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Foreword

Hamdallah Alhusban and Saad Torki present a novel methodology to measure English language textbook readability in the first article entitled "*An Original Computerized and Web-based Method for Assessing Textbook Readability via Lexical Coverage*". The authors used computer and web-based tools to build a lexical corpus. They also designed software to compare lexical coverage across seven English language textbooks currently used in the Algerian middle and secondary schools. The purpose was to determine whether learner's lexical coverage was at the textbook's readability level (Independent reading level), above it (Instructional reading level), or below it (Frustrational reading level). One of the merits of the study is that it proposes a new method of assessing readability by relying on learner's lexical coverage, and it suggests a methodological procedure to measure it.

In the second article entitled "*The Effects of Cooperative Learning versus Traditional Teaching on Students' Achievement: A Case Study*" by Sami Al-Mubireek measures the effectiveness of cooperative learning method (CLM) compared to traditional approaches. Participants in this study are students enrolled in the preparatory year program at Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University, Saudi Arabia. His study found that CLM is effective as it boosts students' confidence, gives learners an opportunity to review ideas from their peers and shy away their hesitation. Further, this study recommends implementing CLM, training faculty members based on the course's and students' needs and enhancing students' interaction with one another.

In the third paper, authors Maribel N. Zipagan, Jin-Young Tak and Eun Joo Kwak, in their paper entitled *"A Speech-based Probe of Korean EFL Learners' Use of Metadiscourse Markers"* analyze metadiscourse in the speech production of 57 Korean L2 learners purposively chosen relative to their language proficiency. Their results suggest two significant findings. First, the quantitative analysis of metadiscourse frequency reveals the interactional category's superiority over the interactive metadiscourse, which implies that the Korean L2 learners are more interested in interacting with the listeners than organizing discourse and asserting their role as speakers. Secondly, the quantitative and qualitative analyses suggest that the logical connectives, relational

markers, hedges, and personal markers are metadiscourse features that significantly predict Korean L2 speakers' speech proficiency.

The fourth paper entitled *"Mindsets of High school Students in English Language Learning"* is authored by Jeffrey Dawala Wilang of Thailand. Using a modified mindset survey, data from 467 students enrolled in regular programs in public schools in Bangkok was analyzed quantitatively. The authors Findings indicated that students have a growth mindset on their own ability, others' success, criticisms, obstacles, and challenges. However, they tend to have a fixed mindset about putting effort into learning English. Similar to previous studies, there was no significant difference found between girls' and boys' mindsets. The research showed that increased attention on research about high school students' mindsets in EFL settings is more necessary than ever and that future research could also consider qualitative paradigms to gain deeper insights into this scholarship.

In their paper, *"Stroke Effect of English Teachers on the Learners' L2 Motivational Self-System",* authors Samaneh Naderi, Muhammad Ajmal, Muhammed Salim Keezhatta and Sohaib Alam argue, based on Dörnyei's Theory of L2 Motivational Self-System, that a language teacher should be trained in other related disciplines to enhance the whole quality of the learners' life by considering his affective, mental, psychological, social and ethical aspects, and believe that a language teacher should promote the learners' motivational feature by appropriately using different kinds of strokes in educational settings.

In the next paper by A. K. Penera, *"Morphosyntax Variations of the Surigaonon Language in North-eastern, Mindanao, Philippines"*, the author examines the linguistic usages of Morphosyntax Variations of the Surigaonon Language in North-eastern, Mindanao, Philippines. Growing interest in the study of language variation is evident in current linguistics. It is evident that its inclusion has already gone beyond being a mere "footnote in linguistic description" (Holyk, p. 17) which may have been driven by Labov, Cedergren, and Sankoff's notion that variation is intrinsic in the system of a language.

The research paper entitled *"EFL Teachers' Assessment Practices of Students' Interactions in Online Classes: An Activity Theory Lens"* by Abdullah Alshakhi, the author investigates how EFL

teachers assess students' participation and interaction in virtual classrooms. The author looked at the issues and problems students encounter and makes recommendations for a fairer and more democratic style of assessing students.

The final paper in this edition is penned by Mohammad Awad Al-Dawoody Abdulaal from the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Port Said University, Egypt. The author revisits a long-standing theory proposed by Prof. Krashen many decades ago, and provides new light on what was ground breaking theory some 40 years ago. The researcher aims at investigating and revisiting the impact of Krashen's input hypothesis on L2 output. Based on Krashen's theories, and proposes the 'homogeneity hypothesis' as an extension to the input hypothesis. Homogeneity hypothesis states that the linguistic input given to L2 learners should be not only comprehensible but also homogeneous. It also should meet the learners' current rather than next level.

An Original Computerized and Web-based Method for Assessing Textbook Readability via Lexical Coverage

Hamdallah A. Alhusban

Department of English Language, Deanship of Preparatory Year & Supporting Studies, Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University, Saudi Arabia

halhusban@iau.edu.sa

Saad Torki

Department of English Language, Deanship of Preparatory Year & Supporting Studies, Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University, Saudi Arabia

ttsaad@iau.edu.sa

Bio-profiles:

Hamdallah A. Alhusban has an M.Phil. in English and Applied Linguistics from the University of Cambridge and an MA (Hons) in Translation and Interpreting from Heriot Watt University in Edinburgh. Hamdallah has taught English/EFL in Britain, Saudi Arabia, and Oman. His primary research interests are EFL speech production and perception, corpus linguistics and English-Arabic simultaneous interpretation.

Dr. Saad Torki is associate professor of Applied Linguistics, has been involved in ELT for over four decades at all graduate and postgraduate levels. He taught the four skills, Linguistics, Literature, Phonetics, and Methodology. His scholarly interests include vocabulary teaching, reading, readability, Phonetics, Phonology, teacher training and material development.

