academic writing is one of the most distinctive English language registers. More explicit guidance may be needed so that NNS writers can build linguistic repertoires for instantiating various types of knowledge and meaning in genre-specific and context-sensitive ways. However, this specific workshop design did not satisfy many of the students who reported they already possessed the most advanced writing abilities at the time of enrollment. Although process-oriented approaches to writing instruction typically expect students to discover appropriate language forms in the course of extensive writing practice, revising, and conferencing, the graduate students explicitly sought top-quality feedback and clear, detailed instructions about very specific problems with their academic writing. More research on the design and implementation of the graduate level writing workshop would be useful.

For this, we suggest that the objectives and content chosen be specifically tailored to graduate student needs. While the typical creative writing focus of most writing workshops does allow graduate students to broaden their views and conceptions of writing, academically and analytically focused workshops could offer an effective alternative. Micciche and Carr (2011) noted that creative writing has gained a privileged status in English composition studies, and this has coincided with a decline in academic writing instruction despite the latter's undisputed importance. Academic writing workshops which focus on analysis and critique in the academic writing process could help graduate students produce, evaluate, and present disciplinary knowledge within their respective academic communities.

Conclusion

Learning is reinforced when English language learners, graduate level learners included, are given freedom and interactive support. The results of our study indicate that graduate students, and especially graduate students who are non-native speakers of English, may need careful scaffolding to become confident, proficient, and independent English

language writers capable of succeeding in academic professions. The creation of social and constructivist environments is one means of achieving this goal. The creative multi-genre writing workshop can create this type of environment by fostering interaction among students and thereby exposing them to varying linguistic choices in differing social contexts. Our findings support the potential of the writing workshop as an effective model for graduate level writing instruction. Further research is required to investigate how graduate level academic writing instruction can best be facilitated by applying the writing workshop model.

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Appendix 1

Semi-structured Interview Protocol

Part 1: Participant's experience of English writing

1. (To NNS students) Tell me about your experience in English-speaking countries.
Where have you lived and for how long?
2. How many years, if any, have you taught?
3. When did you begin writing in English and when did you begin to learn to write in English?
4. On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being low, and 5 being excellent), can you evaluate your English language writing proficiency?
5. Tell me how you feel about writing.

Part 2: Participant's experience with the writing workshop

1. Can you tell me about your journey through the writing workshop?
2. Tell me about your particular experience with the writing workshop.
3. Do you have any future suggestions to improve the writing workshop?

Part 3: Closing

1. Could you describe any other thoughts you have now?



What Makes More and Less Proficient EFL Learners?

Learner's Beliefs, Learning Strategies and Autonomy

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Abstract

Undeniably, Individual Differences (IDs) between more and less proficient EFL learners are noticeable, yet there is still little known about factors underlying individual differences that make learners become more and less proficient as a result of their English language learning. This study, hence, explores three factors, involving beliefs, learning strategies, and autonomy that are presumed to be the causes of IDs among Thai EFL learners. Using BALLI, SILL and Learner Autonomy surveys, this study collected information from 722 (72.15% female, 26.73% male, 1.11% unidentified) university students studying General English (GE) courses in the Academic Year of 2019/20 at Walailak University, Thailand. The data were examined by using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Independent t-test, and Multiple-linear

regression. It was found that more and less proficient Thai EFL learners significantly differ across factors underlying their beliefs, learning strategies and autonomy. These underlying factors were also significant predictors of Thai EFL learners' proficiency levels in overall and in specific skills.

Key words: Individual differences, beliefs, learning strategies, learner autonomy, English proficiency

Introduction

EFL learners might have ever wondered once about how to be proficient in English. Similarly, EFL teachers might have ever wondered once about why some learners become more proficient than the others. It is just natural to think that in one EFL class, despite being taught by the same teacher, there are those who enjoy English learning and do not, there are those who perform the English skills well and poorly, and there are those who like staying at the average level. All these circumstances are ingrained in the term called *Individual Differences* (IDs) in L2/foreign language learning and acquisition research. The term IDs originally came from the field of psychology exploring the uniqueness of the individual mind, yet it has become one of the prominent features in L2/foreign language learning to understand the variation in learners' learning outcomes.

IDs fundamentally conceptualizes the dimensions of enduring personal characteristics presumably to be applicable to everyone as well as on which people vary by degree (Dörnyei, 2006). In their brief overview, Ehrman, Leaver and Oxford (2003) emphasize that studying individual differences leads to the investigation on, "... how individuals learn languages, how and why they undertake and succeed in language study, and how one person differs from another in their styles, strategies, and motivations, among other attributes, yet succeeds in his or her own way" (p. 325). The importance of IDs research lies on the possibility it can offer for the design and adjustment of language learning instructions (Robinson, 2001). In a simple illustration, learners come to an English classroom with individual differences, but with the same goal: to acquire and to be proficient in the target language. Without knowledge of the factors underlying learners' IDs, the course design and instruction

as well as the teacher may fail to address and accommodate individual issues and needs to be proficient learners in English.

The present study, hence, intends to contribute to the knowledge of IDs in foreign language learning. The objective is to highlight the factors underlying more and less proficient English learners, specifically in the context of Thai EFL learners at university level. The body of the literature has provided a long list of the factors underlying IDs, yet this study only focuses on exploring learners' beliefs, language learning strategies and autonomy. From the findings of previous studies, there is an indication that these three factors are built upon one another. Learners beliefs have been found to be closely related to learning strategies (e.g. Chang & Shen, 2010; Yang, 1999), then learning strategies have currently been connected to learner autonomy (e.g. Chen & Pan, 2015; Oxford, 2008). However, there is still little is known about the interrelationships between learners' beliefs, learning strategies and autonomy and the roles they play on more and less proficient English learners. This study, thus, aims to provide empirical findings in this research area of interest.

Literature Review

Learner's Beliefs

Learners' beliefs in language learning has been researched extensively since the 1960s. They play a key role in individual differences in learning which significantly affects comprehension, persistence and effectiveness in language subject domains thereby influencing the extent of learning outcomes and foreign language acquisition (Mori, 1999). Further, defined as pre-conceived ideas, learners' beliefs not only affect learners' approach in foreign language learning, but also can substantially affect learners' responses to certain teaching methods and learning activities (Sakui & Gaies, 1999). Beliefs can influence such internal factors as motivation, expectations about language learning, perceived difficulty level of language learning and selected language learning strategies; all of these, fundamentally influenced by beliefs, are what learners bring to the language classrooms and are, therefore, perceived to be the cause of individual differences both in learning process and outcome (Breen, 2001; Richards & Lockhart, 1994).

Beliefs can be culturally and situationally affected which potentially change over time since their developments are influenced by personal experiences, cultural backgrounds and personality traits (Ellis, 2008). Learners' beliefs may differ by age, stage of learning and professional status (Horwitz, 1999), rooted in individuals' complex metacognitive structures (Bernat, 2006). In addition, other factors that can considerably influence learners' beliefs involve changes in learning environment and results of learning different foreign languages. Learners, for instance, who were studying English in a study-abroad program experienced positive, significant changes in their beliefs since the environment had been purposely designed to support student progress in a short time of period (Tanaka & Ellis, 2003). Another example is one from Fujiwara (2018) who investigated change of Thai EFL learners' beliefs after learning a new foreign language and found that language learning beliefs can change at dimensional levels after learning a new foreign language; however, certain factors in learners' beliefs may remain the same due to some contextual circumstances in their foreign language learning experience (Fujiwara, 2018). At this point, the assumptions both on the role of learners' beliefs in language learning as well as the possible changes due to cultural and situational factors provide opportunities for planning appropriate language learning instructions that can accommodate learners' beliefs as learners' beliefs are positively associated with English proficiency levels (Peacock, 1999) and significantly difference by gender (Bernat & Lloyd, 2007).

Furthermore, most of previous studies on learners' beliefs measure learners' beliefs in English language learning using BALLI (the Beliefs About Language Learning Inventory) developed by Horwitz (1988). Investigating learners' beliefs with BALLI is considered as the normative approach, perceiving beliefs as pre-conceived notions from learners (Barcelos, 2003). This 34-item inventory assesses foreign language learners' opinions on various issues and polemics related to language learning consisting of five categories: foreign language aptitude, the difficulty of language learning, the nature of language learning, learning and communication strategies, and motivation and expectation. By classification, foreign language aptitude specifically addresses the issue of individual potential for achievement in language learning, while the difficulty of language learning explores learners' thoughts on general difficulties in learning a foreign language. Then, learners'

opinions about a foreign language learning process are explored under the nature of language learning category. Learning and communication strategies delves into students' actual language learning practices, whereas motivation and expectation investigates desires and opportunities that learners possess in relation to their foreign language learning. Albeit this inventory was published in 1988, Nikitina and Furuoka (2006) who re-examined the instrument in the Malaysian context, suggest the consistent suitability for research on language learning beliefs involving various sociolinguistics settings.

Regarding the five categories of beliefs, empirical evidence depicts different results across learners in different contexts. Among Iranian EFL learners, for instance, beliefs of motivation and expectation had the highest mean average, followed by learning and communication strategies and difficulty of language learning (Jafari & Shokrpour, 2012), while different results were obtained from Spanish EFL learners (Agudo & de Dios, 2014). Meanwhile, in the context of Thai EFL learners, there have been several studies exploring beliefs about language learning using BALLI. Fujiwara (2014) examined Thai EFL learners' beliefs about English language learning across proficiency levels and academic majors and found significant differences among learners across these groups of interest. It was also noted that learners' past English learning experiences affected their beliefs. In Howchatturat and Jaturapitakkul's (2011) study, Thai EFL learners perceived that their beliefs of difficulty, motivation and nature of English language learning strongly impacted their success in English learning; motivation was reported to be the strongest one. In a comparative analysis between Taiwanese and Thai EFL learners' beliefs, similarities were identified at the dimensional level and strength of the beliefs at each item in BALLI, suggesting the commonality of English language learning beliefs (Fujiwara, 2011).

Language Learning Strategies

Language Learning Strategies (LLS) are essentially defined as a set of intentional, strategic actions, involving the process of acquiring, storing, retrieving and using of information, taken by learners which is driven by the intention to attain desired learning goals (Griffiths, 2007; Oxford, 1999). Learning strategies have been assumed to be one of the causes of individual differences in learning resulting in the distinction

between more competent and less competent learners (Fewell, 2010; Oxford, 1999). Key findings from early studies have indicated strong associations between frequency uses of language learning strategies in English learning with achieved levels of English proficiency. Park (1997) examined the relationships between Korean EFL learners' LLS and their proficiency levels measured by the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL); the study found significant linear relationships with cognitive and social strategies as predictors of the learners' TOEFL Scores. Linear relationships were also observed in Hong Kong (Bremner, 1999), Taiwan (Lai, 2009), and Japan (Kato, 2005). Nonetheless, there were also non-linear relationships noted among Chinese EFL learners, in which there was no significant difference across gender and proficiency levels (Nisbet, Tindall, & Arroyo, 2005). Oxford and Burry-Stock's summary (1995) of the assessment of learners' LLS in different countries in the world suggests, "... (language learning) strategy assessments using different measurement modes with the same sample of students could be cross-correlated." (p. 19), yet different results can serve as useful information in selection of types of proficiency assessments coupled with validity of selected assessments.

The research interest in LLS started in the 1970s and has shown a considerable growth since then. It has been presumed that exploring EFL learners' LLS means to learn what makes some learners achieve better than the others, and vice versa; then, one of the following implications would be including LLS into English language learning instructions for helping learners achieve better learning outcomes and proficiency levels (Oxford, 1989). The most well-known used instrument for measuring learners' LLS is one called *Strategy Inventory for Language Learning* (SILL) from Oxford (1990); nonetheless, despite its extensive use in previous studies, the validity of the instrument is debatable (Hsiao & Oxford, 2002). The present study, hence, adopts a more recent SILL from Ardasheva and Tretter (2013) which was fundamentally grounded upon Oxford's (1990) SILL. Nevertheless, since this SILL was designed for school-aged English Language Learners (ELLs), factorial analysis will be conducted in this study to ensure the appropriateness of the items for measuring the subjects of this study who are ELLs at university level in Thailand. Derrick's study (2016) points out that developing a new instrument or revising the existing instrument is a common practice in L2 language research to find the

suitability of the instrument for particular subjects in specific contexts. Amerstorfer (2018) also suggests that the SILL from Oxford (1990) needs adaptation to the relevant context of study. Similar to Oxford (1990), the SILL from Ardasheva and Tretter (2013) consists of six strategies including,

(a) memory strategies: used for information storage and retrieval; (b) cognitive strategies: used for comprehension and production; (c) compensation strategies: used to overcome limitations in linguistic knowledge or performance; (d) metacognitive strategies: used to plan, organize, focus, and monitor learning; (e) affective strategies: used to control motivation and emotions; and (f) social strategies (Ardasheva & Tretter, 2013, p. 475)

Major findings from recent studies in English language learning strategies include at least the following points. First, there were significant differences between more and less proficient ELLs' strategy use (Habók & Magyar, 2018) with emphasis on cognitive, metacognitive and social strategies (Psaltou-Joycey & Kantaridou, 2009). Second, among the six strategies, strategies that have been used frequently by more proficient learners include metacognitive strategies (Ardasheva, 2016). Third, more proficient learners use more strategies more frequently than do less proficient learners (Rao, 2016). Fourth, not all the six strategies have positive relationships with English proficiency (Cawagdan & Rivera, 2018). Fifth, gender does not have a significant role on learners' LLS (Kashefian-Naeeni & Maarof, 2016). In addition, specifically in the context of Thai EFL learners, Suwanarak (2019) found that there was no significant difference between learners' use of LLS in general learning and English learning, a positive relationship was observed between learners' LLS and their English learning achievement and similar learning strategies were found in high and low performing students with a difference on frequency. The latest study from Iamudom and Tangkiengsirisin (2020) revealed that public school students use more LLS than those in international schools with emphasis on compensation strategies.

Learner Autonomy

Initially associated with adult education and self-access learning systems, it was not until the 1990s that the concept of learner autonomy was discussed in the area of

language teaching and learning, often interchangeably used with independent learning and self-directed learning (Little, 2007). Upon definition, early scholars in learner autonomy, Holec and Dickinson share a slightly different idea. Holec (1979; 1980) defines the term ‘autonomy’ as learners’ attitude of responsibility, in which the term ‘self-direction’ is applied to the learning situation when the attitude of autonomy is practiced by learners. In contrast, Dickinson (1987) uses the term ‘autonomy’ to theorize the learning situation where individual learners manifest an attitude and responsibility and self-direction is part of it. These two definitions may sound similar, but they essentially lead to two types of learning where most people will get confused with: autonomous learning and self-directed learning. Combining the two early concepts, Benson (2009) summarizes that learner autonomy conceptualizes learners’ ability to be responsible for their own learning and when learners practice autonomous learning, their control involve planning and managing the learning process, self-monitoring and assessment, and decision making and adjusting without help from the teachers.

To understand the concept of learner autonomy, Oxford (2003) developed four models of learner autonomy from different perspectives. The models involve *technical perspective* – emphasizing on physical situation, *psychological perspective* – emphasizing on characteristics of learners, *sociocultural perspective* – concentrating on mediated learning and *political-critical perspective* – concentrating on ideologies, access and power structures. This study is particularly interested in exploring the model of learner autonomy from technical perspectives as it fits the study objective. For the operationalization of the model, Murase (2015) elaborates two dimensions of technical autonomy: 1) behavioral autonomy –focusing on learners’ ability to employ cognitive and metacognitive strategies, e.g. setting goals and planning and monitoring to control their learning and 2) situational autonomy – referring to learners’ ability to control their learning when they are required to study independently. Exploring learners’ technical autonomy of more and less proficient learners can give valuable insights with regards to the extent that both types of learners employ cognitive and metacognitive strategies as well as their situational autonomous learning which is argued to be the cause of individual differences in their learning outcome and English language acquisition.

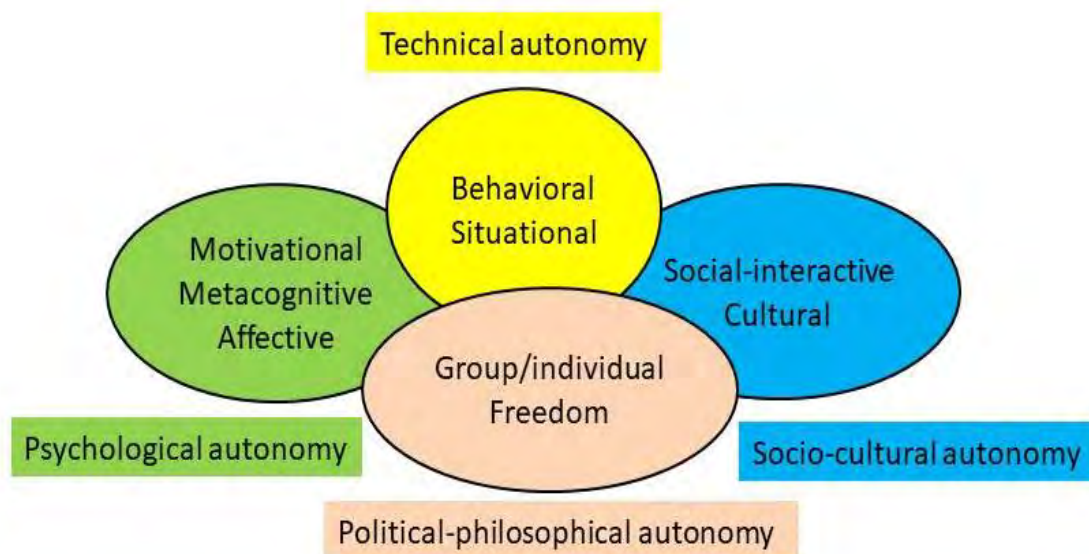


Figure 1 Illustrative interrelationships between the models of learner autonomy

The importance of learner autonomy in English language learning and acquisition has been sustained by empirical studies. Positive relationships between learner autonomy and English proficiency have been observed among EFL learners in Asian countries, such as in Indonesia (Myartawan, Latief & Suharmanto, 2013) and Japan (Apple, 2011). Across English proficiency levels, Sakai and Takagi (2009) found significant differences in the degree of autonomy in which more proficient learners were attributed as independent users and less proficient learners were at dependent level. Specifically, in Thailand, both teachers and students have positive views of autonomous learning, yet higher degree of autonomy is difficult to realize due to students' dependence on teacher and lack of support from families and communities (Tayjasanant & Suraratdecha, 2016). Positive relationships have been identified between Thai EFL learners' beliefs of their autonomous learning and their English proficiency levels (Orawiwatnakul & Wichadee, 2017).

The study

The primary objective of this study is to investigate individual differences that make more and less proficient Thai EFL learners. Three selected factors for the investigation consist of learners' beliefs about English language learning, language learning strategies and autonomy. From the brief review of literature presented earlier,

it can be seen that these three factors play significant roles in learners' English language learning, there is still little information about the extent and variety of beliefs, learning strategies and autonomy among more and less proficient English learners especially in Thailand. This study, hence, aims to address the following research questions:

1. What factors underlie Thai EFL learners' beliefs about English language learning, language learning strategies and autonomy?
2. What are the profiles of Thai EFL learners' beliefs, language learning strategies and autonomy across proficiency levels and gender? Are there any significant differences?
3. What are the interrelationships among Thai EFL learners' beliefs about English language learning, language learning strategies and autonomy?
4. What predictive roles do Thai EFL learner's belief, autonomy and strategy use in English language learning play on English proficiency?

Method

Research design

The design of this study was quantitative that made use of quantifiable data for data analysis. The central emphasis was on the examination of interrelationships among the variables of interests using various statistical techniques such as Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Independent t-test, and Multiple-Linear Regression applicable for applied linguistics research (Fryer, Larson-Hall & Stewart, 2018). In the examination process, illustrative figures, e.g. histogram and scree plot, were explored, yet not presented in this paper due to the limited number of words.

Participants

The participants were undergraduate students studying General English (GE) courses in the Academic Year of 2019/20 at Walailak University, Thailand. A total of 784 students completed the online questionnaire along with the consent forms. After

data cleaning, 722 students were retained for further analysis. The students came from thirteen schools encompassing School of Science, School of Management, School of Nursing, School of Dentistry, School of Architecture and Design and so forth. Their average age was about 20 years old. In the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) levels, the majority of the participants had proficiency levels at A1 (53.04%/383) and A2 (39.19%/283 students); only 6.65% (48 students) were in B1 and 1.11% (8 students) were in B2 levels. By gender, 72.15% (561) were female, 26.73% (193) were male and 1.11% (8) preferred not to disclose their gender.

Instrument and Measure

The data were collected by means of survey questionnaire and English proficiency tests that involved the measures employed in this study.