Abstract

This paper presents a novel methodology to determine textbook readability. The method mainly relies on students' lexical coverage to determine the readability level of textbooks, taking into consideration that readability depends primarily on vocabulary knowledge and that it is a function of lexical coverage in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The appropriateness of the reading material used is critical. If it is inappropriate, the chances that learners understand it are

substantially jeopardized. This study examined seven EFL textbooks currently in use in Algerian public schools to determine whether learners' lexical coverage is at the textbook readability level (Independent Reading Level), above it (Instructional Reading Level), or below it (Frustrational Reading Level). It adopted a multi-instrument computer-based approach. Results showed that all the textbooks have low lexical coverage and readability, which puts them at the frustrational level. Moreover, it was found that 4 out of 7 textbooks demonstrated a discrepancy in terms of lexical coverage as the rate of common vocabulary across all textbooks was very low. Comparing the lexical coverage of the seven textbooks to standard vocabulary lists revealed that students are not learning sufficient, useful, and appropriate vocabulary.

Keywords: *computer and web-based tools, lexical coverage, reading comprehension, readability, textbook evaluation*

1.   Introduction

1.1   Rationale

One of the most recurring problems faced by teachers of English as a Foreign/Second Language (EFL/ESL) is to know whether a particular piece of writing is likely to be comprehensible to their students. Indeed, a daily concern for frontline teachers resides in the question of whether: the level of the instructional reading material is appropriate for learners or not.

Assessing the instructional material to determine whether it is at the student's instructional level is of paramount importance as it serves to build more effective programs. Despite the introduction of technology in classrooms, the textbook, be it a soft or a hard copy, remains a cornerstone of most curricula. It constitutes the most essential aid, and maybe the only one in some cases, in the hands of the teacher and the learner even at university level (Wissing, Blignaut & Van den Berg, 2016). For this reason, textbooks and text difficulty have then been the topic of a substantial body of research studies (Chall, Bissex, Conard & Harris-Sharples, 1996; Chambliss & Calfee, 1998; Alexander & Jetton, 2000; Linderholm, Everson, Mischinski, Crittenden & Samuels, 2000; Goldman & Rakestraw, 2000; Graves & Graves, 2003; Xia, Kochmar, & Briscoe, 2016; Britton & Black, 2017; Nurhamsih, 2017; Salehi & Naserieh, 2013; Odo, 2018; Turkben, 2019; Putra, 2019; Bansiong & Wan, 2019; Roberts, Abdul, & Effendi, 2020; Calafato & Gudim, 2020; Gül, Özay Köse & Diken, 2020; Liu, 2020) . The insightful penetrations of these findings confirmed

Vygotsky's idea of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978), which pointed out the importance of matching task demand and student level as well as Krashen's Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1989). In terms of reading, this principle reflects Betts' concepts of instructional (Betts, 1946), frustration, and independent levels.

As far as English language teaching is concerned, selecting an appropriate reading passage is critical. If the choice is inappropriate, no matter what the reason is, the chances that learners understand that passage are substantially jeopardized. If a reading passage is higher than the student's level, it may be frustrating. If, on the other hand, the reading passage is far below the student's level, it may be felt too easy and perceived as boring and uninteresting. The aim is to have students read materials that are at a level that would cause neither frustration nor boredom. Reading materials should be challenging enough to build vocabulary and comprehension skills (Tourimpampa, Drigas, Economou & Roussos, 2018). In the absence of a reliable means of assessing students' reading level, teachers would rely on educated guesses for their decisions on the choice of the reading material they select for their learners taking into account: (1) the ease with which a reader can understand a text or (2) its readability.

Being able to say whether a reading comprehension text, a test, or a lecture is likely to be understood will undoubtedly help teachers decide on the level of difficulty and make informed decisions to choose materials that will improve students' reading skills confidently. Hence, teachers with the help of technology (Dewi, Lengkanawati & Purnawarman, 2019) can take the guesswork out of matching readers with appropriate texts. To clarify this point, the aim of readability assessment as stated by Deutsch et al is to identify if the appropriateness of the reading level (Deutsch, Jasbi & Shieber, 2020).

Laufer and Ravenhorst-Kalovski (2010) found that successful reading comprehension for foreign language learners is associated with vocabulary. This idea was supported in the work of many scholars (Bernhardt & Kamil, 1995: Nation 2006; Qian, 1999; Ulijn & Strother 1990; Castillo-Cuesta, 2020). The general conclusion is that understanding the words in a text makes it easier to understand the text as a whole. There is a consensus on one point, that is text difficulty is a function of the percentage of known or unknown words in a text, i.e., lexical coverage (Nation, 2006) besides vocabulary scores, as stated by Masrai & Milton "…are strongly correlated" with text comprehensibility (Masrai & Milton, 2017, p. 139).

1.2   Research objectives

Assessing text and textbook readability has been conducted by relying on three approaches: (1) readability formulas, (2) computational approaches, and (3) subjective assessment (Collins-Thompson, 2014; Xia, Kochmar & Briscoe, 2016; Brunato, Cimino, Dell'Orletta, Montemagni & Venturi, 2020). The present study adopted an original approach comprised of assessing text and textbook difficulty through lexical coverage utilizing computer and web-based tools. This study aims to find out if the readability level of seven government-approved textbooks, currently in use, in the Algerian educational system is within the range of the students' lexical coverage. The present research sought to investigate whether the textbooks are at, above, or below the students' lexical coverage, and so deduce the readability level.

1.3   Research questions

The following general research question was formulated: Are English textbooks at, above, or below students' lexical coverage? In the attempt to answer this main question, there is a set of other questions that this research endeavor asked to predict the textbook readability based on lexical coverage. These are:

1. What is the lexical coverage of Algerian EFL textbooks?
2. What is the readability level of Algerian EFL textbooks?
3. Do these textbooks provide sufficient, useful, and appropriate vocabulary items?

These are underlying questions that will undoubtedly interest frontline teachers, English syllabus designers, and education policymakers. They will certainly provide to these people pedagogical implications to decide what measures could be done to foster vocabulary learning. These questions could give insights for teachers to understand the effectiveness of textbooks.