1. Survey questionnaire.

BALLI. The Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory (BALLI) by Horwitz (1988) were used to measure Thai EFL Learners' beliefs about English language learning. Some revisions to the questionnaire items were conducted to ensure the suitability for the subjects. Sixteen items were used to collect the data of learners' beliefs with the emphasis on difficulty of language learning, nature of language learning, and motivations and expectations. The detailed items can be seen in Table 1 in the appendix.

SILL. Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) built upon Oxford (1990) by Ardasheva and Tretter (2013) was selected to assess Thai EFL learners' LLS. Since the inventory was originally intended to measure school-aged children's LLS, this study did some revisions to the items to ensure the appropriateness for the subjects. There were twenty-two items to collect the data from the students on learning strategies which covered memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, and affective learning strategies. The illustrative items can be seen in Table 2 in the appendix.

Learner autonomy. The model of learner autonomy was centralized on technical autonomy that involved goal setting, planning, learning management, reflection, self-

evaluation, and record keeping. The study used the survey of learner autonomy validated by Murase (2015). All the items can be found in Table 3 in the appendix.

All the questionnaire used in this study adopted a 5-point Likert scale, in which “1” means “Strongly disagree/Never/A very difficult language/Less than a year” and “5” means “Strongly agree/Always/A very easy language/You can’t learn a language in 1 hour a day”. Prior to the data collection, the questionnaire was translated into Thai language and the readability for Thai learners had been ensured by a Thai native speaker.

2. English proficiency test

The learners’ English proficiency tests were measured by using *Walailak University Test of English Proficiency* (WUTEP). Framed by the CEFR and *Classical Test Theory* (CTT), WUTEP assesses learners’ English proficiency levels both as a whole and in specific skills including listening, reading, writing and speaking; in addition, the results are generated in the forms of scores translated into A1, A2, B1, B2 and C1 (Waluyo, 2019). The test has been mapped upon other international tests such as TOEFL, IELTS, and TOIEC. This proficiency test has been used to measure about 2000 university students and public people every year. In this study, the learners’ proficiency tests were conducted before the survey questionnaire was distributed. This study made use of both students’ proficiency levels in the CEFR and in raw scores in the data analysis. It was obtained that there were 383 students at low level, 283 at moderate level and 56 at high level of proficiency.

Data collection and analysis

The data collection process began with a pilot study involving 53 undergraduate students whose English language skills are in the average level among the entire population. They majored in Health Sciences, Applied Sciences, and Social Sciences. The results of the pilot showed some inconsistencies with regards to the internal consistencies among the items. These results lead to the conclusion that EFA would be required in the data analysis process. Afterward, the data collection was conducted in March 2020 for a week. The link and QR code to the questionnaire were given to the students with the cooperation of the General English lecturers via announcements

in official courses' Facebook groups. The participants were explained the objectives of the study and were informed that the result of the study would not affect their course grades. They could refuse to take part in the study if they felt uncomfortable. The participants were also asked to sign the consent before answering the questionnaire.

Before the data analysis process started, the collected data were cleaned up. The data cleaning process involved the removal of the duplicate, irrelevant, and incomplete records, and labelling each variable accordingly. The normality of the data was checked by using the values of *Kurtosis* and *Skewness* based on George and Mallery (2003). The data analysis involved such statistical techniques as Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Independent t-test, Bivariate Correlations, and Multiple-Linear Regression. Descriptive statistics were also utilized to illustrate the learners' profiles on the variables of interests. The means were interpreted in three categories: 0 – 2.49 (Low), 2.5 – 3.49 (Moderate) and 3.5 - 4 (High). Additionally, the learners' overall proficiency levels were grouped into three categories following the CEFR levels: A1 – Low Level of Proficiency, A2 – Moderate Level of Proficiency and B1 and B2 – High Level of Proficiency.

Result and discussion

Result

Factor analysis

The first research question explored factors that underlie Thai EFL learners' beliefs about English language learning, language learning strategies and autonomy. The data were normally distributed with the skewness and kurtosis between -2 and +2 for all items (George & Mallery, 2003). Then, multiple exploratory factor analyses (EFA) were performed to expose the latent variables underlying the survey items (Henson & Roberts, 2006). The procedures of performing EFA followed the suggestion from Phakiti (2018) in the area of applied linguistics research. Principal Axis Factoring (PAF) was selected as the extraction method as it has been considered robust and commonly chosen (Fabrigar & Wegener, 2012). The Kaiser criterion eigenvalue higher than 1 was used to determine the number of factors to be retained.

KMO and Bartlett's test was used to identify whether the factors were extractable with a threshold of .50 for sampling adequacy (Field, 2018). Orthogonal rotation, i.e. Varimax, was employed since some factors were assumed to be unrelated. The cutoff point for accepted factor loadings was set at a threshold of .30 (Fabrigar & Wegener, 2012). Lastly, the obtained factors were given new labels.

The results of EFA for Thai EFL learners' beliefs about English language learning disclosed four factors that accounted for 47% of the total variance, validated by Bartlett's test of sphericity: $\chi^2(120) = 1727.942, p < .001$. The sampling adequacy was .844, higher than the threshold of .50. Each factor was labelled: Factor 1 was beliefs of motivation in English learning (*Eigenvalue* = 3.647), Factor 2 was beliefs of nature of English learning (*Eigenvalue* = 1.494), Factor 3 was beliefs of difficulty in learning English (*Eigenvalue* = 1.376) and Factor 4 was beliefs of what matters in learning English (*Eigenvalue* = 1.012). Next, five factors were loaded from Thai EFL learners' language learning strategies which explained 50% of the total variance with $\chi^2(231) = 3683.336, p < .001$ and sampling adequacy of .897. Each factor was named: Factor 1 was memory strategy (*Eigenvalue* = 5.733), Factor 2 was affective strategy (*Eigenvalue* = 1.781), Factor 3 was metacognitive strategy (*Eigenvalue* = 1.201), Factor 4 was cognitive strategy (*Eigenvalue* = 1.153) and Factor 5 was compensation strategy (*Eigenvalue* = 1.123). Finally, two factors were obtained from Thai EFL learner autonomy which elucidated 55% of the total variance with $\chi^2(66) = 3301.649, p < .001$ and sampling adequacy of .922. Each factor was classified: Factor 1 was goal setting, planning and evaluation (*Eigenvalue* = 5.405) and Factor 2 was reflection and record keeping (*Eigenvalue* = 1.223). All the items can be found in Table 1, 2 and 3 in the Appendix.

Profiles and differences across proficiency levels and gender

The second research question delved into the profiles of Thai EFL learners' beliefs about English language learning, learning strategies and autonomy. The analyses were conducted following the results of factor analysis in the first research question. First, the results indicated that overall, the learners had a high mean score for their beliefs in English language learning ($M = 3.51, SD = .33$). They had higher levels of beliefs of motivation in English learning ($M = 4.1, SD = .53$) and nature of

English learning ($M = 3.5$, $SD = .52$) than their beliefs of what matters in learning English ($M = 3.4$, $SD = .54$) and difficulty in learning English ($M = 3.0$, $SD = .40$). Nonetheless, female and male Thai EFL learners ($N = 714$), excluding eight people who preferred not to reveal their gender, did not have significant differences in their beliefs of English language learning ($t(712) = 1.38$, $p = .167$). Across proficiency levels, there were no significant differences noted in the beliefs of English language learning ($F(719) = 2.037$, $p = .131$), yet significant differences were observed in the beliefs of motivation in English learning ($F(719) = 10.914$, $p < .001$) and what matters in learning English ($F(719) = 16.422$, $p < .001$).

Moreover, Thai EFL learners used LLS at moderate level ($M = 3.3$, $SD = .42$) with metacognitive strategy as the most frequent used ($M = 3.9$, $SD = .60$) and affective strategy as the least used ($M = 2.8$, $SD = .65$). Similar to their beliefs, female and male learners' LLS were not significantly different ($t(712) = 1.18$, $p = .240$). Significant differences were also not seen among the learners' LLS in different proficiency levels ($F(719) = .055$, $p = .947$), but it was observed on their use of memory strategy ($F(719) = 3.236$, $p = .040$), affective strategy ($F(719) = 27.085$, $p < .001$), metacognitive strategy ($F(719) = 6.522$, $p = .002$), cognitive strategy ($F(719) = 5.150$, $p = .006$) and compensatory strategy ($F(719) = 3.463$, $p = .032$). Additionally, the degree of Thai EFL learner autonomy was found to be at moderate level ($M = 3.3$, $SD = .48$) with goal setting, planning and evaluation as the most practiced activities ($M = 3.5$, $SD = .49$), followed by reflection and record keeping ($M = 3.1$, $SD = .56$). Significant differences were not identified among female and male learners ($t(712) = 1.944$, $p = .052$). Further, proficiency levels were suggested to matter in the degree of Thai EFL learners' autonomy ($F(719) = 5.742$, $p = .003$), especially in the practice of reflection and record keeping during their autonomous learning ($F(719) = 18.732$, $p < .001$), but not in goal setting, planning and evaluation ($F(719) = .195$, $p = .823$).

Interrelationships

The next research question was driven by the intention to examine whether there were interrelationships among Thai EFL learners' beliefs about English language learning, learning strategies and autonomy. These three variables have been examined by previous studies, yet the empirical findings seem to suggest that each one of them

is built one upon another. Thus, bivariate correlations were run to explore the interrelationships. The results exhibited significant, positive relationships among learners' beliefs, learning strategies and autonomy along with all the factors under each scale. Strong relationships were reflected between beliefs of motivation in English learning and beliefs about English language learning ($r = .710, p < .001$), memory strategy and LLS ($r = .782, p < .001$), cognitive strategy and LLS ($r = .762, p < .001$), compensation strategy and LLS ($r = .751, p < .001$), goal setting, planning and evaluation and learner autonomy ($r = .890, p < .001$) and reflection and record keeping and learner autonomy ($r = .916, p < .001$).

Meanwhile, moderate levels of relationships were obtained between beliefs of motivation in English learning with metacognitive strategy ($r = .541, p < .001$) and goal setting, planning and evaluation ($r = .525, p < .001$), between beliefs about English language learning with beliefs of nature of English learning and ($r = .690, p < .001$), difficulty in learning English ($r = .530, p < .001$) and what matters in learning English ($r = .691, p < .001$), memory strategy ($r = .502, p < .001$), LLS ($r = .518, p < .001$), and goal setting, planning and evaluation ($r = .520, p < .001$), between memory strategy with cognitive strategy ($r = .540, p < .001$), compensation strategy ($r = .507, p < .001$), and goal setting, planning and evaluation ($r = .516, p < .001$), between affective strategy with LLS ($r = .690, p < .001$), reflection and record keeping ($r = .542, p < .001$), and learner autonomy ($r = .553, p < .001$), between metacognitive strategy with LLS ($r = .680, p < .001$) and goal setting, planning and evaluation ($r = .599, p < .001$), between cognitive strategy with goal setting, planning and evaluation ($r = .503, p < .001$) and learner autonomy ($r = .539, p < .001$), between LLS with goal setting, planning and evaluation ($r = .692, p < .001$), reflection and record keeping ($r = .560, p < .001$) and learner autonomy ($r = .688, p < .001$), and between goal setting, planning and evaluation and reflection and record keeping ($r = .632, p < .001$). The remaining relationships were significantly positive with low *Pearson* coefficients.

The predictive roles on English proficiency

The last research questions examined the predictive roles of beliefs about English language learning, learning strategies and autonomy on Thai EFL learners' English

proficiency levels. First, the learners' beliefs of English language learning coupled with the underlying factors were regressed on Thai EFL learners' English proficiency measured by *Walailak University Test of English Proficiency* (WUTEP). The proficiency results consisted of scores of learners' proficiency levels as a whole and scores of learners' proficiency levels on speaking, listening, reading and writing. Multiple-linear regression was conducted on each of these variables.

It was obtained that Thai EFL learners' proficiency levels were significantly predicted by their beliefs of motivation in English learning – Factor 1 ($R^2 = .04$, $F(1, 720) = 30.40$, $p < .001$), nature of English learning – Factor 2 ($R^2 = .01$, $F(1, 720) = 10.03$, $p = .002$), and what matters in learning English – Factor 4 ($R^2 = .04$, $F(1, 720) = 25.83$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, reading proficiency was predicted by three factors: Factor 1 ($R^2 = .02$, $F(1, 720) = 12.07$, $p = .001$), Factor 3 ($R^2 = .01$, $F(1, 720) = 6.38$, $p = .001$) and Factor 4 ($R^2 = .04$, $F(1, 720) = 32.59$, $p < .001$). Writing proficiency was projected by three factors: Factor 1 ($R^2 = .05$, $F(1, 720) = 33.96$, $p < .001$), Factor 3 ($R^2 = .10$, $F(1, 720) = 7.823$, $p = .005$), and Factor 4 ($R^2 = .11$, $F(1, 720) = 9.00$, $p < .003$). Speaking proficiency could be explained by three factors: Factor 1 ($R^2 = .17$, $F(1, 720) = 21.13$, $p < .001$), Factor 3 ($R^2 = .11$, $F(1, 720) = 8.13$, $p = .004$) and Factor 4 ($R^2 = .12$, $F(1, 720) = 11.06$, $p = .001$). However, it was only Factor 1 ($R^2 = .11$, $F(1, 720) = 9.09$, $p = .003$) and Factor 4 ($R^2 = .19$, $F(1, 720) = 26.99$, $p < .001$) that could significantly predict the learners' proficiency levels in listening. The learners' beliefs, despite being a significant predictor of writing, could only explain a small percentage of the variation in the outcome variable ($R^2 = .01$, $F(1, 720) = 3.95$, $p = .047$). From these results, Factor 3 did not play a significant role on the learners' English proficiency in general, Factor 2 was not a significant predictor of the learners' proficiency in reading, writing and speaking, and Factor 2 and 3 were unable to predict listening proficiency.

Afterwards, multiple-linear regression was conducted to predict the learners' proficiency levels by their LLS. It was observed that proficiency levels were significantly predicted by memory strategy – Factor 1 ($R^2 = .12$, $F(1, 720) = 10.46$, $p = .001$), affective strategy – Factor 2 ($R^2 = .29$, $F(1, 720) = 65.52$, $p = .001$), metacognitive strategy – Factor 3 ($R^2 = .15$, $F(1, 720) = 15.56$, $p = .002$), and cognitive strategy – Factor 4 ($R^2 = .14$, $F(1, 720) = 15.04$, $p < .001$). Further, reading

proficiency could be elaborated by four factors: Factor 1 ($R^2 = .12$, $F(1, 720) = 9.75$, $p = .002$), Factor 2 ($R^2 = .27$, $F(1, 720) = 56.80$, $p < .001$), Factor 3 ($R^2 = .12$, $F(1, 720) = 9.92$, $p = .002$), and Factor 4 ($R^2 = .11$, $F(1, 720) = 9.17$, $p = .003$). Four factors also significantly predicted listening proficiency: Factor 1 ($R^2 = .01$, $F(1, 720) = 7.14$, $p = .008$), Factor 2 ($R^2 = .27$, $F(1, 720) = 56.82$, $p < .001$), Factor 3 ($R^2 = .11$, $F(1, 720) = 9.33$, $p = .002$), and Factor 4 ($R^2 = .13$, $F(1, 720) = 12.68$, $p < .001$). Then, the four factors could explain the variation in writing proficiency: Factor 1 ($R^2 = .01$, $F(1, 720) = 4.05$, $p = .045$), Factor 2 ($R^2 = .21$, $F(1, 720) = 33.36$, $p < .001$), Factor 3 ($R^2 = .11$, $F(1, 720) = 9.42$, $p = .002$), and Factor 4 ($R^2 = .11$, $F(1, 720) = 8.05$, $p = .005$). Lastly, these were factors were significant predictors of speaking proficiency: Factor 1 ($R^2 = .11$, $F(1, 720) = 8.63$, $p = .003$), Factor 2 ($R^2 = .21$, $F(1, 720) = 34.14$, $p < .001$), Factor 3 ($R^2 = .13$, $F(1, 720) = 12.58$, $p < .001$), and Factor 4 ($R^2 = .13$, $F(1, 720) = 11.49$, $p = .001$). In contrast, the learners' LLS in overall and Factor 5 failed to predict the learners' proficiency levels as well as proficiency in the four skills.

The last regression was performed to see if learner autonomy could significantly predict the learners' proficiency levels. The results demonstrated that learner autonomy ($R^2 = .02$, $F(1, 720) = 11.68$, $p = .001$) and reflection and record keeping ($R^2 = .05$, $F(1, 720) = 37.88$, $p < .002$), were significant predictors of Thai EFL learners' proficiency levels. Learner autonomy and Factor 2 could also significantly predict the learners' proficiency in listening, reading, writing and speaking, yet on the contrary, Factor 1 was not a significant predictor of English proficiency.

Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to explore individual differences among more and less proficient EFL learners from the viewpoint of beliefs about English language learning, learning strategies and autonomy and the roles on English proficiency levels in the case of Thai EFL learners at university level. There were at least four key points worth discussing from the findings. First, this study has identified factors underlying Thai EFL learners' beliefs, learning strategies and autonomy as seen in Table 1, 2 and 3. The results depicted some differences, in which some items were grouped into factors different from the original ones in BALLI (Horwitz, 1988), SILL (Ardasheva

& Tretter, 2013) and learner autonomy (Murase, 2015). Different results of factor analysis had been reported by previous studies in different countries such as Iran (Jafari & Shokrpour, 2012) and Spain (Agudo & de Dios, 2014), while in Thailand, Fujiwara (2011) found similarities between Taiwanese and Thai EFL learners' beliefs at the dimensional level and strength of the beliefs. These results sustain the arguments that survey instruments may need adaptation to suit the context of the research subjects (Amerstorfer, 2018; Derrick, 2016).

Then, the findings of this study confirm that Thai EFL learners had a high level of beliefs in English language learning which was driven by their motivation in English learning. Differences between more and less proficient EFL learners were noted in their motivation and what matters in learning English, similar to what was found by Fujiwara (2014). Thai EFL learners perceived that their motivation in English learning significantly impacted their English achievement (Howchatturat & Jaturapitakkul, 2011). It was also confirmed that Thai EFL learners employed LLS at moderate level with metacognitive strategy as the most frequent used and affective strategy as the least used. Between more and less proficient learners, differences were observed in their frequent use of memory strategy, affective strategy, metacognitive strategy, cognitive strategy and compensatory strategy. These findings support and add new insights to the findings of the previous studies (e.g. Ardasheva, 2016; Habók & Magyar, 2018; Psaltou-Joycey & Kantaridou, 2009). Besides, the degree of autonomy was dissimilar between more and less proficient Thai EFL learners, especially on their ability to do self-reflection and keep record of their learning; nevertheless, both types of learners seemed to have the same ability in setting goals and plans and evaluating their learning. Tayjasanant and Suraratdecha (2016) report that in Thailand, both teachers and students hold positive views of autonomous learning, but higher degree of autonomy is difficult to realize due to students' dependence on teachers and lack of support from families and communities.

The third point is that significant, positive relationships existed among Thai EFL learners' beliefs, learning strategies and learner autonomy together with the underlying factors. As discussed earlier, previous studies have indicated an association between learners' beliefs and learning strategies (Chang & Shen, 2010; Yang, 1999) and between learning strategies and autonomy (Chen & Pan, 2015;

Oxford, 2008), yet the interrelationships among these three remain unexplored. At this point, the findings of this study confirm that the interrelationships among these three variables existed; since they were presumed to be the causes of individual differences between more and less proficient EFL learners, enhancement on one variable would positively affect the other variables which could result in positive learning outcomes with focus on English learning. Fourth, learners' beliefs and LLS could predict Thai EFL learners' English proficiency levels in overall, yet their specific underlying factors significantly did. In contrast, learner autonomy was a significant predictor of Thai EFL learners' English proficiency with emphasis on their ability to do self-reflection and keeping record of their learning, following the findings from Orawiatnakul and Wichadee (2017).

Implication of the study

The findings of this study can have some implications for addressing individual differences between more and less proficient Thai EFL learners. Factors underlying Thai EFL learners' beliefs, learning strategies and autonomy are slightly different from those in other contexts; therefore, it is important to adopt empirical findings obtained from Thai contexts. More and less proficient Thai EFL learners are different in their beliefs of motivation in English learning and beliefs of what matters in learning English; in this instance, teacher should pay attention to less proficient learners' beliefs and attempt to create an opportunity where both more and less proficient learners can learn and share similar levels of beliefs since they are closely associated with learning strategies and autonomy. Several studies, including the present study, have suggested metacognitive strategy as the most frequent used by Thai EFL learners and these strategies were diverse across learners with different proficiency levels; thus, considering the empirical findings, some actions need to be taken to enhance Thai EFL learners' metacognitive strategy, not to mention that this strategy is closely related and significantly predicted Thai EFL learners' English proficiency levels. The last implication is that learner autonomy plays a significant role and attention should be paid to the learners' ability to do learning reflection and keep record of learning since differences exist between more and proficient learners.

Conclusion

To sum up, more and less proficient Thai EFL learners are significantly influenced by their beliefs of motivation in English learning, their metacognitive learning strategy and their ability to do self-reflection and keep records of learning in autonomous learning. Other variables have influence, but the extent is smaller than these three. Following the suggestions by Dörnyei (2006), Ehrman, Leaver and Oxford (2003) and Robinson (2001), this study has highlighted how more and less proficient Thai EFL learners differ in their beliefs, learning strategies and autonomy. The findings are encouraged to be considered in the process of designing English courses for Thai EFL learners. Nonetheless, this study has some limitations to be disclosed. This study primarily relied on quantitative data that were examined using factor loading, means differences and regression. Studies employing qualitative or mixed methods would presumably attain different results. Hence, the results of this study should be treated in applicable contexts. Despite the purpose of exploring individual differences between more and less proficient learners, the number of high proficient learners was low which might have given some effects to the results.

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Appendix

Table 1. Four factors underlying Thai EFL learners' beliefs of English language learning

Statement	Factor loading	M/SD	Level
Factor 1: Motivation in English learning			
1. If I learn to speak English very well, it will help me get a good job.	.718	4.41 / 0.721	High
2. Thai students think that it is important to speak English.	.711	4.31 / 0.748	High
3. I would like to learn English so that I can get to know its speakers better.	.697	4.08 / 0.755	High
4. If I get to speak English very well, I will have many opportunities to use it.	.686	4.10 / 0.824	High
5. It is better to learn English in an English-speaking country.	.593	4.01 / 0.801	High
6. I believe that I will ultimately learn to speak English very well.	.576	3.81 / 0.730	High
Factor 2: Nature of English learning			
1. It is easier to read and write English than to speak and understand it.	.665	3.08 / 0.889	Moderate
2. Learning English is mostly a matter of learning a lot of new vocabulary words.	.630	3.66 / 0.688	High
3. It is necessary to know the English culture in order to speak the English language.	.559	3.61 / 0.737	High
Factor 3: Difficulty in learning English			
1. The English language I am trying to learn is734	2.72 / 0.584	Moderate
2. Learning English is easier than learning other languages.	.643	3.16 / 0.818	Moderate
3. If someone spent one hour a day learning English, how long would it take him/her to become fluent?	-.370	2.65 / 1.040	Moderate

Statement	Factor loading	M/SD	Level
4. Learning English is different from learning other school subjects.	-.351	3.66 / 0.717	High
Factor 4: What matters in learning English			
1. Learning English is mostly a matter of translating from Thai language.	.679	3.43 / 0.755	Moderate
2. Learning English is mostly a matter of learning a lot of grammar rules.	.655	3.46 / 0.782	Moderate
3. It is easier to speak than understand English.	.594	3.35 / 0.814	Moderate

Table 2. Five factors underlying Thai EFL learners' English language learning strategies

Statement	Factor loading	M/SD	Level
Factor 1: Memory strategy			
1. I learn new words by thinking about when I can use them.	.679	3.42 / 0.772	Moderate
2. I use new English words in a sentence to help me learn them.	.677	3.48 / 0.776	Moderate
3. When I hear a new English word, I think of a picture to help me learn the word.	.658	3.35 / 0.839	Moderate
4. I learn new words by thinking about where I first saw them on the page, on the board, or on a street sign.	.597	3.55 / 0.766	High
5. I try to guess (predict) what people will say next in English.	.384	3.11 / 0.838	Moderate
Factor 2: Affective strategy			
1. I write about how I feel when I am learning English in my journal.	.751	2.59 / 1.044	Moderate
2. I use flashcards to learn new English words.	.672	2.69 / 0.867	Moderate

Statement	Factor loading	M/SD	Level
3. I give myself a gift or a treat when I do well in English.	.577	2.76 / 1.032	Moderate
4. I talk to people about how I feel when I am learning English.	.508	3.23 / 0.826	Moderate
Factor 3: Metacognitive strategy			
1. I look for ways to be a better student of English.	.783	3.95 / 0.755	High
2. I listen well (carefully) when people speak English.	.692	3.88 / 0.741	High
3. I see my English mistakes and try to do better.	.686	3.70 / 0.741	High
Factor 4: Cognitive strategy			
1. I read for fun in English.	.699	3.07 / 0.801	Moderate
2. I make summaries of things I hear or read in English.	.540	2.80 / 0.860	Moderate
3. I think about how well I am doing in English.	.534	3.08 / 0.773	Moderate
4. I first read a page (a text) quickly and then go back and read it carefully.	.505	3.27 / 0.830	Moderate
5. When I read in English, I don't look up every new word in a dictionary.	.415	3.08 / 0.774	Moderate
Factor 5: Compensation strategy			
1. If I can't think of an English word, I show what I mean with my hands.	.637	3.70 / 0.859	High
2. I make up a new word if I can't think of an English word.	.625	2.95 / 0.976	Moderate
3. I look for words in English that are like my own language.	.589	3.32 / 0.802	Moderate
4. If I can't think of an English word, I use a word that	.494	3.51 /	High

Statement	Factor loading	M/SD	Level
means the same thing.		0.826	
5. I break long words into small parts to figure out what they mean.	.464	3.34 / 0.823	Moderate

Table 3. Two factors underlying Thai EFL learner autonomy

Statement	Factor loading	M/SD	Level
Factor 1: Goal setting, planning and evaluation			
1. I set achievable goals in learning English.	.737	3.71 / 0.761	High
2. I set long-term goals in learning English.	.724	3.56 / 0.754	High
3. I try to create the conditions under which I can study English best.	.719	3.57 / 0.694	High
4. I make study plans that match my goals in learning English.	.691	3.44 / 0.685	Moderate
5. I try to create opportunities to use English outside the classroom.	.641	3.49 / 0.685	Moderate
6. I revise my English study plans if they don't work well.	.618	3.55 / 0.703	High
7. I assess the effectiveness of my English study plans.	.558	3.36 / 0.671	Moderate
8. I assess how much of my goal I have achieved.	.484	3.26 / 0.643	Moderate
Factor 2: Reflection and record keeping			
1. I reflect upon how I studied after I finish studying English for the day.	.848	3.10 / 0.669	Moderate
2. I reflect upon what I learned after I finish studying English for the day.	.828	3.10 / 0.683	Moderate

Statement	Factor loading	M/SD	Level
3. I keep records of what kind of methods I used for my English study.	.704	3.07 / 0.709	Moderate
4. I write down what kinds of materials I used for my English study.	.606	3.23 / 0.757	Moderate



Language Learner Beliefs: EFL and ESL Contexts

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Bioprofile

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Abstract

This article aims at exploring Bangladeshi EFL and ESL learners' beliefs and attitudes to teaching and learning English. The research work has been accomplished at two stages. At the first phase, if learner beliefs differ for individual learner differences, such as gender, nature of course, and length of study has been investigated. The second phase includes a comparison between EFL undergraduate and ESL graduate learners' beliefs, who study at two universities in Bangladesh. Both the quantitative and qualitative data have been collected to support the hypothesis that learners having different language needs hold diverse beliefs and attitudes to second language learning in varied pedagogic contexts. Findings reveal that learner's beliefs do not change widely over the contexts; instead, learner attitudes to second language pedagogy change along with individual differences. Experts' research-oriented recommendations on supervising EFL and ESL learners' beliefs using individually responsive and need-based pedagogies have been proposed.

Key words: EFL learners, ESL learners, beliefs, context, pedagogy.

Introduction

Learner beliefs, as a complex learner characteristic, greatly affect the L2 learning process and its outcomes (Han, 2017). Positive reactions and attitudes to a task develop learners' integrative motivation which subsequently 'facilitates the language learning process' (Lamb, 2004). Learners' individual differences researchers suggest learner diversities be examined more closely since age or context can be vital sources within-group variants in learners' beliefs (Horwiitz, 1999). Second language learners' perceived success and failure influence the beliefs about the target language nature, its difficulty, acquisition procedure, effective learning strategies, learning aptitude, expected success, and teaching methodologies, etc. (Bernat & Gvozdenko, 2005). Because language learning does not occur in a culture-vacuum context and beliefs change through interaction with teachers, peers, and other contextual contingencies (Riley, 2009). Analyzing beliefs and their impact on language learning can be useful for the instructors in deciding effective teachable content and teaching techniques. Because learner success depends on the way teachers and learners perceive and interpret the classroom objectives and activities deploying interactions (Kumaravadivelu, 1991). Hence, any imprecise beliefs about pedagogy can generate misinterpretation and miscommunication if these are unrecognized and unattended. L2 learner beliefs are context-dependent and cannot be investigated without considering the context of origin and should be examined in connection of an individual's previous and current learning experiences (Gabillon, 2007). Researchers' interests in the context-sensitivity of beliefs have concentrated on either geographical dimensions or on the effects of a new instructional or independent learning environment on beliefs (Tinder, 2013).

Learner beliefs

Beliefs are cognitive entities critically guiding human behavior and helping individuals to understand and define the surroundings and themselves (White, 1999). Beliefs are attitudes and based on them we are ready to act (Hartl & Hartlová, 2000). Beliefs provide meaning to individuals; help to identify with other people and form groups or social systems; and reduce dissonance and confusion (Fazilatfar *et al.*, 2015). Learner belief is hard to describe and operationalize as a construct since it is entangled with abstract ideas

including "perceptions, attitudes, opinions, and perspectives" (Pajares, 1992). In addition, it is often compared to knowledge which is objective in nature and beliefs are "subjective and value-laden" (Wenden, 1998).

Learner beliefs investigated as an underlying mechanism of meta-cognition are called the building blocks of epistemology (Goldman, 1986) and the driving force of academic performance. Learners' perceptions and behavior are often correlated to the extensive influence of social and individual epistemologies on "academic learning, thinking, reasoning and problem solving" (Schommer, 1993); persistence (Dweck & Leggett, 1998); and interpretation of information (Ryan, 1984). Beliefs are the person's knowledge incorporating needs and emphasize the individuality that influences both learning and applying pedagogical experience (Flavell, 1987).

Learner beliefs are classified into person variables, task variables, and strategy variables. *Person variables* are the beliefs about self and other people; *task variables* refer to an understanding about a task, and *strategy variables* include assorting suitable cognitive processes to complete a task. Beliefs are intertwined self-worth, self-concept, identity, self-efficacy, personality, and other individual differences (Epstein, 1990). Self-worth beliefs are individual opinions about self which are influenced by society, culture, academic achievement and others' opinion about them. Learners' perception of success and realistically high levels of expectancy raise their confidence (Bernat, 2004), whereas low expectations indicate incompetence (Puchta, 1999). Self-concept belief is self-described evaluation consisting of self-esteem and self-worth. Truitt (1995) defines expectancy as learners' beliefs about their own abilities and responsibilities to perform tasks. Self-efficacy beliefs stand for individual insights on their own aptitudes for any activity and turn around the question of capability (Pajares & Schunk, 2002). Learners' conceptualization of the conditions either facilitating or hindering learning can influence their choice of activities (Breen, 2001). Many learners possess sufficient control over the "outcome exert effort" to manage any activity. Control-beliefs are the sense of ease or difficulty in performing behavior which either encourage or obstruct performance (Domyei & Otto, 1998).

Language learner beliefs and context

Beliefs are well-organised and specific schema. Belief formation is an individually self-directed act and each belief has an individualized mark. Beliefs are constructed as the corrective and constitutive social representations of learners in a particular social context (Gremmo, 1993a; 1993b). Language learning culture guides learning behaviors represented either positively through practicing openness to others or negatively by refusing others; but none of these is wrong, correct or permanent (Zarate *et al.*, 2004). These are influenced by curricular options, teaching orientations, and the relationship between social and pedagogical language (macro-context), and classroom activities and attitudinal dynamics (micro-context) (Castellotti & Moor, 2002). Hence, learner beliefs are the “filter of reality” (Arnold, 1999).

Learners' beliefs are situation specific and dynamic (Ellis, 2008), context-dependent (Peng, 2011), emergent and outside forces (Trinder, 2013), which depend on context and fluctuate over time (Fazilatfar *et al.*, 2015). Both proficient and inefficient learners demonstrate obvious changes in their motivational beliefs and attitudes in different contexts (Bo & Fu, 2018). Learners form new beliefs and attempt new strategies to cope with new approaches in a new context (Zhong, 2015). Also, they might form core beliefs about language learning that change or resist change along with the changes in learning context (Naghdipour, 2014). The sociocultural factors, such as prior learning experiences, subject contents, extracurricular activities, formative assessments, and teachers can significantly change learners' beliefs in a different academic setting (Li & Ruan, 2015).

Learner beliefs are static and fixed trait-like changing dimension from the complex dynamic systems aspect while these are the "perspectives embedded in and mediated by the sociocultural, interactional, and experiential context", as the contextual approach views (Mercer, 2011; Dornyei & Ryan, 2015). Hence, learners' beliefs and actions are inconsistent (Barcelos & Kalaja, 2011); might change as learners' motivation, attitudes, and emotions change (Aragao, 2011); and can be mediated by learners' experiences of learning and using second language (Navarro & Thornton, 2011). Belief change is subject to emotional attachment accompanying those beliefs and contextual conditions (Han, 2017) including sufficient exposure to instructional or social setting, opportunities to experience mastery, and constant reflections (Amuzie & Winke, 2009). Zhong (2015) reported the

complex and dual nature of language learners' beliefs, which were not always harmonious and can be self-contradictory. Some beliefs evolve and change over time and across situations while others remain relatively stable and learner beliefs are perceived as an inter-related construct. Beliefs are much constant within the learners, strongly held and resistant to change (Peacock, 2001).

Researcher Positionality

Studying learner beliefs can facilitate teachers with a good understanding of learner expectations, commitment, perceived success, and satisfaction. Certain beliefs about failure can be the source of test and learning anxiety and previous learning experience can affect learner beliefs and strategies (Saha, 2014). Beliefs influence learners' English scores (Hou, 2013). Hence, teachers have to be insightful regarding learner needs and expectations to make a difference in students' learning choices and experiences (Hartjes, 2009). Pedagogical actions are influenced by teachers' and learners' self-identity beliefs. Strong and supportive beliefs develop appropriate mental strategies helping to achieve learning goals. More successful learners not only draw on beneficial beliefs but also adjust expectations and develop autonomous strategies. Understanding learner beliefs is, therefore, crucial for me as a teacher to recognize the consistent approach to language learning and create self-awareness (Zarate *et al.*, 2004).

In recent years, more researchers have attempted to examine the effect of learner factors, such as strategies, autonomy, oral participation, and learning outcome on learners' beliefs (Tanaka, 2004, Zhong, 2008). Although a few recent studies including Mercer (2011) and Zhong (2014) explore learner beliefs evolving over a long time, factors changing learner beliefs is little known. More studies to grasp learner beliefs changing in different contexts where students exchange thoughts about language learning is timely (Fazilatfar *et al.*, 2015).

Bagherzadeh (2012) found a strong relationship of language learning beliefs to language proficiency and aptitude with no relation to gender. However, Daif-Allah (2012) reports significant gender differences in learners' language aptitude, learning and communication, and motivation and expectations. Al Bataineh (2019) also used gender as

a variable, which had a significant impact on learners' motivation, expectations, and difficulty of language learning. Al-malki and Javid (2018) only report learners' positive and negative trends without identifying any variable effects, whereas a dynamic relationship is found between learners' beliefs and gender, academic achievement, and previous education (Genç, Kuluşaklı & Aydın, 2016). Although gender has been frequently used as effective variables in beliefs study, Bernat and Lloyd's (2007) sparse and contradictory findings of its effects on ESL learner beliefs encouraged the author to gain a better understanding. Also, age effects and different nature of EFL and ESL learners' beliefs in a non-native context have not been examined yet. Since Bangladeshi learners have different language needs in EFL and ESL settings which might trigger varied and diverse beliefs, exploring the differences might be significant for pedagogical precisions.

Since ESL learner respondents in the current research are also prospective teachers whose beliefs will control their professional consciousness and influence their teaching behavior (Altan, 2006). Besides, learners' mistaken, uninformed or negative beliefs rely on the less effective strategies resulting in a negative attitude towards learning or autonomy which produces classroom anxiety and poor cognitive performance (Bernat & Lloyd, 2007). It is even more significant in a non-native context like Bangladesh where language learning is mostly classroom-based or field dependent.

Methodology

I have used a survey to investigate learners' attitudes and perceptions about different aspects of learning English as a foreign and a second language. It is primarily a quantitative research requiring less detailed data and MCQ answers to the research questions. Along with the quantitative part, the proposed research includes six qualitative questions used to analyze participant viewpoints. Hence, the research uses mixed-method.

Research questions

This research attempts to answer the following questions:

1. Do gender, age, and course type influence Bangladeshi learners' beliefs about English as foreign or second language learning?

2. How do EFL and ESL learners conceptualize English language learning in Bangladesh?

Participants

The research includes 240 students of Jagannath University as respondents, 160 of whom are the students of English department in the Faculty of Arts. The rest of the respondents (80) are from the Department of Mathematics and Psychology in the Faculty of Science. One hundred fifty of the total respondents were male and 83 were female. The group of ESL learners consisted of 40 first year, 40 second year, 43 fourth year, and 30 master's students. All studied English as a foreign language up to H.S.C. (Higher Secondary Certificate) level, which ensures equal learning background. None had any study gap or longer learning history than the others. Only 233 Horwitz's (1987) BALLI (Beliefs about Language Learning Inventory) Questionnaires were analyzed because seven participants did not provide accurate demographic information and were rejected.

Table 1 Research Participants

Institution: Jagannath University		
Variable Types	Category	Total Number = 240
Departments	English	160
	Mathematics	40
	Psychology	40
Gender	Male	150
	Female	90
Level of Instruction	First-year	120
	Second-year	40
	Third-year	0
	Fourth-year	50
	Master's level	30

Tools

A questionnaire comprising three sections, including demographics, a modified version of Horwitz's (1987) BALLI, and six qualitative questions has been used to collect data about learners' beliefs. Information about learners' gender, level of instructions, H.S.C.

examination year, and course type has been gathered using the demographic survey. BALLI has been adapted from Bernat and Lloyd (2007) and Khodadady (2009) and slightly modified to fit the local context, meet the purpose of the study, and avoid misunderstanding among the learners. The questionnaire has a Likert scale (agree=3, undecided=2, disagree=1) containing 30 questions. BALLI is based on the theory and evidence that learner beliefs involve five pedagogical factors including foreign language aptitude, difficulty of language learning, nature of language learning, learning and communication strategies, and motivation and expectations. The last part is qualitative research consisting of six open-ended questions. A questionnaire based on Arnold's (1999) concepts of learners' beliefs has been administered later to elicit qualitative data ESL learners' perceptions of English language and language pedagogies. The questions also include appropriate classroom behavior, learning goals, self-capabilities, etc. In addition, a bundle of secondary data on EFL learners' perceptions about the similar themes collected from 100 undergraduate EFL & ESP learners at Noakhali Science and Technology University in 2007 has been used in this research (Saha & Talukder, 2008).

Procedure

The demographics were administered at the beginning of the research. Then a qualitative questionnaire was administered with the first and second-year students in the mid-semester. Honours final year and Masters' students responded to it at the end of the semester. After a week, the survey questionnaires were distributed among the participants during different class hours. The author provided them with the instructions for responding to the questions. The participants were assured that the inquiry was not an academic activity. It would neither be assessed as performance nor affect their academic grade or privacy.

Analysis

Data has been analyzed statistically and separately for each variable, such as gender, level of instruction, and type of course. At first, a reliability coefficient of BALLI was determined using the Alpha (Cronbach) model. The value of Cronbach alpha (α) 0.98 indicates a high degree of questionnaire consistency. Mean scores, standard deviations, and

standard error means were calculated to assess belief differences and homogeneity of the sample groups. Then, I used R statistical software to examine the findings and interpreted them with descriptive and inferential statistics. A t-test was performed to detect the correlations between BALLI results which is the dependent variable and the subject variables, including gender, level of instruction, and course type. The correlation coefficients and significance levels (0.05) between the dependent and subject variables were also presented. Finally, qualitative data on ESL and EFL learners' self-reported beliefs have been analyzed manually and descriptively.

Data analysis

Quantitative findings

Results of the BALLI items are examined from five language pedagogical perspectives as outlined in methodology.

Foreign Language Aptitude

The analysis shows the most respondents (70%) agree that some people have a special ability to learn foreign languages. And, the least agreed (57%) item is people good at maths or sciences are not good at learning foreign languages. However, the majority of the male respondents (72%) disagree that women are better than men at learning languages. And, the female respondents mostly (36%) disagreed that people good at maths or sciences are not good at learning foreign languages.

Table 1 shows no significant relationship between gender and beliefs about language learning of Bangladeshi learners ($p = 0.28 > 0.05$) is found. However, females are more likely to believe that they can learn English ($p = 0.00017 < 0.05$), and someone speaking a foreign language learns another one easily than boys ($p = 0.00002 < 0.05$). Table 2 shows age or learning experience has no significant effect on learners' beliefs ($p = 0.47 > 0.05$), although more elder learners believe female learners are better in language learning than men ($p = 0.047 < 0.05$). The academic course attended by the respondents has no considerable impact on the language learning beliefs ($p = 0.16 > 0.05$), although the

variable is comparatively more influential than the rest other because the hypothesis has been accepted for sixteen items, which is greater than age or gender.