1.4   Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: The EFL textbooks used by Algerian students are above the students' lexical coverage. If so, then the textbook readability is low (reading material is difficult).

If Txb > lexCov ⇒ TxbRead = low ⇒ reading material is difficult

Hypothesis 2: The EFL textbooks used by Algerian students are at the students' lexical coverage. If so, then the textbook readability is medium (reading material is of medium difficulty).

If Txb > lexCov ⇒ TxbRead = low ⇒ reading material is difficult

Hypothesis 3: The EFL textbooks used by Algerian students are below the students' lexical coverage.

If so, then the textbook readability is high (reading material is easy).

If Txb < lexCov ⇒ TxbRead = high   ⇒ reading material easy

2.   Literature review

This study draws on literature related to the investigation of text readability, text difficulty, and corpus linguistics. Estimating the readability of text by examining its linguistic characteristics is a long-standing empirical tradition. Such a tradition holds that, first, learning vocabulary is the fundamental step to learning a foreign language. Second, as already mentioned, vocabulary knowledge is the single best predictor of reading comprehension. Previous literature argues that prior knowledge in the topics (Kelsen, 2016) of a text, and vocabulary knowledge (Tseng, 2008) are relevant to reading comprehension. Yet, this paper examines only learner's knowledge of vocabulary concerning text readability and difficulty.

Textbooks and text difficulty have then been the topic of a substantial body of research and writing. The literature is replete with studies aiming at assessing textbook difficulty, text difficulty, and text readability.[1] Researchers have endeavored to develop methods of determining how easy or difficult a piece of writing is for a reader, the degree of difficulty in understanding a reading passage. On the other hand, some research confirms that reading is an interactive process that involves both the reader and the text. According to Alderson, reading comprehension can be affected by a set of factors which can be grouped into two categories: reader variables, and text variables (Alderson, 2000). The first category of variables includes factors internal to readers such as reader's background knowledge, reader's skills and abilities, and reader's motivation and attitude. The other category of variables comprises text variables related to the content, type, genre, organization, typographical features, and readability which are internal to texts rather than to readers. The level of reader comprehension of the text is, as research tends to confirm, determined by how well the reader variables interact with the text variables. Comprehension is then seen as a function of the difference between reader ability and text readability measured by relying primarily

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[1] In this paper, the terms text difficulty, reading difficulty, and text readability are used interchangeably by the authors.

on readability formulas. Text readability is defined here as the ease with which a reader is able to understand a text.

Studies of factors contributing to text difficulty have shown that among the text-based components, vocabulary is the most important and even the most crucial factor in reading comprehension (Nation, 1990). Understanding the words in a text makes it easier to understand the text as a whole. Confirmation of the existence of a causal relationship between vocabulary and reading comprehension has led researchers to conclude that the amount of unknown vocabulary is crucial for the foreign language learner to understand what s/he reads. Research has been directed towards determining how much unknown vocabulary can be tolerated in a text before it interferes with comprehension or lexical threshold. In the pursuit of achieving this aim, lexical or text coverage, that is "the percentage of running words in the text known by the readers" (Nation, 2006, p. 61), has emerged as a key concept. Another key finding was that only a relatively small number of words are used much more often than others. Consequently, for effective language teaching pedagogy, it became essential to determine which and how many words should EFL/ESL language learners know as well as what vocabulary a language learner needs.

As regards how many words in a text a reader must know to understand in a text, it has been suggested that if a reading material has a lexical coverage equal to or higher than 95%, then it is below students' reading level (high readability, independent reading level) and the comprehension rate would be 95%. If the lexical coverage is equal to or lower than 95% and higher than 75%, then the material would be at students' reading level (medium readability, instructional reading level) is challenging but manageable for the reader. In this case, the comprehension rate would be 90%. Finally, if lexical coverage is below 75%, reading material would be above the students' reading level (low readability and at frustration level). This means that the reader would be unfamiliar with more than one unknown word in every ten words (Laufer, 1992; Larson, 2017; Nation, 2006; Hu & Nation, 2000).

Speaking of which words are necessary to know to reach 95% of lexical knowledge that enables reading comprehension, high-frequency words became the focus of investigation. It is axiomatic that EFL/ESL learners would not know much vocabulary when they start learning English. To teach vocabulary to ESL/EFL learners, teachers should be aware of the selection of vocabulary items to be taught. However, if a textbook is chosen and closely followed in teaching, the selection of vocabulary heavily depends on the textbook lexical coverage. The third question seeks to

examine the textbooks in terms of the appropriateness of lexical choice. The ultimate objective is to find out whether Algerian EFL textbooks provide learning opportunities for frequent vocabulary which they will use in their future life, particularly for academic purposes. It is axiomatic that some words can be used in a wide variety of contexts while others have limited use. Therefore, teaching useful vocabulary before less useful vocabulary gives learners the best reward for their learning effort. However, the question is how to define 'usefulness'? One measure of usefulness is word frequency, that is, how often the word occurs in normal use of the language. Nation described useful vocabulary as vocabulary that every English language learner needs whether they use the language for listening, speaking, reading, or writing, or whether they use the language in formal and informal situations as the most frequent 1,000-word families of English (Nation, 2003). Nation further explained that these 1,000-word families are so important and useful that they cover around 75% of the running words in academic texts and newspapers, over 80 percent of the running words in novels, and about 85% of running words in conversation. In other words, these 1,000 words families (known as the '1k list') considerably help learner's communication. If a learner knows these words, they will comprehend a large proportion of the running words in either a spoken or a written text. The next most useful list is the second 1,000 words of English (known as the '2k list'). The classic list of high-frequency words is Michael West's (West, 1953) General Service List (GSL) which contains 2,000-word families. Knowing the first 2,000 most frequent word families in the language brings us up to 80% lexical familiarity with academic texts (Laufer, Ravenhorst-Kalovski; 2010; Nation, 1990). Before the 2,000 high-frequency words, the most useful vocabulary depends on what the learner intends to use English for. If a learner plans to do academic study in a university, then The Academic Word List (AWL) (Coxhead, 2000) contains the next most useful vocabulary. The AWL is a list of 570-word families that frequently occur in a wide range of academic texts that meet the learner's needs for general academic vocabulary.