Difficulty of Language Learning

As in Table 1, the majority of the learners (70%) agree that some languages are easier than other ones, although 46% disagree that speaking is easier than understanding a foreign language. 45% of participants found English moderately difficult, and only 24% find it absolutely difficult. Fifty two percent of learners believe studying an hour a day should be adequate for improving English language speaking skills in less than one year, while only one-fourth of the respondents (23%) believe it takes 3 to 5 years. Seventy percent of the total respondents believe English is difficult to learn, while 46% of participants find it easy. Also, 44% of students find it medium-difficult.

Although gender does not affect beliefs about language learning difficulty in general ($p = 0.28 > 0.05$), female learners have different attitudes than males to reading and writing skills which they find easier than speaking and understanding ($p = 0.01 < 0.05$). Younger respondents find English more difficult ($p = 0.049 < 0.05$) and take longer to learn the language ($p = 0.00001 < 0.05$), although age shows an insignificant correlation with learners' beliefs. Despite no statistical correlation, course type has much effect on learner beliefs about language difficulty. More ESL learners (28%) find reading and writing English is easier than speaking and understanding ($p = 0.0001 < 0.05$), and the language difficult ($p = 0.01 < 0.05$) than the EFL learners (15%). However, 51% of EFL and 43% of ESL learners experience it medium-difficult.

Nature of Language Learning

Table 3 shows diverse answers. Most participants (80%) admit the importance of speaking English with excellent pronunciation and learning new words to learn a foreign language. Seventy four percent of respondents agree that learning how to translate from the first language is most significant in learning English and enjoy practicing English with foreigners. However, the least agreed point was the necessity of learning grammar (46%). Least of the respondents (12%) are confused about the different nature of foreign language

and other academic subjects. The most confusing idea (14%) is if learning English is learning to translate from the first language.

Although there are no statistical differences because of gender ($p = 0.28 > 0.05$), female learners rely more heavily on grammar ($p = 0.01 < 0.05$) and translation ($p = 0.02 < 0.05$) for improving language competence than males. No significant statistical correlations are found between age and beliefs. However, a greater number of young learners acknowledge the differences in learning English ($p = 0.03 < 0.05$) and learning other subjects and the necessity of learning new words ($p = 0.03 < 0.05$). Despite no statistical correlation between the course type and learner beliefs, more EFL learners believe translation is important ($p = 0.0001 < 0.05$) than the ESL learners. However, both groups believe learning English differs from learning other academic subjects ($p = 0.09 < 0.05$).

Learning and Communication Strategies

A vast majority of the learners (88%) believe repeating and practicing is needed to learn English, and 66% disagree with stopping speaking English if there are mistakes. The most (24%) undecided point is if guessing the meaning of any unknown words is all right or not.

Table 1 shows some gender effect on learners' learning and communication strategy selection since the hypothesis has been accepted for eleven items more female students are concerned with better pronunciation ($p = 0.03 < 0.05$), prefer repeating and practicing ($p = 0.03 < 0.05$), feel shy to speak English ($p = 0.05$), make initial mistakes in speaking ($p = 0.04 < 0.05$) than the males. Despite that, ESL and EFL learners have similar beliefs about emphasizing repetition and practice ($p = 0.22 > 0.05$), zero tolerance to initial errors ($p = 0.04 < 0.05$) and practicing with CD-ROM ($p = 0.13 > 0.05$). However, age has slightly more considerable effect on learner beliefs ($p = 0.47 > 0.05$) about learning and communication strategies than the other factors. The groups have different response patterns for five items out of eight. However, thirteen hypotheses have been accepted for age including younger learners agree to speak with excellent pronunciation ($p = 0.027 < 0.05$), make mistakes ($p = 0.005 < 0.05$), feel shy to speak English ($p = 0.008 > 0.05$) and practice ($p = 0.00002 < 0.05$) more than the elders.

Motivations and Expectations

Responses related to motivations and expectations indicate the majority of participants' agreement to the statements. Very few are undecided or disagree with the assertion. 90% of respondents want to speak English well, while 60% of respondents wish to know foreigners or native speakers, which is agreed by the least number of respondents. Participants (88%) are sure about getting better jobs once they acquire good working English.

Statistically, no significant relationship between gender and language learners' motivation is found, although more female learners want to learn speaking English well ($p = 0.044$) and agree that learning to speak good English will create better job opportunities ($p = 0.0342$), than the males do. Also, younger learners have different beliefs than the elder learners ($p = 0.47 > 0.05$) except about learning to speak English well ($p = 0.001 < 0.05$). Course type has a considerable impact on learners' motivations and expectations too ($p = 0.16 > 0.05$). ESL learners are more motivated to learn English ($p = 0.27 > 0.05$) and are interested in having native English speaking friends ($p = 0.13 > 0.05$).

Qualitative analysis

a. Beliefs about the nature of English as a foreign language

ESL learners consider English as a common global language and emphasize its communicative nature and significance as an international language. The respondents acknowledge the usefulness of the English language in higher education and focus on the difficult aspects of this language, *"English is a globalised language for sharing and understanding the social, environmental, and economic development throughout the world"*. Sentence structure, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar are basic parts of the language. However, ESL learners have difficulties with the variety of sounds, transformation of sentences, connected speech, pronunciation variation, reading, and anomalies in the grammar rules. But EFL/ESP learners focus more on the purposes and utility. As they state, *'It has created a communicative world', 'It is tough to learn but not impossible', 'English is a turning point in one's career'*.

b. Beliefs about the speakers of English

ESL learners stated insufficient fluency, less confidence, wrong accent, and limited access to meaning causes inadequate speaking skills, although persistent practice makes improvement possible. These learners believe fluent speakers enjoy extended advantages in the job market and higher education, *"Making connection or building communication with the rest of the world is easier for an English speaker."* Bangladeshi ESL learners aspire to acquire fluency, effective listening, and native-like pronunciation. However, EFL/ESP learners are more aware of speakers' image and state, *'Speakers of English are smart and conscious persons', 'Native speakers are too fast to be understood', and 'Learning is nothing but a thing to practice.'*

c. Beliefs about the four language skills of English

ESL learners are concerned with the disintegrated teaching of four skills in Bangladesh and learners' less command over the skills acquisition process. They believe extensive listening and speaking opportunities can help and boost confidence since these show *"how much a learner can do!"* Speaking is the most difficult skill which requires sufficient practice and language socialization to improve. EFL/ESL learners have a similar concept regarding four language skills: *'Pronunciation and expressions make English difficult to learn', 'Speaking and listening are more difficult than reading and writing', and 'Grammar is the most difficult part of learning.'* While EFL learners believe *'writing is comparatively easy'*, ESL learners consider it as the *"reflection of the all four skills development, which is needed to learn the formal aspects of a language"*.

d. Beliefs about teaching English

"This is not at all an easy task which should be easy, systematic, and clear enough since it is not our mother language." Many of the ESL learners expect instructors to teach grammar, communicative activities and reading in a language class. These learners prefer 'Direct Method' than 'Grammar-translation' method for effective language teaching. They choose interactive teaching, opportunities of expressing feelings and opinion, an inductive way of teaching, learners' active participation, positive feedback, conversational practice outside the classrooms instead of teacher-led pedagogy. Finally, the ESL learner respondents emphasize on ensuring adequate teachers' training on communicative language

teaching and preparing effective lesson plans. Although EFL/ESP learners appreciate active participation too, they complain little teacher control. Instead, these learners need some tutor interventions that include *'Teachers should explain the grammar rules with examples'*, *'Teachers should point out and correct our mistakes while speaking'*, *'Teachers should cooperate with the students while doing any activity'*, *'Teachers should converse with the learners'*, *'S/he should know about the weakness of every individual learner'*, *'Teachers can give dictation in the class'* etc. However, they are aware of classroom interactions too; *'I expect a friendly environment in a language class so that I can tell my problems'* and *'Teachers should allow us to talk to each other'*,

e. Beliefs about English language learning

ESL learners prefer situational activities and interactions as classroom learning strategies. They suggest speaking should be taught at elementary level and learners need to use English language before being introduced with the grammar rules. Learners need to learn the vocabulary and sentence structures first and then practice using language through demo and simulations. Upgrading the status of English from a foreign language to the official or second language can also boost learner motivations, as they state. Overall, *"it's difficult and learners need to be a dedicated and perseverant"* and EFL/ESP learners clarify the idea and expose their learning strategies' *Learning grammar rules are important'*, *'Watching movies is useful'*, *'Vocabulary should be memorized or learned every day'*, *'Speaking English with friends is a good way of developing English speaking skills.'* *'Reading English newspaper, magazine, or novel is needed'*, *'We should write at least a page every day on any topic and get it checked by the teacher'*, *'Listening to news and CDs are important to improve one's listening skills.'*

f. Beliefs about appropriate classroom behavior

ESL learners expect a small classroom with fewer students and energetic teachers who involve learners in participatory activities ensuring teacher and peer support. Friendly classroom atmosphere along with engaging games, role-play, relia, and pictures, etc. is significant to motivate learners. Increasing teacher and peer tolerance on mistakes and openness in teacher-student and student-student interactions is also needed. However, they

believe *"learners need to be attentive, keep calm and quiet sometimes, and confident in asking and responding to any questions along with taking part in all the classroom activities."* EFL/ESP learners have less specific observations about classroom activities: *'Language lab is good to improve one's listening skills', 'Teachers should provide opportunities for interacting with other students', etc.*

g. Beliefs about oneself

Overall, Bangladeshi ESL learners are *"not at all a pro-learner and find difficulties in developing all four skills"*. However, they are confident in performing the skills including writing, listening and reading and are far less than a native-like speaker. Most are better at writing and reading than speaking. Listening is particularly difficult, which demands additional inspiration to improve. A few learners make continuous efforts despite limited scopes of practice. EFL/ESP learners, on the other hand, are more judgmental about themselves as learners than assessing further learning needs. *'I'm not so good in learning English because I can't speak correctly', 'I am not good and not bad', 'I can't understand anybody speaking English fluently', 'I am afraid of speaking to others', 'Grammar is very difficult.'*

h. Beliefs about the goal of language learning

ESL learners' pre-service teacher education involves communicative skills acquisition, learning the language properties, knowing second language theories and literature, etc. This is a meaningful training from academic, professional and global aspects. These learners seek well-organized report writing skills, language proficiency, global migration opportunities, and greater socio-economic access, *"The goal is both academic and non-academic, which facilitates utilizing and showcasing knowledge through developing interactive personality and criticality"* However, EFL/ESP learners have more specific learning goals in mind than the ESL learners' holistic approach. The expectations include *'I want to speak well as I will work for a multinational company', 'I want to read and write correctly to study abroad', 'I have to do well in all four skills to score high in the IELTS exam', 'My hobby is to contact with foreigners extensively', 'I want to speak English language fluently', 'I want to work in media and express everything well in English.'*

Discussion

Although no significant differences in learner beliefs have been detected statistically in ESL and EFL contexts in the present study, individual differences, such as gender, age, nature of courses have small or large impacts on them. Despite having similar responses, ESL learners have different patterns of responses in some items than EFL learners. Since non-native learners seldom enjoy contextual benefits, the findings clearly determine the beliefs about language learning ability which is mainly need-based. Female and elderly learners are, overall, more confident about their learning potential and longer learning experience can create realistic beliefs. Also, long exposure to limited classroom-based input and real-life language exposure might suppress self-esteem. The introverted nature of the female learners might make them focusing more on receptive skills than the males do. Besides, ESL learners' different views from EFL learners demonstrate a stronger effect of nature of the course, compared with the other variables despite having no statistically significant relationship.

The qualitative data confirms ESL learners are more concerned with integrated language pedagogy, while EFL learners view it fancifully and instrumentally from a distant position. However, both groups know the features of the four skills and perceive learning grammar as difficult. Both groups consider speaking and listening skills as more significant and difficult than the other skills. Fluency, accent, and pronunciation are common concerns too, although ESL learners are more aware of the specific sub-skills involved in each skill, which the other group limits to fluency or accuracy only. Writing is easier for both groups, whereas EFL learners have detailed expectations from teachers regarding classroom learning and teaching. Conversely, ESL learners are suggestive about methods and policies used in effective language teaching and learning in Bangladesh. Also, EFL learners emphasize speaking as the competence indicator, whereas ESL learners focus on the ability of reading and writing because of studying English extensively as a subject. Finally, ESL learners perceive their goals of learning as acquisition and from pedagogical perspectives, while EFL learners are much inclined to the language itself and learning it.

Summing up, learners have difficulties with at least any of the four skills in English, although most have a high estimate of the status of this global language and its speakers.

The research participants use a wide range of learning strategies regardless of experiencing the same pedagogical problems. Despite being aware of English language needs, the less motivated learners often fail to perform up to the demand. Overall, students have emotional reliance on the teachers, need-based teaching, and classroom learning to raise confidence equally with the four skills. EFL learners have different learning goals and objectives and prefer a variety of techniques.

Implications

Any mismatch between learner beliefs and teaching practices can cause disillusionment and de-motivation leading them to adopt surface approaches and even discontinue study (Tinder, 2013). Learners' expectations and reality may conflict in a new context (Horwitz, 1999). Since learners hold both facilitative and inhibitory beliefs about language learning, knowing and dealing with learner insights is significant, which should be done in groups rather than individually. Since learners have diverse needs, beliefs, learning styles, and educational background, Bassano (1986) forbids imposing teachers' preferences on them and suggests being aware of the sources of belief differences, such as previous learning experience and assumptions, etc. and offers six steps to enhance learners' positive attitudes:

- Teachers can consider individual differences and encourage homogeneous grouping instructions. Promoting reading groups and reading strategy instruction can help.
- Since student beliefs impact their anxiety, encouraging learners to develop positive beliefs and decrease anxiety for better performance (Hou, 2013) is required. Competitive outlook, social prestige, fear of negative evaluation, teachers' acceptance, belief of certain failure, pressured by time constraints, irregularity, disliking, undermined self-image, and unwilling to take a risk, etc. are the sources of EFL learners' learning and test anxiety (Saha, 2014).
- Language teachers can lessen some learners' negative preconceived beliefs by implementing and discussing positive instructional practices and realistic expectations in the classroom. Positive communication between teacher and student is the key to successful language pedagogy (Bassano, 1986).

- Peng (2011) suggests teachers can inspire learners by convincing "what they are learning is what they need." Because unavailable or inconsistent classroom affordances can raise counter-productive beliefs like denying the value of lessons. Teachers need to communicate and explain the purpose and rationale of the classroom activity to support and encourage positive changes in learner beliefs. Such teacher-interferences would be significant in the contexts where "teacher authority and submissive ways of learning are culturally valued" (Wen & Clement, 2003).

- Exam stress, tedious lectures, and any other learning schedule can simply demoralize learners by discouraging their informed beliefs. Hence, educators can create a learning environment constantly promoting authentic language use to foster learned beliefs and develop competence. Meaning-focused learning tasks or projects tailored to linguistic features can offer effective affordances to interpret beliefs. Adopting a formative assessment of oral language achievement can also encourage practical language use and positive learner beliefs (Peng, 2011).

- Williams (2012) suggests principled teaching practices can be adopted in the classroom and a learner might be 'open' to new language teaching techniques if those appear to work, and if the rationale behind that is made clear.

In addition, well-planned teaching and assessment strategies, along with purposeful effective training and thoughtful instructional design, can reassure learners by removing foreign language anxiety.

Teaching

a. Teaching thinking skills and learning strategies, along with teaching target language, helps learners to develop meta-cognitive learning strategies. Acknowledging learners' own learning styles and multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1993) and considering the affective learning dimensions could be helpful (Puchta, 2010).

b. Students' and teachers' contradictory beliefs create tension in the classrooms (Kern, 1995). Puchta (2010) states, 'Success comes in *cans*, not in *can'ts*'. The conception of a 'can-do-spirit' in the classroom is needed, and engaging learners in using language to

construct meaning can achieve such a 'can do' learner attitude in a classroom environment (Andres, 1999).

c. Learners prefer to learn in collaborative environments, which positively influence their learning beliefs (Fahiminia *et al.*, 2013). Working within a group triggers interaction and meaningful communication through sharing meaning and exchanging information, knowledge, and expertise. This sparks learners' positive attitude towards the content (Koenraad & Westhoff, 2003). The personal relationships grown here raise motivation to learn and enhance learners' communicative competence. Also, the mutual responsibilities of completing the task increase engagement and internalization.

d. The pedagogical choices made by an instructor can contribute to support positive beliefs in the classroom, and paying heed to learners' preferences while deciding pedagogies will boost positive attitudes and beliefs to the pedagogical process.

e. Taking caution while creating tasks at a suitable level of competence for the learners is essential (Fahiminia *et al.*, 2013). This can increase confidence by reducing their anxiety.

Assessment

a. Learners should have opportunities of assessing their own learning progress; especially, having process-oriented tests and keeping a portfolio can help (Kohonen, 1999).

b. Teachers can allow the learners to discover the language instead of receiving it. Involving learners in actively constructing their own learning paths to increase beginners' creativity is recommended by William and Burden (1997).

c. Raising learner expectations will increase their performance level. Using pedagogical placebos can help to prevent the learners from falling into a predicament and their confidence going down because of the maximum difference between the expectations and performance. Learners' need of teachers' support to perform up to the expectation is a crisis point (Puchta, 2010).

Theoretical framework

a. Humanism focusing on the independent individual enhances language learners' positive beliefs, confidence, potentiality, and performance. A humanistic teacher usually knows not teaching a class, rather the individuals. Besides being a good listener and observer, teachers' attitudes should also be supported by adequate training (Rinvolutri, 1999).

b. Trust and rapport between language teachers and learners is another classroom culture concern, which can allow learners to strengthen self-esteem and confidence by minimizing confusing logical levels. Errors should be considered as learning signs instead of learners' capability or identity measurements (Puchta, 2010).

c. Learners' beliefs or attitudes towards corrective feedback should never be overlooked since learners constantly receiving negative comments from teachers have more negative attitudes to language learning than those receiving positive reinforcement (Agudo, 2012).

Affective training

a. Learners' heterogeneity in learning experiences is significant, and teachers should lead the learners in using strategies. It is neither adequate to tell them about the benefits of certain activities, strategies or behavior, nor forcing them to learn anything and expect them to understand, remember and use those immediately and effectively is reasonable (Smiskova, 2005). Teachers need more comprehensive and systematic training to deal with learners' affective factors.

b. Some tuning in pedagogic and skills development activities outside the classroom help learners to form realistic beliefs (Nhapulo, 2013).

Instructional design

Curriculum and pedagogy should be more learner-centered, and assessment methods should fit the complexity of interrelationships that shape learners' beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes. Educators should consider learners' linguistic, cognitive, and social backgrounds.

Conclusion

The study exposes English language learners' beliefs in two contexts, including EFL and ESL settings in Bangladesh, which perhaps apply to many other non-Anglophone countries. Learners hold different beliefs, expectations, aptitude, and pedagogical objectives about language learning. Bangladeshi ESL learners prefer socio-affective and meta-cognitive strategies involving learning from others and self-regulated learning than memorizing words and practicing outside the classroom, which are chosen by the ESL learners (Anam & Stracke, 2016). Particular sub-skills, such as learning vocabulary or grammar are emphasized by EFL learners, while ESL learners focus on communication as an integrated skill. Conceptual knowledge and professional needs consideration allow ESL learners to see the big picture of language pedagogy while EFL learners focus on the individual language needs. Moodie's (2016) findings also clarify the point. Two different studies conducted in 2006 and 2017 on Bangladeshi language learners' beliefs by the author show that EFL learners are encouraged while ESL learners are concerned with teachers' feedback. These themes strongly correlate to the contextual factors and focus on the context influence on learner perceptions directly, which can redefine the statistical findings.

This research is limited to a non-native context, and the respondents consist of a group of undergraduate and graduate students in Bangladesh. Therefore, further research with different age groups, other populations, or contexts can produce different results. Moreover, the survey was conducted using a researcher-developed questionnaire that might not capture the respondents' true perceptions and beliefs about ESL or EFL learning. In addition, some learners might be confused or misunderstand any items and, thus, could produce faulty data. So, a qualitative approach like interviews, observations, or case studies would elicit more detailed and accurate data on learners' beliefs and attitudes to ESL and EFL learning.