It has become obvious that if we want to determine the lexical coverage of a reading text, it will be possible to infer its readability level. Such a procedure will necessarily rely on the familiarity of vocabulary to the reader. The more familiar words a text contains, the higher its readability level will be, and vice versa. The common measurement of vocabulary familiarity is word frequency which means the frequency with which a given word occurs in a sample of the target language. Word frequency and vocabulary difficulty are inverse in variation. The higher the word frequency, the smaller the vocabulary difficulty will be and vice versa (Litz, 2005). Similarly, if we can

identify the rate of most frequent words in a reading text, we can deduce whether the text does, or does not provide sufficient, useful, and appropriate vocabulary.

The methodology proposed here relies on the idea that when a learner moves from one textbook to the next one or from one level to the other, the lexical items contained or encountered in the first book, or level, are likely to be familiar when encountered in the second book or level. At this point, a word of caution is necessary, and it should be pointed out that (1) the choice of the target lexis focused on is either determined by the syllabus designer or by the teacher, and (2) learning is idiosyncratic (Corder, 1967). Overall, teachers should be certain of which vocabulary is likely to be familiar with.

3. Methods and procedures

For the measurement of vocabulary levels of textbooks, a full list of the words occurring in each textbook is needed to form a basis of comparison. For the purposes of the study referred to above, a computer method needs to be adopted involving the use of software tools. The procedure is described below.

3.1 Instruments

This paper utilized four instruments, namely Range and Frequency Programs for Windows-based PCs (Nation & Heatley, 2002), the Compleat Lexical Tutor (Cobb, 2000), Textmaster (TextMaster, 2009), and Textcompare (see Table 1). Below is a detailed explanation of these instruments.

1) *Range and Frequency programs for Windows-based PCs*

This is freely downloadable software. It is a vocabulary profiler (VP). Vocabulary profiling is a measure of the proportions of low and high-frequency vocabulary used in a written text. In addition to frequency information, other information such as the presence/absence of the set of words from the input text in word lists is provided. The VP divides the words of any text into four categories by frequency: (1) the most frequent 1000 words of English (level K1), (2) the second most frequent thousand words of English, i.e. 1001 to 2000 (level K2), (3) the AWL (the 570 words that are frequent in academic texts across subjects), and (4) the remainder which are not found on the other lists (off-list). The latest version of this tool is known as Range and Frequency Programs for Windows-based PCs. As explained in the instructions which come with the software, the program also includes the British National Corpus High-Frequency Word List (BNC HFWL 1st–14th

1,000) based on English words' occurring frequency and range. It can compare the vocabulary of up to 32 different texts at the same time. For each word in the texts, it provides a range or distribution figure (how many texts the word occurs in), a headword frequency figure (the total number of times the actual headword type appears in all the texts), a family frequency figure (the total number of times the word and its family members occur in all the texts), and a frequency figure for each of the texts the word occurs in. It can be used to find the coverage of a text by certain word lists, create word lists based on frequency and range, and discover shared and unique vocabulary in several pieces of writing. RANGE can also be used to compare a text against vocabulary lists created by the user to Fig. out what words in the text are and are not in the lists, and to find out the percentage of the items in the text that are covered by the lists, namely lexical coverage. The program has a function whereby it can ignore a list of words made into a file called stop-list. This list consists of function words such as he, will, should, if, prepositions (in, on, at, etc.), numbers (Arabic and Roman numerals), and any word added to the list. RANGE has been designed and used to answer the following questions: What common vocabulary is found in all these texts? How much vocabulary is needed to read this text? If a learner has a vocabulary of 2,000 words, how much vocabulary in the text a learner is famialr with? Besides, which vocabulary in the text a learner is likely not to know?

   2)   The Compleat Lexical Tutor (Lextutor)

   The second software is the Compleat Lexical Tutor (Cobb, 2000). It is a free web-based version of Nation's Range and Frequency programs. It includes 26 applications in addition to range and frequency. It also provides K1 words, K2 words, and AWL words.

   3)   TextMaster

   TextMaster is a plain text editor freely downloadable from the Internet (TextMaster, 2009). Its chief feature is statistical analysis. Furthermore, it gives for each text: (1) the total number of characters, (2) the number of unique characters, (3) the total number of words, (4) the number of unique words, (5) the character frequency, and (6) the word frequency. It also generates a word list, makes the text lowercase, etc.

   4)   TextCompare software

   This software was developed by the authors of this paper. Though simple, it can in seconds identify what words are potentially entirely new to the learners in the Algerian context. In other words, it compares Text1 and Text2 and finds out which words occurred in one text and not the

other (Text1 minus Text2, or Text2 minus Text1), and which words occurred in both texts. Additionally, it can then prove to be of valuable help to teachers in a variety of ways. For instance, it compares any text to any other one in the textbook or to the whole content of any of the seven textbooks in use in Algerian schools. The listing feature provides the user with lists of words occurring in each textbook that have been compiled file by file and book by book. It may thus be possible to find out useful information about vocabulary and exploit it.

3.2   Procedure

The procedure is comprised of corpus compilation and corpus analysis. The textbooks analyzed are the official textbooks currently in use designed by the Ministry of Education for pupils in their seven years of English study in middle and secondary schools. These textbooks are designed along with the principles of the competency-based approach which relies basically on project works, problem-solving situations and task-based-teaching or practices. The manuals in use in the middle school are: Spotlight on English in the first year, Spotlight on English Book Two in the second year, Spotlight on English Book Three in the third year, and On the Move in the fourth year. The books in use in the secondary school are: At the Crossroads (first year), Getting Through (second year), and New Prospects (third year). Contrary to the middle school books, where the didactic entity is the file, the books in the secondary school are organized in units.

3.3   Corpus compilation

The process of corpus compilation consisted of six steps before analysis began as explained below (see Table1 and Fig. 1).

1) *Step1: Scanning the books*

The purpose of this task is to convert a written text on paper to a machine-readable one. A practical procedure was to use a scanner with a built-in Optical Character Recognition (OCR) function to render a page printed on paper into a file 'read' by word processing software (Microsoft Word). The outcome is a copy of each book, as is, with text and illustration.

2) *Step2: Cleansing untreated text*

Pictures, diagrams, caricatures, and illustrations are unnecessary. Removing them is a very simple matter. The scanned material is simply saved in the word processor as 'plain text', that is, files with the extension '.txt'. In this way, the outcome consists of text only. However, scanning is

not without imperfections. The outcome of the scanning operation needs to be sifted or debugged to generate word lists.

3) *Step 3:   Generating word lists using vocabulary profilers*

The third step consists of making lists of words that appear in each textbook. The list of all words occurring in each book is then generated using the computer software TextMaster.

4) *Step 4: Refining the word lists*

Once lists of words occurring in each textbook are generated as described above, word families/headwords henceforth were extracted using the same software and Lextutor. The lexical analysis often uses concepts such as tokens (a count of every word in a text), types (unique words in a text), and word families (a headword, its inflected forms, and its closely related derived forms from affixation, etc.). The software Lextutor gives a list of headwords and another one of off-list words such as misspelt words, loan words, foreign words, non-English words, non-words, proper nouns, etc. The researcher must further sift the off-list words. Spelling errors should be corrected, logograms, acronyms (e.g., UNESCO, CONCACAF), proper names, articles, abbreviations e.g., BBC, a.m., UK, bros., months, days, names of countries, nationalities, loan/foreign words, rare words or oddities, etc. should be removed and made into a list. It should be noted here that the Range and Frequency programs have a function whereby it can ignore a list of words made into a file called stop-list. This list consists of function words such as he, she, will, should, if, prepositions, numbers, and any word added to the list. Hence, the stop-list available with the program is completed by adding to it the words removed from the lists generated from the textbooks in addition to a list of proper names copied from the Internet, metalanguage (adjective, noun, verb, etc.), and text language. The outcome of this step is a refined list consisting of the above-mentioned words. The whole process of corpus compilation and preparation for analysis can be summarized in the Table 1 and Fig.1:

Table 1. *Corpus compilation process*

Step	Operation	Instrument/tool	Outcome
1	Scanning the books	Mustek 1248UB scanner	Machine-readable text with illustrations
2	Cleansing the untreated text	Microsoft Office Word	Gross untreated text

3	Generating word lists (headwords)	Lextutor	words in each textbook
4	Refining word lists	Lextutor Text Master Researcher	Refined final lists + stoplist

Fig. 1. *Corpus compilation process*
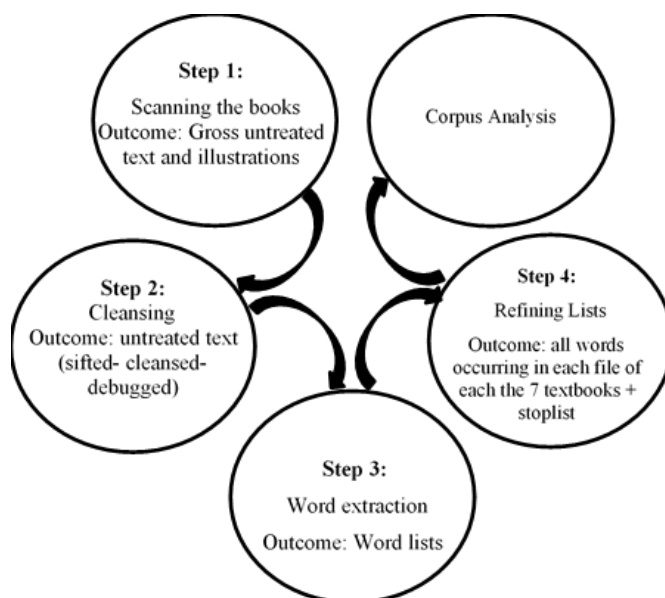
3.4   Corpus analysis

This stage consisted of attempting to answer the questions below, the first and second research questions are interrelated, as readability is deduced from lexical coverage which in turn determines the readability level (see 1.3). They were answered by determining the lexical coverage and then inferring the answer related to readability. The first task in the analysis was to find out the number of word families in each textbook (Book 1 through Book 7). The next step was, starting from Book 1, to compare each book to the preceding one. After that, Book 2 was compared to Book 1, then Book 3 compared to Book 2 and to Book 2+ Book 3, and so on. Once text coverage identified (number of known or unknown words in a text by the reader), the data were exploited to assess readability by comparing lexical coverage to research standards:

1. If the lexical coverage of a book is greater than or equal to 95%, then the textbook readability is high, and the textbook is at the independent level.

2. If the lexical coverage of a book is greater than 75%, but less than 95% then the textbook readability is medium, and the textbook is at the instructional level.

3. If the lexical coverage of a book is less than 75%, then the textbook readability is low, and the textbook is at the frustrational level.

4. The third research question (see 1.3) was answered by comparing lexical coverage to the criterion lists: AWL, GSL, BNC-HFW), a task done with the help of Lextutor.

4. Results and discussion

The lexical coverage for the seven books put together is displayed in Table 2 and Fig. 2 below. Evidently, there is a progression of lexical coverage through the seven textbooks. It was found that the textbook with the lowest text coverage, and least readable is Book 2 (second-year middle school). The textbook with the highest text coverage, and most readable is Book 7 (third-year secondary school). It was also noted that there is a regular progression of text coverage in Books five, six, and seven (secondary school textbooks).