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Enhancing Professional Development of Iranian EFL Teachers through Collaborative Reflection

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine if collaborative reflection effects on developing teachers' teaching knowledge and skills. The original number of participants were 126 from different cities in Iran, out of which 52 were found homogeneous via the results of B2 First exam and also based on returning the needs analysis survey. The participants were then asked to sit for Cambridge Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT) modules 2 and 3 as pre-

and post-tests. What came next was randomly assigning the participants into two experimental and control groups. As per the results of the needs analysis survey, nine topics pertaining to teaching knowledge and the participants' interest were given to them in the form of a pamphlet. The experimental group had 2-3 collaborative reflection sessions held face to face per week. Each session lasted 45-60 minutes and was totally video-recorded. The participants in the experimental group were further divided into two modes, namely leveled and non-leveled, which was as the moderator variable. In the control group, on the other side, no collaborate reflection took place, but the pamphlets were given to them to be studied individually. The results of the t-test run on the TKT scores indicated that there was a significant difference between the experimental and control groups. However, leveled and non-leveled groups did not show any significant difference in their gains. The implications and some suggestions for further study are provided at the end.

Key words: collaborative reflection, professional development, pedagogical knowledge (PK), mentoring

Background

With the relentless pace of development in the theoretical foundations of the language education, it seems vital to overhaul the educational systems to regain their competitive advantage in the business and keep pace with the changes. Language teachers, as the indispensable resource for the implementation of the curriculum, are expected to keep abreast of the developments. This can put their job security at risk but one redeeming feature of it can be the need to have continuous professional development (CPD). As a pivotal element of teachers' career advancement, CPD guarantees a life-long learning opportunity. With the paradigm shift from teacher- and learner-oriented to learning-oriented approaches and from behaviorist to social constructivist approach, the need to revamp the on-the-job training systems is acutely felt.

In the context of Iran, where language teachers have spread along public or private schools as well as private language institutes, administrators provide the teachers with teacher training programs, besides their academic education (Talebinezhad & SadeghiBeniss, 2005), especially in the private institutes. However, the programs or

courses fail to both adopt the strategies or activities in line with the most recent development in language teaching, i.e., social constructivist theory, and tap into the teachers' needs and preferences (Leather & Motallebzadeh, 2015).

To fill this gap, the present study attempts to examine the effect of collaborative reflection, as one of the interactive instructional activities in line with social constructivist approach to learning/teaching, on enhancing professional development of Iranian EFL teachers.

Literature Review

Collaborative reflection

Learning takes place in a social system in the light of the tenets of social constructivist learning theory. According to Vygotsky (1962), learning/development cannot be separated from its social and cultural context, so the sole way to explore intellectual strategies is via the perception of Vygotsky's notion of mediation that has made a step forward in explicating individuals' development process. According to Shabani, Khatib, and Ebadi (2010):

“Individuals learn best when working together with others during joint collaboration, and it is through such collaborative endeavors with more skilled persons that learners learn and internalize new concepts, psychological tools, and skills”(p.238).

It is apparent that without having a supportive environment for professional development, higher stages of reflective thinking and self-evaluation of teaching practices are not probable going to occur through self-study programs or are truly omitted by in-service teachers (Lin, Hong, Yang, & Lee, 2013). Much literature also argues that individual reflection may also hinder professional development and it should involve exterior communicate with others such as the teacher or classmates (Clarke, 2003; Hawkes & Romiszowski, 2001).

Individuals may have distinct understanding of the same notion in a context. Wang and Quek (2015) once stated ‘as learners’ individual understanding on the same topic may be different, having an opportunity to share and negotiate their understanding with peers

would enable them to get various perspectives from others and hence understand the topic better. As Lin, Hong, Yang, & Lee (2013) stated in their study, “collaborative reflection means that the participants work together as a learning community for professional development through interactive discussions, supportive workshops, cooperative classroom observations and reflective journal writings” (p. 14). Akyel (2000) indicates that at some stage in the collaborative reflection teachers have a probability to examine their instructing exercise and deconstruct or seriously change their existing believes. Kraft (2002) also focused on collaborative reflection recommending that it creates the prerequisites where educators learn about their practice, by way of talking about their experiences, turning into conscious of their assumptions and expectations, questioning these assumptions and revising their perspectives.

EFL instructors tend to have different attitudes in enhancing their professional knowledge and their teaching strategies, known as pedagogical knowledge; these attitudes may include dialogues and discussions, collaborative writing or peer observation. Likewise, Brock bank and McGill (1998) give an explanation for the significance of ‘reflective dialogue’ which can, rocket-like, thrust persons out of ingrained and limiting and self-re-enforcing understanding (single-loop learning) into new and sparkling insights (double-loop learning).

Furthermore, some researchers focused on the effectiveness of collaborative reflection on EFL teaching. As Mede (2010) stated during the collaborative reflection both participants examined their own instructional exercise and tried to find out new methods to appeal their students’ gaining knowledge of requirements and interests. She also concludes the members in her study had a chance to analyze their instructional exercise in the direction of language teaching and learning at some stage in the method of collaboration, which raised their attention of discovering new teaching strategies and behaviors (Mede, 2010). Teachers have little hazard to collaborate with every other, as in most TEFL context and they are usually all on their own, making an attempt to deal with lots of unique problems in their classrooms (Mede, 2010). However, according to Akyel (2000), collaboration is crucial, considering that it helps teachers to improve the requiring

abilities to discover their own educating or that of others, and to examine the results of their practice.

As Eickhoff and De Costa (2018) concluded, collaboration and the sharing of substances are solely treasured as all parties can acknowledge their cultural and/or pedagogical biases that can also play a role in their decision-making strategies and have an effect on each the collaboration and product; and are willing to create a product that can be adapted to suit users' special contexts. In consideration of these biases and context, instructors adopting the products of such collaborations need to also evaluate the position that they themselves play in that context and consider how they would possibly challenge the educational norms in an institution, the reasons they are doing so, and whether or not such intervention will have an effective or negative impact on the outcomes (Eickhoff & De Costa, 2018).

In order to have a higher perception of instructing practices, it is essential to uncover beliefs and exchange experiences, and in this case teachers' discussion meetings seems vital for enhancing their quality of reflection. Kuusisaari (2013) Stated: 'the central emphasis of sociocultural learning theory is learning and development in a social context through social interaction'. According to Day (1999) teachers hardly ever have possibilities to replicate extensively and deeply on the purposes and practices of teaching skills, even though in-service training is provided to them. As Jung, Tryssenaar, and Wilkins (2005) believed experienced instructors enhance often with the aid of reflecting on their instructing and discussing educating problems with colleagues. Richardson (1990) stated that giving instructors the opportunity to engage in conversations about their own classroom experiences, is a way to bring a big change to teaching practices. According to Hatton and Smith (1995) the act of exchanging experiences and ideas and opinions with others is regarded vital for improving high-quality of reflection. And as Ackland (1991) once claimed, a popular way of sharing experiences is meeting with colleagues. Such peer meetings may allow participants to talk about and improve their teaching skills and strategies. With a view to enhancing or gaining insight into their teaching practices, instructors evaluate their educating experiences in peer meetings (Meijer, 2005). Richardson (1990) discussed that a way to bring about substantial alternate in teaching practice is to give teachers the chance to interact by participating in conversations about

theory, standards and their own classroom practices. From this view, theory provides a structure, and sometimes an alternate viewpoint to enrich the teachers' own conceptions.

According to the above statement, a practical, conducive development program may seem more efficient. As Seaman, Sweeny, Meadows, and Sweeny (1997) mentioned that instructors ought to be given an educated mentoring agenda which is practical, supportive and secure in which they feel eager to test and make mistakes; As a result, collaborative conversations with mentors, peers and supervisors, offer instructors with a probability to replicate on their very own personal practices (Mede, 2010).

In English as a foreign language (EFL) context, novice teachers may face challenges because of faculty environments and they have a tendency to teach their students independently from their colleagues. Therefore, professional improvement aims to clear up some of these tricky problems (Bailey, Curtis & Nunan, 2001). On the other hand, it's assumed that for the duration of the procedure of collaboration, individuals enhance new techniques to deal with one-of-a-kind problems in their language classrooms; practically, the speaking between instructors extends their beliefs about language instructing and gaining knowledge of emphasizing the significance of sharing information in professional development (Akyel, 2000; Kraft, 2002).

Furthermore, the term reality shock coined by Veenman (1984), refers to the emotional and professional difficulties that many instructors experience in their first years of their profession. Moreover, qualitative approaches to these problems truly give a photo of the complexity of the phenomenon, displaying that reality shock is distinct for each and every amateur teacher, and that in every case the phenomenon is explained by using a mixture of problems inside very specific and idiosyncratic situations (Correa, Martínez-Arbelaiz, Aberasturi-Apraiz, 2015). Forthwith, one vital approach that amateur teachers find helpful in this duration of reality shock, is their collegial relationships with different teachers (Buchanan, Prescott, Schuck, Aubusson, Burke, & Louviere, 2013).

Given the above points, teachers need to enhance their teaching knowledge through effective ways. Knowledge sharing can be viewed as an effective way to help EFL teachers benefit from their colleagues' experiences and accomplishments. Also, without

having a supportive environment for professional development, higher levels of reflective thinking and self-evaluation of teaching practices are not likely to happen by themselves or are simply ignored.

Empirical studies

Based on the studies reviewed above, teacher education and continuous professional development is a proper field to be more investigated; therefore, the purpose of the present study is to identify the nature of collaborative reflection and investigate its efficacy on developing EFL teachers' teaching knowledge and skills. Second, this work aimed at implementing collaborative reflection in professional development of English teachers as a foreign language and how they could improve their teaching knowledge through collaboration. With the introduction of collaborative contexts, EFL teachers can share their teaching information, knowledge and experiences regarding their teaching profession. Through such interactions and discussion, EFL teachers can benefit from their colleagues' knowledge and accomplishments and try to improve their teaching skills.

Studies in the field of professional development on different topics specifically on teacher education has done to a large amount as in the research of Bala, Mansor, Stapa, and Zakaria, (2012) in regard to Digital portfolio and professional development of language teachers. The study intends to illustrate a successful effort of a group of English language teachers in turning into technology-proficient in their teaching while developing their teacher e-portfolios. In addition to exploiting their understanding on laptop technological know-how and technical necessities of developing their teacher e-portfolio, such effort additionally contributes to language teacher expert development. This research appears at how the teachers documented, organized, created and shared information and substances in designing their teacher e-portfolio. Findings from content analysis, reflections and interviews indicate that all instructors agreed that the e-portfolio indeed contributed to their expert development. This is established by using the responses given with the aid of the individuals whereby they felt that their professional development has accelerated after creating the e-portfolio.

In their study, Loh, Hong and Koh (2018) stated that educational success has been largely defined by academic scores in many educational systems, and teachers are

frequently held accountable for their students' scores. These accountability-driven school systems impinge on teachers to enact time-tested effective and efficient pedagogical approaches. In such a context, it is onerous for teachers to adopt alternative approaches. This paper traced how an experienced language teacher, schooled in the discourses and practices of neoliberalism, made a transformation into a teacher of constructivist bent. It explored the transformation of the teacher's beliefs and practice as a result of reflecting collaboratively with a small team. The findings help to provide a broad understanding of how collaborative reflection can develop teachers' ability to engage in reflection, and illuminate the potential it has in transforming the teaching practices set against the background of neoliberalism. This finding has relevance for Asian countries which are similarly engulfed in a neoliberal discourse.

In another study, Daniel, Auhl and Hastings (2013) reported on the challenges experienced by a group of first-year pre-service teachers engaging in a process of reflection and critique with peers, as they participated in a program focused on the development of core practices of teaching. These pre-service teachers' responses indicated their growing understanding of the importance of engaging in ongoing critical dialogue, as part of the "unnatural" aspects of teaching. The paper concluded with a reflection on the value of feedback from the earliest stages of professional learning.

Eickhoff and De Costa (2018) investigated collaborative teaching reflection. In their study, two US-based TESOL graduate students, from Senegal and the United States, collaborated on a lesson plan to be implemented by an American university EFL teacher stationed in Timor Leste. Through the process, the importance of fostering equity amongst Western and non-Western teaching philosophies and traditions, as well as grounding all decisions in a relevant cultural context, became imperative. Complicating measures, however, were resolved by accommodating diverse perspectives, building flexibility into lesson delivery, and trusting the intuitions of the teacher implementing the lesson.

Gutierrez, Adasme, and Westmacott (2019) conducted an action research study to examine how to enhance pre-service EFL teacher professional identities through reflective practice at a Chilean university. Reflections were fostered through a structured, conversational and collaborative approach. Qualitative data about the 12 participants'

perceptions of the workshop were collected using a focus group discussion. The hybrid thematic analysis of their responses showed that participants' emerging teacher professional identities were improved in three relevant ways: participants developed confidence in their ability to problem-solve, their appreciation of collaboration grew, and they became more aware of the need for teachers to change.

In another study, Farrell (2018) stated that reflective practice in the field of TESOL has been warmly embraced in many teacher education and development programs worldwide. However, one of the important issues that is still not clear to many educators is how reflection should be implemented. In his article, he argued that one of the reasons for the confusion about operationalizing reflective practice is that most of the existing approaches that blossomed since the 1990s are restrictive and thus a more holistic approach to reflection should be adopted through the framework for reflecting on practice in SLTE.

It is properly recognized that the satisfaction and extent of learner success are determined exceptionally by means of teacher competence, development, sensitivity and teacher motivation. Sigrin (1996) stated "it has long been recognized that reforming schools require concomitant reforms in teacher education" (p. 23). Within the ultimate decade, some of national reviews have encouraged teacher education that offers possibilities for instructors to inquire into their personal teaching, and some skilled teaching standards established by the National Board of skilled Teaching Standards speak of the requirement for teacher reflection and collaboration (Goodlad, 1990; Howey, 1992).

Teachers may not have enough motivation, interest or even not enough eager to allocate time for their own learning procedure. Therefore, as once more refer to Lin *et al.* (2013) mentioned in their research, "it is obvious that without having a supportive environment for professional development, higher levels of reflective thinking and self-evaluation of teaching practices are not likely going to happen by themselves or are simply ignored by in-service teachers" (p. 11). Also, they define collaborative reflection as a team work in a learning community for professional development through interactive discussions, supportive workshops, cooperative classroom observations and reflective journal writings to remark their responsibilities that they may have forgotten or ignored (Lin *et al.*, 2013). Moreover, he claims that even in writing tasks, teachers are also encouraged to use critical

incidents (e.g. student questions) in their daily teaching practices as a chance for collaborative reflection through sharing ideas and giving effective feedbacks to each other (Lin *et al.*, 2013).

Recent changes in educational system of Iran have had a massive impact on teaching profession. The effective roles of teachers, diverse range of students and the developing needs and expectations of the society and coverage makers require enough qualified instructor education and professional development programs (Mohammadi & Moradi, 2017). Moreover, teacher training programs may not be meeting the rising expectations of the related audience so that teachers require to continue their developing program (Borko, 2004; Gandara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005; Guskey, 2002; Mann, 2005). However, Schlager and Fusco (2003), based on their overview of research, concluded that conventional professional development organized at the school, nearby and country wide levels are “disconnected from practice, fragmented and misaligned and many of the programs lack key pedagogical, content, and structural traits of tremendous professional improvement that are wanted by using the teachers they serve” (p. 205).

The present study aimed at creating an environment in which EFL teachers were provided with an opportunity to collaborate with their colleagues and discuss and share their pedagogical knowledge. Based on the purpose of the study, the following research questions were formulated.

RQ1: Does collaborative reflection have any significant effect on Iranian EFL teachers' professional development?

RQ2: Does the impact of collaborative reflection on EFL teachers' professional development differ in leveled and non-leveled groups?

Method

The present research involved selecting two groups upon which a variable was tested without any random pre-selection processes and included a treatment on one group of EFL teachers. Hence, since the participants of the study were chosen non-randomly, the current

study adopted quasi-experimental design and included pretest/posttest to evaluate whether there were significant differences in their performance in TKT.

The instruments were used in different stages of the current research were: Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT), Cambridge B2 First test, and teacher's professional development pamphlet:

Cambridge B2 First Exam

Cambridge B2 First, used to be called First Certificate (FCE) exam, is a B2 level qualification which is, as stated by Cambridge English website, an indicator of learners' level of mastery over language skills in so much as they are able to live and work independently in an English-speaking country or study an English-medium course.

The test has four sections:

- (1) Reading and Use of English -75 minutes
- (2) Writing - 2 essays, 80 minutes
- (3) Listening - 40 minutes
- (4) Speaking - interview, 14 minutes

Candidates can do the B2 First exam on a computer or on paper.

The scores range from A, B, C (pass), D, E or U (fail).

Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT) (Cambridge English Teaching Framework)

In order to fulfill the purpose of the study, the researchers used modules 2 and 3 of Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT) as the pre-test and post-test to determine the participant's teaching knowledge in both groups and to make sure there was no significant difference between experimental and control groups. According to the official websites of Cambridge, TKT is a flexible series of modular teaching qualifications, which tests knowledge in specific areas of English language teaching. It may show how you are developing as a teacher. It may be assumed as ideal for people who want to prove their teaching knowledge

with a globally recognized certificate. Modules 2 and 3, which were used in this study, are tests of knowledge about the principles and practice of English language teaching (Module 2: Lesson planning and use of resources for language teaching. Module 3: Managing the teaching and learning process). Also, the reliability indices of both tests were calculated as 8.1 and 8.5 respectively.

Procedure

The target participants of this study who were available to the researchers were 126 EFL teachers of Silkroad Innovators Institute teaching in different representatives around Iran. Their age ranged from 18 to 40. They were from both genders and all of them were from Iran. They were from different cities including Babol, Amol, Bandar Abbas, Tehran (the Capital city), Rafsanjan, Khorramshahr, and Damavand.

Stage One: Out of the mentioned 126 English language teachers who received the invitation letter to take part, only 96 took the Cambridge B2 First test. The results of the tests have been sent to the Silkroad central office in Tehran.

Stage Two: 52 Teachers who gained one standard deviation above and below the mean were considered in this study. They sat for the B2 First test for homogeneity and also completed the needs analysis survey via a Google Form. The needs analysis survey was used in order to design the course content based on the participants' requirements. Moreover, a Cambridge TKT test (Modules 2 and 3) was used as the pretest in order to determine all teachers' teaching knowledge level.

Stage Three: According to the results of the TKT, the sampling participants were divided in to 3 Subgroups:

Subgroup I: 3 non-leveled experimental groups

Subgroup II: 3 leveled experimental groups

Subgroup III: 3 control groups

Subgroup II was divided in to six level groups (mentor, level 1, level 2, level 3, level 4, and level 5) based on their pre-test results.

Stage 4: In this stage the researcher started working with the experimental groups through pamphlet submission and scheduling group discussions via a Telegram group. Each pamphlet dealt with an issue related to pedagogical knowledge (teacher education knowledge) in several pages. Since the present study concentrated on EFL teachers' knowledge sharing on the in-person collaborative discussions and reflective writing, as mentioned in the previous stage, issues assigned by the researchers were chosen by the participants via the online needs analysis Google Form. This survey included around 20 issues, chosen by the researchers, according to their previous knowledge achieved about the participants' field of interests and needs.

Both groups received pamphlets on 9 topics of their interests on teaching knowledge extracted from the results of the needs analysis survey such as categorizing learners' mistakes/errors, giving corrective feedback, teaching listening/speaking/writing/grammar/vocabulary, lesson planning, and classroom management.

In experimental groups, the participants were supposed to interact with group-mates, share ideas with each other, and help each other to accomplish the common goal.

The experimental groups (Subgroups I and II) were required to study the pamphlets before the discussion meetings and be ready to share ideas. The discussion meetings were being held twice or three times a week. Participants of Subgroup I, with the same level of teaching knowledge, and participants of Subgroup II, with leveled group-mates, both attended the sessions and collaborated in group discussions. In addition, at the end of each pamphlet, the group-mates were supposed to write one reflective commentary together and send it to the researchers through the Telegram group.

It is obvious that Subgroup II group members had the chance of sharing knowledge with group members of lower or higher levels of pedagogical knowledge and using a mentor advice and experiences.

During the treatment sessions, however, the groups had their discussions. One member in each group was asked to record a video and send it to the researchers to ensure that everyone was attentive enough. Stage 4, lasted for 8 weeks (16 sessions) during 4 months.

Each discussion meeting took about 45 minutes and the whole process was entirely monitored by the researchers.

Simultaneously, the control groups received the pamphlets, the same as the experimental groups, and they had written commentaries individually but without group discussions and collaborative reflections.

Stage 5: Finally, a TKT, modules 2 and 3, was administered to both experimental and control groups in order to rate each member of both experimental and control groups' development and to compare the results of the 3 Subgroups to indicate the differences.

Results

Descriptive statistics were calculated to check the assumptions of the main statistical operations prior to the main study. T-test was also used to compare the posttests of the experimental and control groups.

Homogeneity of Participants

Before continuing the study, the researcher had to make sure that the participants were homogenous in terms of their language proficiency. Thus, the researcher decided to further assure that the participants of the two groups did not show any significant difference in terms of their language proficiency at the outset. Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of the two group's B2 First test scores, used as the homogenization test at the outset.