Fig. 2 *Lexical coverage in all textboo*
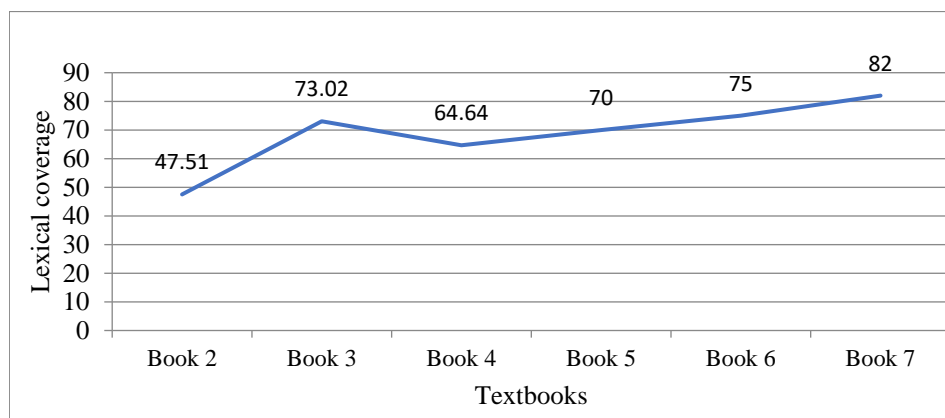
Table 2. *Lexical coverage in all textbooks*

Textbook	level	Lexical coverage (%)	
		unknown	Likely to be known
Book 2	2MS	52.49	47.51
Book 3	3MS	26.98	73.02
Book 4	4MS	35.36	64.64

Book 5	1SS	30	70
Book 6	2SS	25	75
Book 7	3SS	18	82
Key: *MS stands for Middle School & SS stands for Secondary School*			

Another interesting fact revealed by the above diagrams is that there is a noticeable regular increase in text coverage of about 5% from Book 4 through Book 7. If the third-year middle school textbook (Book 3) had followed this rate, the progression through all the books would have been regular. That is when students move from one level to the other, the rate of vocabulary available for learning is 5% of the total items contained in the textbook they use. Had the rate of increase been the same for Book 3, the progression of lexical coverage through the seven books would have been linear.

The lexical coverage of Book 2 (middle school second year) which is 47.51% reveals that when students move from the very beginning level (Level zero) to the next one, they might be overwhelmed by the number of words they encounter and likely to learn.

However, it is inferred that in the ideal conditions secondary school textbooks are by far more readable than middle school textbook. The opposite scenario would help learners as they would move from the most readable to the least readable as the results of the study suggest. The linear progression of text coverage in secondary school textbooks can be considered as a 'positive' point since this progression is increasing the likelihood of known vocabulary. In other words, the percentage of the likely to be known vocabulary in third-year secondary school textbook (Book 7) is higher than that of the second year (Book 6) which in turn is higher than in first year (Book 5). Furthermore, there is a problem in the second-year middle school (Book 2) where students are likely to encounter more lexical items than in any other book, especially the book they had been using in first-year middle school. Learners moving from a beginning level (1MS) find themselves in front of a flood of new lexical items that they had never encountered before. Consequently, learners find it a hard task for them, and for the teacher to cope with such a jump in expected lexical coverage.

As a result, it is concluded that textbooks used by Algerian EFL students are above students' lexical coverage. Unexpectedly, Book 2 (2MS) is the textbook with the least lexical coverage.

The textbook with the highest lexical coverage is the last in the series, which is Book 7 in use in the last year of secondary school. Then comes the textbook of the preceding year (2SS) followed by Book 3 in use in third-year middle school. After that, we find the first-year secondary school textbook, the fourth-year middle school textbook, and in the last position the second-year middle school textbook.

To sum up, if a student in an Algerian English class knows all the vocabulary contained in the textbook in use within an academic year, s/he would come across too many lexical items. Knowing that learners are not expected to learn or use all the lexical items encountered in Algerian EFL textbooks, It would be interesting to investigate the frequency of vocabulary repetition throughout all the textbooks, and also of equal importance to know whether learners have the opportunity to encounter and then are likely to learn the 'right' vocabulary. By 'right vocabulary', it is meant the vocabulary contained in the GSL, the AWL, and the BNC-HFW. Hence, the task now is to answer the third research question: Do Algerian EFL textbooks provide sufficient, useful, and appropriate vocabulary items?

The objective is to find out whether Algerian EFL textbooks provide learning opportunities for vocabulary which is used most frequently and which they will use in the future for academic purposes. It is axiomatic that some words can be used in a wide variety of circumstances while others have limited use. Therefore, teaching more useful vocabulary before less useful vocabulary gives learners the best reward for their learning effort.

The 4434 headwords contained in all the textbooks under investigation were compared to the criterion lists, namely the AWL, the GSL, and the BNC-HFW. They were then analyzed by the computer programs. First, the list of headwords was processed using Range and Frequency programs, and the results were cross-checked using Lextutor as displayed in Table 3.

Table 3. *Headwords contained in all the textbooks compared to standard lists*

	Results by Range		Results by Lextutor	
	# words	%	# words	%
First 1000 most frequent word /K1	849	19.16	853	19.22
First 2000 most frequent word /K2	854	19.27	850	19.29
The 3000 most frequent words/K1+K2	1703	38.43	1703	38.51

| Academic /AWL Words | 472 | 10.65 | 472 | 10.65 |
| not in the lists/ Off-List Words | 2256 | 50.91 | 2254 | 50.85 |

The results show evidence that the textbooks under investigation do not demonstrate the required level of vocabulary which should be known by the readers. Throughout seven years of study of English in a formal setting, Algerian EFL learners are likely to encounter only 19% of the first thousand most frequent words of English, and 19% of the second thousand most frequent words. This adds up to and yields a lexical coverage of 38%. Algerian EFL learners are likely to encounter 38% of the 3000 most frequent words of English. Then, even in the 'ideal' situation with an 'ideal' student who would learn all the 38% of words discussed above, he/she would still have not been exposed to 62% of the most frequent words from the textbooks.