Table 1 *Descriptive Statistics*

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation
EXP	FCE	34	121.12	19.91
CNT	FCE	18	121.33	16.90

Investigation of the First Research Question

Does collaborative reflection have any significant effect on Iranian EFL teachers' professional development?

To investigate research question one, an independent sample t-test was conducted on the gain scores (the deviation score), the difference between the pretest and the posttest of teachers in both experimental and control groups. The improvement (gain) from the pretest to the posttest of TKT can be computed for each participant by subtracting their posttest score from their pretest score (See Table 2 for more information on teachers' performance in different times of testing). At the outset of the analysis, the assumption of normality of t-test was investigated and all the skewness measures were between -2 and +2. Therefore, this assumption was tenable (See Table2).

Table 2 Descriptive Statistics of Different Groups in Two Times of Testing (N = 52)

Group	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std.D	Skewness	Kurtosis
EX							
PRE	34	29	132	82.97	26.62	0.32	0.62
POST	34	35	150	112.97	23.33	1.15	1.97
CNT							
PRE	18	34	160	91.00	30.18	0.17	1.09
POST	18	28	160	99.22	35.55	0.64	0.21

Note: EXP = Experimental Group, CNT = Control Group, PRE = Pretest, POST = Posttest

The results of the main independent sample t-test on gain scores of from the pretest to the posttest of TKT showed that there was a significant difference between the gains of experimental group (M = 30, SD = 21) and the control group (M = 8.22, SD = 23.49), $t(50) = 3.41$, $p = .00$, equal variance assumed, with Cohen's d effect size of .97, which was considered a large effect (Sawilowsky, 2009).

Table 3 The Descriptive Statistics of Gain Scores of TKT in Different Groups from Pretest to Posttest (N = 52)

		N	Mean	Std. D	Std. Error Mean
Groups	EXP	34.00	30.00	21.00	3.60
	CNT	18.00	8.22	23.49	5.54

Table 4 Independent Sample t-test of Gain Scores from Pretest to Posttest

		Levene's Test		t-test				95% CI	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Gain Score	Equal variances assumed	.124	0.726	3.41	50	0.00	21.78	8.97	34.59
	Equal variances not assumed			3.30	32	0.00	21.78	8.32	35.24

Investigation of the Second Research Question

Does the impact of collaborative reflection on EFL teacher's professional development differ in leveled and non-leveled groups?

To investigate research question two, another independent sample t-test was conducted on the gain scores (the deviation score), the difference between the pretest and the posttest of teachers in both leveled and non-leveled groups. The improvement (gain) from the pretest to the posttest can be computed for each participant by subtracting their posttest score from their pretest score. At the beginning of the analysis, the assumption of normality of t-test was investigated and all the skewness measures were between -2 and +2. So this assumption was satisfied (See Table 5).

The results of the main independent sample t-test on gain scores of from the pretest to the posttest of TKT indicated that there was no significant difference between the gains of leveled group ($M = 25.75$, $SD = 23.55$) and non-leveled group ($M = 33.78$, $SD = 18.30$), $t(32) = -1.12$, $p = .27$, equal variance assumed (See Tables 6 and 7).

Table 5 Descriptive Statistics of Different Groups in Two Times of Testing (N = 52)

Group	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std.D	Skewness	Kurtosis
Leveled PRE	16	45	130	96.44	26.38	0.61	-0.29
POST	16	98	150	122.19	16.35	0.21	-1.17
Non-Leveled PRE	18	29	132	71.00	20.95	1.25	1.16
POST	18	35	149	104.78	25.89	1.14	1.39

Table 6 The Descriptive Statistics of Gain Scores of TKT in Leveled and Non-leveled Groups from Pretest to Posttest (N = 34)

		N	Mean	Std. D	Std. Error Mean
Groups	Leveled	16.00	25.75	23.55	5.89
	Non-leveled	18.00	33.78	18.30	4.31

Table 7 Independent Sample t-test of Gain Scores of TKT in Leveled and Non-leveled Groups from Pretest to Posttest

		Levene's Test				t-test			
								95% CI	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Gain score	Equal variances assumed	.058	.0810	-1.12	32.00	.27	-8.03	-22.67	6.62
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.10	28.25	.28	-8.03	-22.97	6.92

Discussion

The present study investigated enhancing professional development of Iranian EFL teachers through collaborative reflection. Upon the analysis of the data, the main independent sample t-test on gain scores from the pretest to the posttest of TKT showed that there was a significant difference between the gains of experimental group and the control group, which was considered a large effect (Sawilowsky, 2009). It can be said that teachers in the experimental group had far more advances from the pretest to the posttest of TKT in comparison with that of their counterparts in the control group. Thus, the first null hypothesis of this study can be rejected.

The results of the main independent sample t-test on gain scores from the pretest to the posttest of TKT indicated that there was no significant difference between the gains of leveled groups and non-leveled groups equal variance assumed. It can be said that there was no significant difference between advances of teachers in leveled group and non-leveled one. Thus, the second null hypothesis of this study cannot be rejected. It can be argued that being in leveled or non-leveled groups did not have any significant effect on teachers' performance in TKT modules II and III used as post-test, based on this study.

The results of the study indicated that the instructors in the experimental group had improved performance in the professional development by collaborative reflection through their group discussions.

The result of this study is in conformity with the research of Tigelaar, Dolmans, Meijer, Grave, and Vleuten (2008) around teachers' interactions and their collaborative reflection processes during peer meetings. They have concluded that "stimulating different ways of thinking by looking at beliefs and values that usually remain implicit is important to arrive at a better understanding of teaching and stimulate improvement. Accordingly, we might suppose that the technical advice given to the teachers during the peer sessions was based on a deeper understanding of their practice as a result of the collaborative reflections" (p.304).

Conclusions

The results provided in this study can be used as an instance for the effectiveness of collaborative reflection, and group discussions in order to enhance EFL teachers' professional development. Generally, participants of this case seemed to prefer having weekly meetings and reflections about their own learning. In such an atmosphere, most instructors could interact more than ever with their colleagues. Since cooperative learning could be assumed to retain its novel effect due to the relax environment, collaborative discussions may be effective to attract teachers. Thus, the findings can be considered to show an example of positive effect of developing interaction among participants in groups in promoting their ability to improve their professional development.

Based on the study findings, it could be stated that collaborative reflection is effective for inexperienced teachers with low levels of pedagogical knowledge. After the application of the study in different cities, teachers reported positive feedback about their working environment and started to show progress in teaching skills and became more interested in their career. Furthermore, it increases teachers' self-confidence.

Teachers and teacher trainers may devise and plan workshops and on-the-job interactive training courses which can improve teaching and pedagogical knowledge of the instructors. Furthermore, the findings of this study are also useful for teacher trainers to incorporate appropriate and practical techniques for material instruction in their existing training courses. This way, teachers themselves would be informed of different sharing knowledge strategies and will develop positive attitudes toward the incorporation of the best strategies into their conventional teaching programs. The findings of present study are hoped to provide EFL teachers with applicable and interesting strategies to present them as part of the instruction in language and professional development program.

One of the most significant concerns of the mentors, supervisors and education directors who are responsible for their teachers' professional development procedure is to find a way to encourage and justify a long-term path for them. This study can be used as an instance in their mandatory or optional development programs for EFL instructors or as 'On the Job' programs.

Implications of the Study

Based on the research findings, this study suggests the following implications to EFL teachers, teacher trainers, supervisors, mentors and education directors that are hoped to be found helpful.

First of all, teachers and teacher trainers may devise and plan workshops and interactive on the job training courses which can improve teaching skills and pedagogical knowledge of the instructors.

Furthermore, the findings of this study are also useful for teacher trainers to incorporate appropriate and practical techniques for material instruction in their existing training courses. This way, teachers themselves would be informed of different sharing knowledge strategies and will develop positive attitudes toward the incorporation of the best strategies into their conventional teaching programs.

Finally, one of the most significant concerns of the policy makers, mentors, supervisors and education directors, who are responsible for their teachers' professional development procedure is to find a way to encourage and justify a long-term path for them. In that, this study can be used as an instance in their mandatory or optional development programs for EFL instructors or as On the Job programs.

Limitations

The present study like other studies has some limitations which are out of the control of the researcher and they may influence on the results and conclusion of this study. In this study the participants were chosen from small groups of EFL teachers (using intact groups), therefore, generalizability cannot be done easily. The study concentrates mostly on pedagogical knowledge of the teachers and will not deal with their content knowledge directly. Another limitation can be related to TKT result, meaning that respondents do not always reveal their real attitudes when taking the test, which will affect the result of the study.

Based on the findings of the present study, some suggestions for further research can be presented:

(1) The same hypotheses as those here could be formulated considering online discussions of EFL teachers at different levels of pedagogical knowledge. It is worth investigating whether providing them at other cooperative and collaborative environments has any significant effect on their professional development. (2) The present study employed collaborative reflection to investigate its efficacy on EFL teachers' professional development. (3) Studies may be needed to investigate the effectiveness of the same independent variable on the learning process of students in EFL classes. (4) This study was carried out among both genders. More research could be done to see whether gender would be a significant factor or not. (5) This study was done in a language institute; more studies can be done in other contexts such as schools. (6) In this study, the researcher focused on the collaborative reflection, while more studies can be done on other types of mentoring inexperienced teachers such as using portfolios or e-portfolios.

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Appendix: A Sample of Presented Pamphlets

Mistakes or errors?!

In the study and science of languages, also known as linguistics, the nouns "error" and "mistake" ARE NOT INTERCHANGEABLE and DO NOT have the same meanings and usages.

In linguistics, it is considered important to distinguish errors from mistakes.

An "error" is seen as resulting from a learner's lack of proper language knowledge. In other words, the learner did not know the correct way.

Errors may occur repeatedly and are not recognizable by the learner.

Errors are a part of the learner's lack of understanding, and the learner does not generally consider them as errors. They are errors only from teachers' and others native speakers' perspectives. Errors cannot be self-corrected, because the learner does not know or recognize the problem.

A "mistake" occurs when the person fails to utilize a known system correctly. In other words, a native language speaker, who knows the rules, makes an incorrect statement, such as incorrect grammar. Such mistakes are generally made by both the native speakers and second language learners. However, native speakers are generally able to correct themselves quickly. Such mistakes include slip of the tongue, random ungrammatical formations.

Mistakes can be self-corrected with or without being pointed out to the speaker.

Examples

If a native English speaker or an EFL/ESL teacher says or writes, "I read many informations* today". This is a mistake because the native speaker knows that "information" is an uncountable/non-countable noun, and therefore does not have or use a plural form.

However, if an English language learner says or writes, "I read many informations* today", they have simply made an error, not a mistake, because they may not have yet learned that the noun "information" is uncountable.

Categorizing Learners' Mistakes

Learners make mistakes related to either accuracy or communication, in oral or written forms. Knowing that it is precisely through mistakes that learners learn, we need to learn to categorize them and decide which to correct no to be corrected on the spot or to be prioritize according to the teaching purposes

If we correct every single mistake student make, we may be demotivating them. We need then, to reflect and think which errors should be corrected and which should not.

Try using a simple correction code for correcting learners' written work in our class. Remember you will have to demonstrate to learners what they are meant to do and show them what the different symbols mean.

Try this question:

Question excerpt

For questions 1 to 5, match the underlined mistakes with the types of error listed A-F. Mark the correct letter (A-F) on your answer sheet.

There is one extra option which you do not need to use. **Mistakes**

- 1 Ghosts are usually saw at night*. (Error of the verb form in passive voice: seen)
- 2 I am very much like football*. (I like football very much)
- 3 Every festival is different in my country*. (Every festival is different in my country)
- 4 We must to protect the environment*. (We must protect the environment)
- 5 What time did you say you going out later? * (What time did you say you are going out later?)

Types of errors

- A unnecessary auxiliary verb
- B missing auxiliary verb
- C wrong verb form
- D wrong verb pattern

- E wrong phrasal verb
- F wrong subject-verb agreement

Question focus

This question tests your ability to recognize exactly what is incorrect when students make mistakes. It also tests your ability to categorize these errors using grammatical terminology.

What you need to know

First of all, you should identify what is wrong with each sentence. Although the question gives you some help by highlighting the general area that the mistake is in, you will still need to pinpoint the precise error yourself. It's important to do this carefully as the mistakes may at first appear to be quite similar. In this example question all the errors are to do with verbs -. It is not enough to know the errors, but also to know the reasons/causes of the errors (error/contrastive analysis) and the correct form must be provided as well.

It will also help you if you can decide what the correction should be for each sentence. By comparing the wrong sentence and the corrected sentence, you can quickly decide exactly what is at the heart of the problem.

Hence, let's start by spotting the errors and correcting them:

1. Wrong: Ghosts are usually saw at night. Corrected: Ghosts are usually seen at night.

This is a passive sentence - i.e. 'ghosts' is not the subject. Compare the active and passive - Active: " People usually see ghosts at night." Passive: "Ghosts are usually seen at night." All passive forms are made using the past participle form. The past participle of the verb *see* is *seen* (not *saw*). Therefore, we can identify the mistake as a 'wrong verb form' - the past simple verb form has been incorrectly used instead of the past participle form.

2. Wrong: I am very much like football. Corrected: I very much like football.

This is a normal Present Simple sentence. The word order is slightly unusual with *very much* coming after the pronoun rather than at the end of the sentence where it more normally appears. However, this word order is possible and isn't a mistake. The error is the addition of the auxiliary verb *am* which is completely unnecessary to the sentence structure.

3. Wrong: Every festival are different in my country. Corrected: Every festival is different in my country.

This question demonstrates how careful you need to be in selecting the best answers. There is clearly a mistake with the auxiliary verb *are / is* here - but the two answers listed that use this terminology are 'unnecessary auxiliary verb' and 'missing auxiliary verb' - neither of which are accurate descriptions of this problem. So, be careful - don't just spot that the 'auxiliary verb' is wrong and jump for one of these answers. You also need to be careful of the answer 'wrong verb form' - which is arguably correct, but is not the most precise description of the problem.

'Every festival' is a singular subject and requires a singular verb. In the incorrect sentence, the verb form is in the plural. In other words, the subject and verb do not agree.

4. Wrong: We must to protect the environment. Corrected: We must protect the environment.

Must (like *can*, *should*, *might* etc.) is a modal auxiliary verb. In sentences like this, after a modal verb we need to use the verb 'base form' (also called the 'infinitive without *to*'). This is a normal sentence pattern which could be expressed as a grammar rule like this: subject + modal verb + base form.

Wrong: What time did you say you going out later? Corrected: What time did you say you are going out later?

5. Once again, we have problems with those troublesome auxiliary verbs! In this case, the auxiliary *are* has been left out of the sentence. This may be hard to spot because the sentence is quite complex which already contains a number of verb forms

(*did, say, going*) that may help to hide the fact that one more is needed. It may be useful just to look at the end of the sentence on its own: '... you going out later'. Clearly, there is something missing here. To make the present progressive (also known as present continuous) we always need an auxiliary verb (*am, are, or is*) together with the *ing* form of the verb. In the incorrect sentence this auxiliary verb is completely missing.

So what are the answers?

Number of the question	The correct choice
1	C
2	A
3	F
4	D
5	B

The option which is not needed is E (There is no phrasal verb in the sentences)

What else should I study?

Although, this question type is often likely to be about grammar, it could be used with other language areas, such as pronunciation or vocabulary.

Jim Scrivener

How do we categorize learners' mistakes?

Mistakes show problems either with accuracy, i.e., using the correct form of the language, or with communication, i.e., sharing information clearly. Learners can make oral or written mistakes. Oral mistakes are mistakes learners make when they are speaking. They make mistakes in the accuracy of, for example, grammar, pronunciation or vocabulary or in the degree of formality of the language they use. In written language, learners may make mistakes, for example, in grammar, spelling, paragraphing, ordering

of information or pronunciation. Learners' mistakes can be errors or slips. Learners are usually able to correct slips themselves.

Key Concepts:

Oral mistakes

Look at the following examples of learners' oral mistakes. There are mistakes of accuracy (grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary) and appropriacy. Can you identify them?

1. She like this picture.* (Talking about present habit) (She likes this picture)
2. Shu t up!.* (Said to a classmate)
(it is not appropriate to insult a classmate)
3. wear my suit in the sea.*
(I wear my swimsuit in the sea)
4. Do you know where is the post office?.*
(Do you know where the post office is?)
5. The dog /bi:t/ me.* (Talking about a dog attacking someone)
(The dog bīt me)
6. What /hrepn·ed/?.*
(what happened)

Accuracy

Examples 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6 all contain examples of inaccurate language.

In Example 1 there *is* a grammar mistake. The learner has missed the third person *s* from the verb. The learner should have said 'She likes this picture'.

✓ In Example 3 there is a vocabulary mistake. The learner has used *suit* instead of *swimsuit*. The learner should have *said* 'I wear my swimsuit in the sea'.

✓ In Example 4 there is a grammar mistake. The learner has put the subject and verb in the wrong order in the indirect question. The learner should have said 'Do you know where the post office is?'

✓ In Example 5 there is a pronunciation mistake. The learner has used the long /i:/sound when she should have used the short /I/ sound. The learner should have said: The dog / bIt / me.

3. In Example 6 there is a pronunciation mistake. The learner has stressed the final syllable of the word *happened*. making it into a three-syllable word when it is in fact pronounced as a two-syllable word /happened/.

4. **Appropriacy**

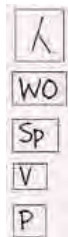
Example 2 contains an example of inappropriate language. Although Example 2 is accurate, there is a problem with appropriacy. It is rude to say 'Shut up!' in the classroom. The learner should have said 'Can you be quiet, please?', or something similar.

Written mistakes

As with oral mistakes, these can also be categorized into slips or errors in accuracy or appropriacy; or errors in communication.

✓ Have a look at this story written by a learner. In the margin there is a code written by the teacher to show different kinds of mistakes. Can you work out what the code means?

My Best friend



going to tell you about my best friend. Her name is Betty. She is tall and has I got long hair dark. Her favourite Food is chocolate and her Favourite drink is cola. Her hobbies a rewritting short stories and

looking at TV. At the weekend we go shopping in the mall and meet our friends. It's fun!

The teacher has used a correction code to indicate the types of mistakes in accuracy that the learner has made. This enables learners to make their own corrections. Here is an explanation of the letters and symbols:

The first symbol = word missing

There is a word missing in the first line. The learner has written 'Igoing' when it should be 'I am going'.

The second symbol = wrong word order

There is a word-order mistake in line 2. The sentence 'She is tall and has got long hair dark' should be 'She is tall and has got long dark hair'.

The third symbol = wrong spelling

There is a spelling mistake in line 3. The word 'writting' should be writing.

The fourth symbol = wrong vocabulary

There is a vocabulary mistake in line 4. The learner has used 'looking at' when the correct word is 'watching'.

The fifth symbol = punctuation (comma, full stop, etc)

The learner has used the wrong punctuation in line 5. The learner has written 'Its' when the correct version is 'It's'.

It makes learners lose motivation if we correct every mistake they make. We need to make sure our corrections are appropriate for the level and learning style of the learner and for the focus of the task.

There are different reasons for the mistakes that learners make. For example: □ they may not have learnt the word or the structure yet;

✓ they may be using a word or structure from their first language by mistake;

- ✓ they may have been introduced to the language but may still need more time to process it or practice using it;
- ✓ they may have great difficulty making certain sounds;
- ✓ they may have writing *or* spelling-problems in their first language;
- ✓ they may need more time to check and edit their writing.

The reason why a mistake is made influences the way we correct it.

There are different techniques we can use to correct oral and written mistakes.

Mistakes can be a very positive aspect of learning. They show us that learning is taking place and learners are taking risks with the language.

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Level Tones in the Narration of Serial Pictures by Malay ESL Learners

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Abstract

This study investigates the functions of level tones in Malay ESL learners' speech. Recorded speech samples of 30 male and 30 female Malay ESL learners narrating structured short stories were examined both auditorily and acoustically for level tone occurrences. Tone functions were identified using Brazil's (1985, 1997) Discourse Intonation approach. In general, the learners used level tones for hesitation, structural considerations and listing, displaying similarities with native speakers of British English. The tones were also used to convey new (unknown) and shared (known) information, two functions not normally associated with it in British English. In addition, there was a significant gender-based difference in the usage of level tones to

express new information and to dedicate time for structural considerations. Findings add to current understanding of tone use in second language speech and Malaysian English phonology.