As for the AWL, lexical coverage is roughly 11%. This means that an Algerian EFL learner has the opportunity to learn 11% of the words appearing in the AWL. An Algerian student entering university would have never had the opportunity to learn 89% of the useful vocabulary needed for academic studies. On the whole, a student attending school in the Algerian educational system is likely to learn only 40% of the sufficient, useful, and appropriate vocabulary advocated by research in English language pedagogy (see Table 3). The finding showed that 60% of such vocabulary remains out of the learners' reach knowing that these textbooks constitute for the overwhelming majority of students the sole source of vocabulary.

5.   Conclusion

The analysis of the vocabulary in the textbooks reflected a level of difficulty that is inappropriate for Algerian EFL learners. It also revealed that learners' lexical coverage is far from the level advocated by researchers in the field of teaching and learning English as a foreign language. This certainly would make reading comprehension a daunting, if not an impossible task, for learners. Definitely, the design of the textbooks needs to be reconsidered in terms of lexical coverage and organized in a way that facilitates their learning. The analysis conducted in this research was not intended to criticize the vocabulary of the textbooks; however, most textbooks suffer from similar issues as those described above. There is not a perfect textbook to meet all the needs and interests

of each group of learners, let alone the "appropriate" lexical coverage for learners. Yet, textbooks' limitations can be reduced to a great extent in terms of vocabulary.

As this study demonstrates, teachers can reduce these limitations by becoming familiar with the vocabulary contents of their textbooks. Overall, teachers do not have enough time to devote to vocabulary-focused instruction, i.e., formally presenting vocabulary items and providing activities that are designed to practice and reinforce the target vocabulary. Since the number of vocabulary items in any language is so large, only a small number can be dealt with through vocabulary-focused instruction, and most will either have to be acquired through exposure or will not be learned at all (Schmitt, 2000). Consequently, these factors make it very important for teachers to be well-informed about the vocabulary in their textbooks, so that that they can make pedagogically-sound decisions regarding vocabulary instruction. The results point out to teachers which and how many words need to receive additional practice beyond the textbook to meet the vocabulary learning goals of the course.

5.1   Pedagogical implications

It is believed that the findings of the study are of pedagogical significance for the teachers who are using the textbooks investigated. The procedures of this study also give insights for teachers to examine and to choose their target lexis. The findings could inform teachers about the treatment of vocabulary and the limitations of the textbooks. Although the textbooks are prepared by writers and publishers, not classroom teachers, it is actually the teacher who is in a better position to decide what to teach and how. By understanding the hidden aspects of vocabulary treatments in a textbook, teachers could adapt the materials in the textbooks more effectively to teach vocabulary. This would also be very important in selecting or rejecting the vocabulary items according to their students' levels and needs.

One merit of this study is to make teachers aware of the existence of vocabulary treatment software such as the ones used in this study. Besides, the Textcompare software conceived for this study can be used as a quick tool to compare the lexis occurring in a textbook file/unit to another one, or to the whole book, or even all the books. The results can be used for pedagogical purposes such as the selection of the target lexis, planning of lexis distribution across the curriculum or academic years.

When teachers know what words are or are not covered by the textbooks, they would be able to provide supplemental reading material. Without significant supplementation by the teacher to extend the vocabulary of the course beyond that offered in the textbook, students probably would have little chance of increasing their vocabulary to the 1000-word level. Based on the findings of the present study, textbook writers and EFL/ESL teachers could improve vocabulary teaching by paying closer attention to the systematicity of vocabulary selection. The number of new lexical items in each unit/file or textbook can be controlled for a better presentation and sequencing of vocabulary.

The high-frequency words can be distributed in a well-informed way throughout all the curriculum, so that when learners leave secondary school to enroll at the university, they would have encountered and would have had the opportunity to learn at least the items included in the GSL and the AWL. Textbook designers should build vocabulary progression and gradation in one book based on the items presented in the previous one. This study provides data for doing so.

The results and data of this study can further be exploited to bridge the gap, as far as lexical coverage concerned, readability, and consequently reading comprehension that exists on the one hand between middle school and secondary school as well as between secondary school and university. A secondary school teacher can utilize the list of headwords in middle school textbooks and the Textcompare tool to compare any reading material intended for secondary school against that list and deduce the lexical coverage to be able to predict the comprehension likeliness of the reading material. Similarly, university teachers of English would be able to 'gauge' their lectures or reading material in a similar way.

5.2   *Limitations of the study*

A few limitations of the study are worth noting before making some recommendations for future research. First, the results generated from the study will be restricted to EFL/ESL textbooks in use in Algerian schools. Second, the lexical coverage and readability findings will be limited to the texts contained in the textbooks used in this study. Next, this research was only a preliminary attempt to survey the Algerian EFL textbooks lexical coverage. Its focus was on the vocabulary component and does not imply that lexical coverage and readability are exclusive factors in designing a textbook for classroom use.

Through a lexical corpus study, this research hopes to draw the attention of EFL teachers and textbook designers to the vocabulary component of textbooks and how important it is to identify text readability and lexical coverage of a certain text to promote effective reading comprehension. Good command of vocabulary is essential for success at higher levels of education (Coxhead, 2000). The current research data may serve as a basis for in-depth research into acquiring vocabulary or teaching material profiling only. Other parameters such as syntax and content area knowledge may be worth investigating but are beyond the focus of the current study. In a nutshell, vocabulary may not be the only component of an English course, but it is a component that learners notice and can occupy a lot of their learning time. It is a component that deserves more attention from course designers which this study has aimed to generate that attention.