Key words: Discourse Intonation, level tone, Malaysian English, ESL, gender differences

Introduction

Unlike Mandarin, Thai or other tone languages where a change in tone results in a change in the meaning of a word, changing a tone in an intonation language like English results in a change in the meaning and function of a sentence. Intonation in English is the utilization of pitch in a language-specific way to impart post-lexical meanings and it carries heavy communicative load (Hirst & Di Christo, 1998; Ladd, 1996). Miscommunication, therefore, frequently occurs when intonation is not used in the ways expected by the speech community (Gumperz, 1982; Pickering, 1999). Hewings (1995), for example, argues that native speakers of English (NS) perceive disrespect, displeasure and enmity when expected rising tones are replaced by more level and falling tones by non-native speakers of English (NNS). NS may become displeased and uninterested in talking with NNS and may consider giving up the interaction with NNS altogether if inappropriate patterns of tone usage persist (Clennell, 1997). All these point to the fact that employing appropriate intonation is important to avoid miscommunication between listeners and speakers, as suggested by Jufri, Yusri and Mantasiah (2019). Despite its importance for effective communication, intonation teaching nearly always falls by the wayside because teachers tend to correct or focus on pronunciation mistakes at the expense of ESL learners (Huyen Phuong, 2019). This study was conceived as a preliminary look into how Malay learners of English use intonation when they attempt to express themselves in the target language. More specifically, the study examined the functions of level tones in the speech of Malay ESL learners using Brazil's Discourse Intonation approach (1985; 1997). The level tone has been found to be widely used by ESL speakers in the region, for example Hong Kong English speakers (Cheng, Greaves & Warren, 2008; Setter, 2006 and Setter, Wong & Chan, 2010) and Singaporean English speakers (Deterding, 2007; Goh, 2003; 2005). It is also the most frequently utilized tone by Malaysian English (ME) speakers, regardless of their ethnicity (Goh, 2003; Hassan, 2005). Since the tone form is

ubiquitous in ME, it is pertinent to examine its communicative values in comparison to those in Standard British English. A comparison between the two varieties can highlight similarities and differences between a native and a non-native variety with findings that are likely to be useful in the context of increasing international communication in contemporary societies. There has been no comprehensive research investigating the functions of the level tone in the speech of ME speakers, especially the Malays who make up the biggest ethnic group in Malaysia. There is also evidence to suggest that gender plays a role in the acquisition of certain components of language, for example, phonology, although this is not yet properly understood (Moyer, 2016). Thus, this study focuses on the use of the level tones by a group of Malay ESL learners and compare the use of this tone by male and female learners.

To achieve these aims, the study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What functions does the level tone perform in the narration of a story by Malay ESL learners?
2. Are there significant gender-based differences in the functions of the level tone used by male and female Malay ESL learners?

Discourse Intonation

Discourse Intonation (DI) was introduced by David Brazil and is based on the intonation of Standard British English (SBE). Brazil (1997) asserts that intonation contains a discourse function and its choices have nothing to do with syntax but are related to speakers' context of interaction, which refers to an on-going judgement of understanding that speakers make when communicating with their interlocutors. The choices are based on tone, prominence, key and termination, which are four components of intonation constituting a tone unit (Brazil, 1985; 1997). The present research focuses on tone.

Tone is a change in pitch within a tone unit (Roach, 2009). A change in pitch enables speakers to produce different tone forms to perform different functions in speech. Fall, fall-rise, rise, rise-fall and level are the five major tones in SBE (Brazil, Coulthard & Johns, 1980). While the first two are unmarked and frequently used, the other three are considered marked in SBE. Brazil considers rise and rise-fall tones marked because they are used to emphasize a speaker's more dominant role over his/her interlocutor.

As for the level tone, it is perceived as marked because it highlights a speaker's detachment from his/her interlocutor. In the DI approach, fall and rise-fall, known as proclaiming tones, are used to convey new information while rise and fall-rise, also called referring tones, are used to communicate given or shared information. The level tones are used when a native speaker of SBE expresses something routine, engages in reading intonation or lists items. One typical situation in which a routine action is expressed is when a teacher orders her/his students to do something in the classroom, as shown in Brazil (1997, p.138):

// ➡ stop WRiting // // ➡ PUT your PENS down // // ➡ LOOK this WAY //

When a teacher gives commands to students with level tones such as the above, s/he orders them to perform regular actions that should be immediately understood. According to Brazil (1997, p. 136), in this situation the teacher conveys that “these are not my words addressed particularly to you on this occasion; they are rather a routine performance whose appropriateness to our present situation we both recognize.” Additionally, it is also normal for a teacher to utter something that is unfinished in her/his bid to seek response from the students, as exemplified below:

// ➡ the CAPital of ENGLand IS : : //

According to Brazil (1997, p. 138), the teacher here uses the “template technique” and a level tone is applied on the final syllable that is also lengthened (i.e. IS) as a cue for the students to supply the answer.

Level tones are also used when a speaker expresses hesitation and engages in reading intonation, as illustrated below:

// ↗ IN MY point of VIEW // [0.6s] // ➡ UHH : : // [0.38s]

// ➡ THERE are POSSible REASONS some OF maLAY students // [0.23s]

// ➡ ARE NOT PROFiCIENT in engLISH // [0.39s]

In the above extract, the speaker employs an oblique orientation by recalling and repeating words that were said by someone else. In the process, the speaker also hesitates and utters a filled pause, “*uhh*” with a level tone to allow him time to think of what to say. As he recalls and utters those words, he has to be careful to ensure the

words are repeated as accurately as possible. His caution causes him to express those words in level tones. This also causes him to shift his attention from his interlocutor to the language he is using. Brazil (1985, p. 202) refers to the resulting tone contour as the “reading intonation.”

A speaker may also use level tones in lists (Cauldwell, 2003), as illustrated below:

// ➡ i LOVE watching MOVIES // // ➡ I LOVE uh lisTENING to ENGLISH SONGS //
// ➡ i uSUALLY READ // ...

In the extract above, level tones are applied to indicate continuity. Although rising tones are always used to show incompleteness, especially for non-final items on a list, level tones can also connote incompleteness and be used for the same function (Cauldwell, 2003).

In summary, level tones can be used when a speaker hesitates, expresses routine behaviour, engages in reading intonation and lists non-final items. To perform these functions, the speaker will momentarily cease her/his focus on the interlocutor and attend to her/his language. This temporary disengagement from the listener is why Crystal (1969) and O’Connor and Arnold (1973) consider the level tone as contributing minimally to the expression of meaning.

Studies on intonation in non-native English

Although Malaysian English has a fair amount of description in the literature (e.g. Baskaran, 2005; Tan, 2013), research on the intonational features of this variety is scarce. The lack of description is even more noticeable where Malays are concerned considering they are the largest ethnic group in Malaysia (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2017) and that their intonation patterns may have a strong overall influence on Malaysian English prosody.

Gut, Pillai and Don (2013) studied how Malaysian speakers of English projected and perceived prominence in new and given information through semi-spontaneous speech and found that the speakers did not make both types of information significantly prominent using noticeable pitch although the rise tone was applied on given information. Gut and Pillai (2015) also investigated possible cross-linguistic influence in the English questions formed by Malay speakers participating in a map task and

found that the speakers had an inclination to apply the rise tone on both single words and yes-no questions with inversion while wh-questions with ‘wh’ located at the beginning and the end were used with the fall and rise tone respectively. Yap and Pillai (2017) then studied the intonation patterns of the Malays, Chinese and Indians in Malaysia asking WH and yes-no questions and found that all three races had similar patterns of intonation in forming questions as they had the tendency to start their questions with the level tone, end their Yes-No questions with rise tone and end their WH questions with both the rise and fall tones. Mat Nayan and Setter (2011) investigated the intonation patterns of ten very fluent Malay speakers of English and an international postgraduate student from China participating in a map task with a focus on stress and rising tone use. They found that the Malays had the tendency to stress their English syllables unsystematically, use tones at the end of tone units and use the rise tone the most in their speech. As they found that the rise tone was the most frequently utilized tone in ME, Mat Nayan and Setter (2016) then explored the form and function of a rising tone they called “cooperative rise,” one of the intonational features they found distinct in the speech of ten fluent Malay speakers of English and found that the tone was used in place of the fall-rise tone which, in turn, was hardly used by the ME speakers to support their interlocutors and highlight important information. Although these studies may have found that the rise tone is widely used by ME speakers, at times in ways divergent from SBE, there is another type of tone that is also extensively employed by them – the level tone (Goh, 1998; 2001; 2003; Hassan, 2005).

Goh (1998) is, to date, the only study that has comprehensively investigated the level tone usage among speakers of Singaporean and Malaysian English. Goh (1998) argues that Malaysian and Singaporean English speakers frequently use the level tone due to influence from their first languages and code-switching. Using Brazil’s model, Goh (1998; 2001) found that the level tone is associated with short tone units and is utilized in the following four situations.

1. When the information is part of a whole and temporarily incomplete, as in:

// ➡ this was the EARLIest WAY // // ➡ that PEOple HAD // // ↘ for communicating //...

The level tones are employed in the first two tone units to convey incompleteness. The use of the level tone in the above has the same function of a comma in writing. The speakers used the level tone to parse text or break a sentence into phrases and clauses.

2. In a compound phrase, as in:

// → PICture // // ↘ WRiting //
// → BALLroom // // ↘ DANcing //

In the above examples, level tones are used on the first syllables of the first nouns which results in the second syllables of the same nouns receiving the same level of prominence as the first ones. This is called a “syllable-timed” phenomenon which explains why there is no apparent prominence in the speech of Malaysian and Singaporean English speakers (Goh, 1995; 1998; 2001).

3. At the end of a sentence, as in:

// ↗ this was the EARliest WAY // // → to TELL something // // → to SOMEone //
// → an ALphabet // // → is ALso // // → a WRiting SYstem //

According to Goh, it is normal to find level tones used at the end of a sentence in the speech of Singaporean and Malaysian English speakers. However, there is no way to predict this type of use as it can also be replaced with a falling or rising tone.

4. When a speaker pauses for words, as in:

...// → THAT // // → UH // // → BOILS DOWN // // to // // → UH //

In the example, level tones are applied on fillers when a speaker is searching for the right expressions. When ideas are not forthcoming, the speaker deliberates on what to say and signals her/his wish to keep the floor by employing filled pauses like UH with a level tone. The tones are, thus, used when the information is contained in compound phrases and sentence ends as well as when speakers employ fillers to indicate hesitation. Among these functions, only signalling hesitation and incomplete information are consistent with the practice of SBE speakers. Although the research by Goh (1998; 2001) offered a lot of insight into level tone usage, her participants mostly spoke Chinese as an L1. Additionally, it was not stated whether the speech was analysed auditorily, acoustically or using both methods.

In another ESL context, a study on the usage of the level tone was conducted by Lomotey (2016) involving 200 speakers of Ghanaian English. Lomotey found that the tone was applied by the speakers on non-final items in lists as a sign of continuity, when the speakers were having difficulties expressing themselves and when they were hesitating. It was also used when they were recounting statements or shared information made by others. The findings show that Ghanaian English speakers, like ME speakers, used the level tone to express functions that are sometimes different from the ones found in SBE.

Gender-based differences in tone usage

Previous studies on the rise tone have identified gender-based differences in relation to its usage. Lakoff (1973) acknowledged that females were more inclined than males to use the rise tone in their speech. The use of the rise tone that Wells (2006) calls High Rising Terminal (HRT) was also found to be prevalent in the female speech of Southern Californian (Ritchart & Arvaniti, 2013), Canadian (Sando, 2009) and Australian English (Guy, Horvath, Vonwiller, Daisley & Rogers, 1986). Though no males were involved in Mat Nayan and Setter's (2016) study, the female Malay speakers of ME they investigated also tended to use the rise tone in their speech. No evidence has been offered for the level tone in the Malaysian variety so far. Therefore, the present study intends to fill this gap by investigating gender-related differences in level tone usage.

Methodology

Participants

60 L1-Malay learners of ESL comprising 30 males and 30 females were selected to participate in the study. The 19-year olds were students of a Malaysian university undergoing a one-year foundation programme in Teaching English as a Second Language. They are a largely homogeneous group because all were nineteen years old at the time of the study and bilingual in Malay and English. They read similar materials, watched similar TV programmes and listened to songs in both Malay and English. All of them grew up and attended schools in Malaysia and have lived in the country since birth. The learners also obtained similar grades (A or A-) for English in their Malaysian equivalent of the British O-level examination.

were determined by measuring and noting the pitch (in Hz), intensity (in dB) and duration (in seconds) of each syllable and its whole tone unit. For example, as shown in the Praat object window in Figure 1, there are three syllables in the tone unit “*they plan the*.” Firstly, the average intensity for the whole tone unit (76.19 dB) was measured. Then, the intensity for each of the syllables was measured. It was found that “*the*” had an intensity reading of 77.28 dB, while “*they*” and “*plan*” had intensity readings of 74.61 dB and 71.47 dB respectively. Since “*the*” was produced with an intensity level higher than the average intensity for the whole tone unit, it was considered a prominent syllable for the tone unit while “*they*” and “*plan*,” were considered non-prominent. Moreover, “*the*” was uttered the longest (1.2s). Finally, the straight pitch track shows that the speaker has applied a level tone on “*the*” since there was not much change in the pitch level from the moment it was uttered (116 Hz) to the moment it was ended (112 Hz). The same procedure was repeated with all the recordings to determine all prominent syllables and the type of tones in tone units.

To ensure reliability, 20% (12 recordings) of the total 60 recordings were re-analysed by a trained and experienced user of Praat who rigorously rechecked the prominent syllables and tone marking made earlier. For prominent syllables and tone marking, the inter-rater reliability scores were 90% and 95% respectively.

To identify the functions of the level tones, recordings of the narration were first transcribed. Functions of the tones were identified by analysing the context in which a level tone was used in the narration, using Brazil’s (1985, 1997) approach to intonation as the framework. Additional functions were added when the learners were found to use level tones for other functions not described by Brazil. The transcripts of the same 12 recordings and the function of the level tones were cross-checked independently by another labeller. The transcribers’ agreement for the level tone functions was 88%. Later, all transcripts were transferred into Excel spreadsheets for the calculation of frequency and percentage of the level tone functions used by the learners. Independent samples t-tests were conducted using SPSS version 13 to determine if function differences between male and female speakers were statistically significant.

Findings and discussion

Table 1 compares the functions of the level tone with the functions of the other tones used by the Malay learners in short story narration.

Table 1 Functions of the level tone and other tones used by Malay ESL learners in short story narration

	Tone	Level		Rise		Fall		Fall-rise		Total freq for each function
	Function	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	
1.	Hesitation	1580	98.3	-	-	24	1.5	3	0.2	1607
2.	New info	333	40.6	283	34.5	199	24.2	6	0.7	821
3.	Shared info	77	33.5	126	54.8	20	8.7	7	3	230
4.	Self-correction	21	84	1	4	3	12	-	-	25
5.	Listing	11	64.7	6	35.3	-	-	-	-	17
6.	Elaborating	-	-	258	100	-	-	-	-	258
7.	Statement	-	-	-	-	24	100	-	-	24
8.	Definite	-	-	-	-	3	100	-	-	3
9.	WH-Quest	-	-	-	-	1	100	-	-	1
10.	Surprise	-	-	-	-	1	100	-	-	1
	TOTAL	2022		674		275		16		2987

As shown in Table 1, 2987 complete tone units were identified from the speech of the Malay ESL learners. Of the total number of tone units, 2022 were assigned the level tone, making it the most frequently used tone in their speech. It can also be seen that 674 and 275 of the tone units were assigned the rise and fall tones respectively, making them the second and third most utilized tones by the learners. Only on 16 occasions was the fall-rise tone used in their speech while the rise-fall tone was not used at all. Therefore, these findings are in conformity with those of previous studies on L1-Chinese ME speakers in that the level and rise tones were widely used while the fall-rise and rise-fall tones were scarcely so (Goh, 1995; 1998; 2001; 2003; 2005). Table 1 also shows that the learners used the level tone the most when they were hesitant as the tone was applied 98.3% of the times in this manner. In comparison with the level tone, the fall and fall-rise tones were only used 1.5% and 0.2% of the times respectively by the learners when they were hesitant while none of the rise tone was used for this function. This shows that the learners were more inclined to utilize the level tone when they were in doubt and it is a tendency also observed among NS of English. Apart from hesitation, the level tone was also produced 40.6% of the times by the learners to convey new information. In comparison, the learners only used the rise, fall and fall-rise tones

34.5%, 24.2% and 0.7% of the times respectively for the same function. This shows that the learners tended to convey new information using the level tone instead of the fall tone, which is also the practice of NS of SBE. Additionally, the learners also used the level, rise, fall and fall-rise tones in 33.5%, 54.8%, 8.7% and 3% of the times respectively when they were conveying shared information. Although the rise tone was most frequently used to convey shared information, which is consistent with the practice of NS, it is important to note that the level tone was not infrequently used by the learners to fulfil this function. They also employed the level tone to correct their language mistakes and list items 84% and 64.7% of the times respectively, making them the two most frequently used tones for the functions. In comparison, the rise and fall tones were utilised once (4%) and thrice (12%) respectively to self-correct their speech and the rise tone was used six times (35.3%) to list items. Albeit at much lower frequencies, the use of the level tone to perform these two functions conforms to the practice of NS of English.

The following illustrates the level tones when one of the speakers (M6) was hesitant and wanted to communicate new information:

1. // → SO : : // [0.4s] // → ONE NIGHT // [0.48s] // → TWO teenaGERS : : //
2. // → TWO MISchievous teeNAgers // → UH : : // [1s] // → UH // [0.14s]
3. // → coVERED THEMSELVES a white BLANKET // [0.46s] // → AND : : //
4. // → they HIDE // [0.2s] // → beHIND a TOMB // [0.6s] // → CAUSE // [0.27s]
5. // → they'RE thinKING to // [0.3s] // → DO a PRANK on SOMEone //

Figure 2 Level tone in hesitation and new information

In the above excerpt, there are thirteen complete tone units that were assigned a level tone. Overall, the example indicates that he was having problems expressing his ideas smoothly as there were instances of hesitation. For example, in the first line, he began his speech by lengthening the vowel in “So.” The vowel lengthening was repeated in the last syllable of “teenagers” at the end of the third tone unit in line 1 and in “and” located in the second tone unit in line 3. The vowels were lengthened probably because the speaker needed to have more time to think of what to say. The silent pause lasting 0.4s after “So” may also indicate that the speaker needed more time as vowel lengthening did not give him sufficient time to think. At the beginning of the first tone

unit in line 2, the speaker repeated the word “*teenagers*.” Additionally, he used filled pauses “*Uh*” twice and these were followed by silent pauses. The filled pauses were expressed with a level tone, which is commonly regarded as a hesitation marker (Cauldwell, 2013). Filled pauses such as “*Uh*” and “*Uhm*,” according to Levelt (1989), Clark (1994), Fox Tree (1995) and Acton (2011), are also common before silent pauses in native English since, in spontaneous speech, speakers may experience complications in planning and conveying their thoughts. The vowel lengthening process, repetition, pauses and filled pauses used by the speaker suggest that he was hesitating as he struggled to express his ideas. Most importantly, the utilization of the level tone to express hesitation in the present study is consistent with the practice of SBE speakers. Outside British English, the same speech pattern was also found among Ghanaian ESL speakers (Lomotey, 2016).

The excerpt also shows that the learner had the tendency to use the level tone to convey new information. The tone is used on the final syllable of “*blanket*” in the first tone unit (line 3) and on the first syllable of “*someone*” in the last tone unit (line 5), although the speaker was communicating the information for the first time. The 0.46s silent pause occurring after “*blanket*” and “*someone*” indicates that he has finished conveying the new information and wanted to express another idea. The level tone used for “*tomb*” in line 4, could be used for both imparting new information and hesitating. He appeared to experience a momentary coding problem and needed the 0.6s pause following the word to think of what to say before continuing to complete his idea. M6’s use of the level tone on “*blanket*”, “*someone*” and “*tomb*” is in line with Goh’s (2001) assertion that Malaysian and Singaporean English speakers tend to use this tone at the end of their utterances. The level tone use to communicate new information suggests that Malay speakers utilize the tone differently from their SBE counterparts. As pointed out by Brazil *et al.* (1980), new information is conveyed using falling tones. However, the Malay speakers are not alone as Ghanaian and Singaporean English speakers also used the same tone for this function, as discovered by Lomotey (2016) and Goh (2001).

Apart from hesitation and new information, the level tone is also used by the Malay learners to communicate shared information, as seen in the following excerpt from the speech of a female learner (F15):

1. // ↗ SO IN THE picTURE // [0.6s] // ➡ we have two CHILDREN // [0.18s]
2. // ➡ a BOY // // ➡ and a GIRL // [0.6s] // ➡ UHM : : //
3. // ➡ PLANTING A seed or UH // // ↗ a TREE // [0.7s]
4. // ➡ SO the boy and the GIRL // // ➡ ALWAYS COME and PLAY // [1s]
5. // ➡ THEY look so hapPY : : // [0.3s]

Figure 3 Level tone in shared information

In the first and second tone units (line 2), the speaker described “*a boy*” and “*a girl*” as the two children she saw planting a tree. The words ‘*boy*’ and ‘*girl*’ are new information because it is the first time they were mentioned. Then in the first tone unit (line 4), F15 mentioned ‘*the boy*’ and ‘*the girl*’, referring to the same individuals, using a level tone. The level tone was utilized to communicate shared information. This is certainly different from the norm of the native speakers who only use rising tones to convey shared information (Brazil *et al.*, 1980). The usage of a level tone in “*girl*” in the example shows that the Malays, like most other Malaysian and Singaporean English speakers, tend to utilize the level tone when the information is part of a whole and temporarily incomplete (Goh, 2001). Similarly, Ghanaian English speakers were also found to use the level tone to convey shared information in their speech (Lomotey, 2016).

Level tones were also used by the Malay learners to correct their own language mistakes, as illustrated in the following examples from two female learners, F23 and F27.

1. // ➡ THE WOman AND the dog WAS : : // // ➡ hiDING // [0.2s]
 2. // ➡ WERE Hiding // [0.7s]
-
1. // ➡ SHE : : // [3.6s] // ➡ she apPROACH // [0.28s]
 2. // ➡ she apPROACHES // [0.27s]

Figure 4 Level tone in self-corrections

The first two lines at the top are the excerpt of speech made by F23 while the bottom two are the excerpt of speech made by F27. In the above examples, both self-corrected themselves after becoming aware of their mistakes. In the first example, F23 initially said “*was*” and wrongly used stress on the second syllable of “*hiding*,” making this syllable more prominent. Then, in the next tone unit, she corrected herself by replacing “*was*” with “*were*” and used stress correctly on the first syllable of “*hiding*”. In the second example, F27 uttered “*she approach*” and corrected it to ‘*she approaches*’. Both examples show that the Malay learners used a level tone in correcting their language mistakes. In these examples, they appeared to focus on the words to ensure accuracy. As learners of English, it may be difficult to speak spontaneously for long periods without committing mistakes. Although Lomotey (2016) did not find any trace of language mistake correction using the level tone in Ghanaian English speakers, there were instances of retelling in her study in which it was utilized. This was caused by speakers changing their focus from their interlocutors to the language to ensure what they said resembled what they wanted to quote. In other words, when the focus shifts from interlocutors to language, speakers no longer make use of the fall and rise tones but adopt the level tone in order to be careful with their speech. Clearly this is the reason why the Malay learners opted to use the level tone when correcting their mistakes. Moreover, they had no interlocutors to speak to as they narrated the stories individually.

Finally, the Malay learners also used the level tone when they wanted to construct a list in their short stories, as depicted in the following utterances by a male student, M20:

1. // ➡ there’s a BOY NAMED : : // [0.54s] // ➡ newTON // [1.3s]
2. // ➡ UHH // [0.14s] // ➡ he likes to WANDER : : // [0.8s]
3. // ➡ a LOT // [1.2s] // ➡ he likes to GO to the PLAYGROUNDS : : // [0.12s]
4. // ➡ to the FIELD // [0.58s] // ➡ the MALL // [0.8s]

Figure 5 Level tone in a list

The excerpt shows that the speaker began to construct a list by using a level tone on the second syllable of “*playgrounds*” in line 3. M20 continued by using a level tone on the other two items “*field*” and “*mall*” in the next two tone units (line 4). According to Bowler and Parminter (1992, p.30), “The intonation always goes down on the last item

and up on all the items that come before the last”. However, except for the last item which requires a falling tone to indicate completeness, the others can also be assigned a level tone to signal continuity (Cauldwell, 2003). The speaker used the level tone on all the items in his list. Therefore, except for the last item, the use of level tones on non-final items conforms to the norms of SBE. The same practice was also discovered by Lomotey (2016) with Ghanaian English speakers.

Generally, the level tone was used when the speakers hesitated or felt inadequate during narration due to difficulties in expressing ongoing thought. Because they were asked to narrate the stories spontaneously and were given little time to study the pictures, the learners faced occasional difficulties expressing themselves and ended up with repetitions, vowel lengthening and instances of silent and filled pauses. Repetitions, vowel lengthening, silent and filled pauses allow speakers time to re-organize their thoughts and plan what to say. Native English speakers may use the same strategies when they struggle for ideas in spontaneous speech (Trouvain, 2003).

Level tones were also used to express new information. Goh (2001) found that Malaysian and Singaporean English speakers used level tones at the end of their utterances. Most of the new information in this study was located at the end of their utterances. The frequent use of the level tone on new information, coupled with the absence of falling tones that usually suggest certainty, finality and definiteness (Roach, 2009), gave the impression that the speakers, especially the male ones, lack conviction when conveying new information. Lomotey (2016) who found that Ghanaian English speakers conveyed new information by using more level tones than falling tones suggested that the speakers probably gave more attention to the text than their interlocutors. In the present research, since there were no interlocutors, the learners must have focussed solely on the language, hence the increased use of level tones in conveying new information.

When an idea was incomplete as seen in the speech of F15, a level tone was also used. The tone unit // **SO** the boy and the **GIRL** // is incomplete. Syntactically, the tone unit is a noun phrase that functions as the subject for the sentence “*So the boy and the girl always come and play.*” It is a given piece of information. Although shared information is usually expressed with a rising tone in SBE, it is possible to use the level tone when the idea is incomplete (Cauldwell, 2003). Goh (2001) found that Malaysian

and Singaporean English speakers use the level tone when the information is part of a whole and temporarily incomplete, a phenomenon that can be attributed to their tendency not to deaccent information that is predictable and already known (Deterding, 1994). Speakers of Ghanaian English were also found to use the level tone in places of the fall and rise tones, which are usually utilized in SBE to convey new and shared information respectively.

When the Malay learners used the level tone and paused for thought between items on a list, they may have simultaneously used it to convey hesitation and new information. In other words, the tone may have a double function. For example, as seen in the tone units produced by M20, *playgrounds*, *field* and *mall* are all items in a list that also represent new information. Therefore, the level tones in listing may also be used to convey new information. Deterding (1994) pointed out his difficulty in judging whether such pauses by Singaporean English speakers were signals for thought between items or hesitation, and suggested that they were a combination of both. In the present study, listing, hesitation, thinking for ideas and conveying new information may have also occurred simultaneously.

The nature of the task requiring the learners to narrate their stories individually may have also prompted them to speak with the level tone more frequently as the task was no longer interesting after a period of time. Most of the narratives seem to lack creativity. They were merely descriptions of characters in the pictures. The fact that the task was a monologue is another reason for the overuse of the level tone. The rise tone, for example, is marked and usually used to emphasize a difference in the social status between a dominant speaker and a hearer when the former conveys shared information to the latter (Brazil, 1997). The absence of an interlocutor in the task appears to have reduced the possibility of using proclaiming and referring tones since the learners did not have the need to exert their dominance or “exploit” their social roles that can enhance interaction (Goh, 2001).

The use of the level tone can also be attributed to the learners’ first language, Malay, and this possibility must not be discounted as NNS of English have the tendency to apply their L1 features to English (Suntornsawet, 2019). Being a syllable-timed language, equal stress is applied to all syllables in an utterance in Malay (Goh, 2001). Therefore, when the learners applied Malay intonation to English, which is a stress-

timed language, all syllables were given the same level of prominence which resulted in the production of mostly level tones in their speech. Finally, the lack of proficiency in English could have also prompted the use of the level tone (Goh, 1994) given the challenge posed by speaking spontaneously.

Gender and the use of level tones

Table 2 Level tone functions performed according to gender

Functions	Male		Female	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Hesitation	752	72	828	84.7
*New info	222	21.3	111	11.3
*Shared info	43	4.1	34	3.5
Self-correction	18	1.7	3	0.3
Listing	9	0.9	2	0.2
TOTAL	1044	100	978	100

The table above shows that, of the 2022 tone units assigned the level tone by the learners, 1044 were produced by the males while the remaining 978 were made by the females. This shows that the males used more level tones than their female counterparts. The table also shows that 72% and 84.7% of the level tones used by the males and females respectively were when they were hesitating. The male learners used 21.3% of the tones to convey new information while the females did so for only 11.3% of the total. 4.1% of the tones were employed by the males to convey shared information while the females did so for only 3.5% of the total. 1.7% of the tone usage by the males was to correct language mistakes while the females used 0.3% of the total for the same function. 0.9% of the tone usage was used by the males for listing items while 0.2% of the tone was used by the females for the same function.

An independent samples t-test revealed that there are no statistically significant gender-based differences in the use of the level tone when the learners were hesitating, conveying shared information and constructing a list, as shown in Table 3. However, the differences between gender are statistically significant in the use of the level tone for communicating new information and making self-corrections. Both tables 2 and 3 show that the males had more tendency to convey new information using the level tone.

Table 3 The average (M), standard deviation (SD) and p value of the level tone functions according to gender

Function	Gender	N	M	SD	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>
Hesitating	Male	30	25.07	11.68	-0.821	0.415
	Female	30	27.60	12.21		
*New info	Male	30	7.40	3.31	4.639	0.000
	Female	30	3.70	2.86		
*Shared info	Male	30	1.43	1.81	0.716	0.477
	Female	30	1.13	1.41		
Self-correction	Male	30	0.60	0.86	3.017	0.004
	Female	30	0.10	0.31		
Listing	Male	30	0.30	1.06	1.144	0.257
	Female	30	0.07	0.37		

Upon further inspection, it was found that the females in this study tended to convey new information using the rise tones instead of the fall tone which is preferred in SBE. This is not surprising considering that the rise tone is prevalent in female speech (Lakoff, 1973; Richart & Arvaniti, 2013; Sando, 2009). There is evidence that, along with the level tone, the rise tone is also common in Hong Kong English (Cheng, Greaves & Warren, 2008; Setter, Wong & Chan, 2010). However, there was no information given on gender differences.

The male learners also used more level tones than the females in self-corrections. This, however, does not mean that the males were more prone to making language mistakes. The females may have decided not to correct their mistakes by repeating although they were aware of the mistakes made. It is also possible the females may have not been aware of the errors made. The tendency for the males to use the level tone in correcting errors is in conformity with the practice of SBE speakers in this regard. As stated before, Ghanaian English speakers also used the level tone when reoffering information, which was likely caused by their focus shifting from co-interlocutors to language. In attempting to correct one's own mistakes, attention is placed on form and the learner is more careful with his speech to ensure accuracy.

Pedagogical implications

Overall, the results suggest that the learners, regardless of gender, were neither confident nor comfortable narrating their short stories spontaneously in English, leading the level tone to be utilized very extensively in their speech. The results also reveal gender-based idiosyncrasies in conveying new information as the males and females were more inclined to use the level and rise tones respectively for the function, a practice that does not resemble that of NS. As previous studies have documented the preference among females NS, especially teenagers, to use the rise tone in their speech, what the findings suggest is that while male learners were more inclined to produce more level tones when experiencing discomfort or uncertainty, female learners resorted to more of both rise and level tones under similar circumstances. Despite these differences, the results also indicated the learners' converging inclination to use the level tone to correct their speech and present items in lists, just as NS do. To suggest that the speech of the learners in English was monotonous, however, is untenable since the other tones were also used to various degrees. Nevertheless, this finding also proves that they were not able to use proper intonation when speaking spontaneously in English, although it is an understandable situation considering they were ESL learners.

As learners, they may make mistakes in pronunciation including intonation, much like in vocabulary and grammar. Teachers should, therefore, make the effort to address mistakes related to intonation too. Since the level tone was widely used in the speech of the learners and is rife in the speech of ME speakers, learners should strive to engage in available English discourses outside their classrooms where they tend to be more spontaneous and natural. Additionally, teachers should also encourage spontaneous, oral communication and place equal emphasis on both suprasegmental and segmental aspects of speech in English lessons. Occasionally, teachers should also highlight the functions that all the five major tones in English play so that learners are aware of the importance of using the right intonation in speech. To reduce production of misapplied level tones in ME, teachers may spend more time training their students to stress certain strong syllables and deaccent weak syllables in words according to their word categories so that not all syllables are made prominent and learners are aware that nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs as well as simple and complex words are not stressed the same way. Moreover, the learners could also be taught about prominence and to stress only certain syllables in content words that are polysyllabic and not to stress function

words unless they carry important information or meaning. Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting wide application of technology in teaching and learning today, teachers should also use various online platforms to expose their learners to intonation by communicating with NS of English and demonstrating to them the significance of intonation in speech. Most importantly, as practice is crucial, teachers should exercise a more student-centred approach to enable learners to have more opportunities to speak or use intonation in English language lessons.

Conclusion

In conclusion, like native speakers of English, level tones were used by the Malay learners to express hesitation, correct their mistakes in the language and list items on a list. The level tone was also used for some functions not normally associated with it in SBE like conveying new and given information. Factors like language proficiency, task type, and probably L1 transfer may explain the frequent use of the level tone. There were also gender-based differences in the usage of the level tone by the learners as the males were more inclined than the females to convey new information and correct their language using this tone. Like Goh (1994, 1998, 2001), the present study found that the functions of the level tone in the speech of the Malay learners are more varied than those in SBE. Some of the functions conform to those of SBE while others are different. This study demonstrates that the level tone is not one that makes little contribution to the expression of meaning, as claimed by Crystal (1969) and O'Connor and Arnold (1973). The Malay speakers in this study clearly used the level tone for a variety of functions including those associated with falling and rising tones. For more conclusive evidence on the usage of the level tone by Malay speakers and differences in tone usage based on gender, future research should investigate the use of the level tone by Malay speakers in performing a given task in both Malay and English.

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Baker, W. (2017). Culture and Identity through English as a Lingua Franca: Rethinking Concepts and Goals in International Communication. Walter De Gruyter: Berlin. Pp. 284.

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Bioprofile

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Baker's book is a helpful resource for English language teachers who teach in English as a lingua franca (ELF) contexts. Seidlhofer (2011) defines ELF as “any use of English among speakers of different first languages for whom English is the communicative medium of choice, and often only option” (p.7). According to this definition, the use of English is negotiated as a lingua franca whenever the native language of at least one of the speakers is not English. This includes native/non-native and non-native/non-native speakers of English to make sure the communicative message is conveyed. Since language and culture are interconnected and cannot be separated, the author of this book sets the tone for intercultural communication in contexts where English is used as a lingua franca.

The book begins by introducing the concept of 'ELF'. It also differentiates between the concept of World Englishes, when the variety of English is connected to a specific nation or geographical area such as Singlish or Chinglish, and ELF, which entails the interaction of people who use different varieties of the English language. In chapter 2, the author acknowledges the difficulty of defining 'intercultural communication' and prefers to characterize it instead. The chapter also explains that cross-cultural communication is concerned with comparing different cultures, whereas intercultural

communication refers to the negotiation of cultures in direct interaction. Unlike intercultural communication, which focuses on the cultural differences between the users of the language, ELF research emphasizes what is shared. Against some other scholars, Baker believes that ELF communication is never neutral in the sense that every participant will bring their cultural background whether consciously or unconsciously.

The third chapter sets the background of what culture is. Then, the chapter introduces the concepts of 'nation', and 'globalization' to refute the claim that the world is now a small village and suggests that it had, prior to covid-19, become a web of interconnected villages. Because language and culture are inseparable, losing a language, as a result of linguistic imperialism, has been viewed to eventually entail the loss of culture it is associated with. The next chapter goes further to discuss how people build their cultural identity as a process. Therefore, in intercultural communication, as the author argues, ELF users construct their fluid self to be able to communicate as multicultural and multilingual participants.

In Chapter 5, the author suggests that unlike 'linguistic competence', which is the norm for English as a Second Language, ELF learners should seek communicative competence, thus breaking with the native speaker model myth. For this purpose, the author claims that ELF learners should be able to understand their own culture and appreciate otherness so that they can become critical of their practices to allow the communication to be smooth. Intercultural awareness starts with understanding one's own culture, according to Baker.

Chapter 6 brings the discussion to English language teaching practices. The author recognizes the limitations English language teachers face because they have to follow assigned curricula. This is why even when teachers are informed of the importance of cultural and intercultural awareness and that the language classroom is the perfect setting to develop intercultural citizens, they leave it in the bottom of their list. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) can be very helpful to integrate intercultural awareness; especially when the teachers themselves have multicultural/multilingual backgrounds. The author offers resources for exploring culture(s) through learning material, media, arts, and other media.

To put theory into practice, the author dedicates chapter 7 for a study in Thailand. Although Thailand is officially reported as a monolingual country, there are other languages and varieties over there and ELF plays a major role in society and education. 31 university students and 6 teachers participated in this mixed-method study. The study aimed to test whether intercultural communication can be used in ELF teaching materials and for this purpose a course was designed and offered as optional. The results showed that the strands of intercultural awareness can be translated in the classroom although the results of the quantitative data about participants' attitudes toward intercultural awareness slightly changed between the beginning and the end of the course.

Chapter 8 is the conclusion of the book. It restates most of the ideas cover earlier. However, Baker's argument seems to exclude native/ non-native interaction at certain points in the book. Native speakers have to adjust their language when they speak to non-native speakers and, thus, even native speakers should be able to use ELF in their international/ intercultural communication.

The book is a valuable resource for teachers of English to speakers of other languages. It introduces the concepts of culture, intercultural communication / awareness, identity, and how to integrate them in ELF contexts.

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**Hale, C. C. & Wadden, P. (2019). Teaching English at Japanese Universities: A New Handbook (Eds.).
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Teaching English at Japanese Universities: A New Handbook aims to act as a guide for English language teachers currently working, or aiming to find employment in, Japanese higher education. Although it has some value for Japanese staff, the *Handbook* is primarily designed for non-Japanese teachers. The book itself is an update of the original handbook (Wadden, 1993), and consists of contributions from over thirty experienced educators, all of whom are familiar with the Japanese university context.

The twenty-three chapters are divided into four sections: the setting, the courses, the classroom, and the workplace. This division allows the *Handbook* to cover a wide range of issues, from practical teaching strategies and classroom cultures to other key issues, such as workplace conditions, culture-specific complexities, and the perception of "native speaker" English in Japan.

The first part of the book acts as a general overview of the setting and an entry point to working in a Japanese university. Following an introduction, part one contains clear and detailed advice on seeking employment, both part-time and full-time. This advice includes a walkthrough of the various stages, from locating job opportunities, to completing applications and interviews. Based on the authors' personal experiences, this section serves to clarify the often-difficult issue of securing a teaching position at

a Japanese university. The final chapter of part one adds a much-needed element of cultural understanding. By providing an insight into the attitudes and mindsets of Japanese colleagues at university, the chapter aims to highlight and alleviate potential sources of confusion or friction.

Part two, “The courses”, focusses on teaching pedagogy and examines a range of class types and aims common to the Japanese university context. The first four chapters are each dedicated to the teaching of one of the four main skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, with a fifth chapter looking at vocabulary. Although these areas are applicable to a wide range of situations, the chapters here include advice and information specific to the Japanese university context. Furthermore, subsequent chapters focus on areas which are, or are becoming, increasingly prominent in Japanese higher education. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) as well as English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI), are examined together, whilst technology and the issue of homework and evaluation each also receive a chapter. The inclusion of these latter sections provides information relevant to the modern situation.

The third part, “The classroom”, mostly examines the learners themselves. One chapter provides an intriguing insight into the identities of Japanese learners, including common interactional styles, whilst a second considers the key issue of motivation. Another chapter expands on this by analysing the relationship and dynamic between the learner and educator within Japanese universities. Finally, a section on official language policy, as laid out by MEXT, the Japanese Ministry of Education, is included. Although brief, this chapter serves to highlight some of the considerations which influence the Japanese education system, as well as the direction of any future developments.

The final part, “The workplace” considers a range of other issues connected to working in Japanese higher education. One chapter analyses the male-female dynamics within Japanese universities. Two others examine the various difficulties facing both non-native English teachers and more specifically Japanese teachers of English, with the writers including their own personal experiences on these points. Providing a different perspective, a further section reports on the situation of non-Japanese administrators from two educators who fulfilled this role. Usefully, one chapter aims to explain, as simply as possible, the complicated area of Japanese labour laws, whilst

the final segment, presented as a transcript of a conversation, revisits the possible challenges which face staff in a Japanese university.

Teaching English at Japanese Universities: A New Handbook is an excellent resource for educators interested in the Japanese university context. Equally suitable for teachers currently employed, or for those who are considering a role, within Japanese higher education, the primary strength of this book is in the range of topics that are discussed and the clarity with which each is presented. The book itself is concise, consisting of only two hundred and twenty pages. However, this space is effectively filled with practical examples of teaching strategies, useful comments on Japanese learners and their educational contexts, and the discussion of other issues of importance for educators.

Written by experienced teaching professionals with a strong knowledge of their chosen area, the information provided is surprisingly detailed. Although, considering the broad scope of topics included, not as much depth is achieved as would be the case if the focus were on a specific issue. However, the various contributors are generally able to provide an informative overview of a multifaceted context. The short length of each chapter perhaps helps to make this more accessible to readers than may otherwise be the case. Overall, the *Handbook* fully achieves its stated aims of providing accessible, useful and sufficiently detailed information on a range of topics and issues, which would be of great benefit to those educators wishing to obtain, or continue within, an English teaching role in a Japanese university.

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