5.3   Directions for future research

It may prove useful to further research the issues considered here through a qualitative analysis involving the actors in the learning situation, namely learners and teachers. Investigating students' perception toward language textbooks in relation to lexical coverage, readability, vocabulary load, and reading difficulty and eliciting teachers' opinions would certainly generate new insights that would hopefully confirm the findings of the present study. Another issue that can be exploited easily by using the data collected in this study is to examine the degree of repetition of words throughout all the seven textbooks. Research shows that it is necessary to encounter a word in a variety of contexts many times at regular intervals for the learner to have a realistic chance to increase the likelihood of learning the target word (Nation, 2001; Nation & Heatley, 2002). An analysis of the textbook can show if the target vocabulary frequently occurs enough and recycled over time to provide optimum vocabulary-learning conditions. The results can guide teachers in deciding how best to supplement the text with activities that will give learners exposure to target vocabulary that is not sufficiently presented in the textbook. How can learners succeed in reading comprehension when they are given material which they are likely to understand only 40%?

6.   References

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The Effects of Cooperative Learning versus Traditional Teaching on Students' Achievement: A Case Study

Sami Al-Mubireek

Department of English Language, Deanship of the Preparatory Year and Supporting Studies,

Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University, Dammam, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

smubireek@iau.edu.sa

Bio-profie:

Dr. Sami Al-Mubireek has an MA in English as Second/Foreign Language and a Ph.D. in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) from the Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, USA. He was the former Head of the English Language Department for more than five years at the University of Dammam. Currently, he is an assistant professor and the head of Studies and Research Unit, Prep Year Deanship at Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University, Saudi Arabia.

Abstract

The research aims at measuring the effectiveness of the use of cooperative learning compared to the traditional method in teaching English courses for students of the Deanship of Preparatory Year and Supporting Studies, Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University, Saudi Arabia. It is hypothesized that cooperative learning is more effective than traditional teaching in learning English and developing better academic achievement. The study involved 60 advanced students apportioned into two groups: 30 in the experimental group studying the English language course through cooperative learning and 30 in the control group studying the same course through the traditional method. After the teaching period, which lasted seven lectures at a rate of a lecture per week, the research instrument is applied to both groups. The data extracted from the pre- and post-tests are processed statistically using the independent data student t test to verify the validity of the research hypotheses. The data are also subjected to the equation of improvement ratios in order to find the differences between the average test scores of the two groups' pre- and post-tests. The results demonstrate the validity of the research hypothesis.

1. Introduction

Methods of teaching that are based on communicating information; reception and repetition seem to be old-fashioned. The regurgitated information makes the teacher assume that his students have absorbed the information conveyed to them. Having a closer look at the Saudi university education system will confirm the fact the direct method is widely used and preferred, especially in delivering English courses in which the teacher becomes the main source of information. Depending on the direct method is no longer effective nor accepted in the shade of the revolutionary plethora of modern technology and inventions which made it nearly impossible and completely futile to depend on the same traditional approaches. However, this paper is not intended to enumerate the negative and positive sides of the direct method, but to alert teachers against using it as a teaching habit. They would rather diversify their teaching methods depending on the situation/topic. It is therefore necessary to give up some of the traditional methods of teaching, especially those which focus on lecturing and memorizing in favor of new methods that focus on students' activity and participation under the guidance of the teacher.

Since automaticity is targeted, it becomes an elusive objective if the direct method is used. Unfortunately, most English teachers continue to focus on imparting knowledge and skills using traditional teaching methods that require students to memorize information without understanding. Traditional teaching methods also encourage unhealthy competitiveness and sometimes illegal rivalry among students who struggle to obtain the best scores over their peers. So, it is high time to call for an up-to-date method that suits the modern age of technology and results in the best outcome learner that can use English effectively, communicatively and appropriately. There is an urgent need to call for the search of modern methods in teaching English courses that focus on learners' activity, engagement, creativity, participation and cooperation.

Cooperative learning method (CLM), as a prototype of the communicative approach, is one of the most important contemporary trends in the field of education. Students can work in groups, where each student feels that he is an active partner in the educational situation and has responsibilities and specific roles that must be exercised in order for the work, undertaken by the group, to be fully assimilated. It also provides students with life-like situations in which they

practice the skills of scientific thinking, promote discovery and investigation, and develop skills of gaining knowledge along with other social skills:

> "Collaborative learning is one of the most important strategies that have proven instructional excellence and importance as it provides participants with the opportunity to learn and share sources of diverse information, as well as the possibility of exchanging experiences among themselves, where the main goal of collaborative learning is not only the acquisition and participation of knowledge, but also exceeds it to enhance the individual with the ability of building knowledge in innovative ways" (Paavola et. al. 2004, p. 567).

2. Literature Review

The original idea of cooperative learning dated back to a hundred years ago. Althouh the principle of communicative learning is deeply rooted in human history, the term "cooperative learning" began to be used in the 1960s. Since then, the topic has already become an important part of any successful education system. In the mid 1960s, Johnson and Johnson contributed to the development of cooperative learning in the training of teachers at the University of Minnesota. Then, it progressed till the early 1970s where researchers like DeVries and Edwards (1972) at Johns Hopkins University built up Teams-Games-Tournaments, and other researchers like Sholmo and Sharan (1980) developed the group investigation procedure for cooperative learning groups.

In the late 1970s, Slavin, DeVries and Edwards (1978) extended work at Johns Hopkins into Student Teams-Achievement Divisions and modified computer-assisted instruction into Team-assisted Instruction. At the same time, Kagan (1993) created the Co-op co-op procedure. In the 1980s, Dansereau (1985) widened several cooperative scripts, and many other individuals worked out further cooperative procedures (Johnson, Johnson & Smith, 1991). Cooperative learning has been found as an effective epitome of communicative language teaching. Cooperative learning has become so common that it is no longer considered a new idea in education. This can be viewed in the mid of 20th century where applications of cooperative learning drew its development to sociology and social psychology specifically to Gordon Allport's (1954) Social Contact Theory and Morton Deutsch's (1949) studies of group dynamics. This continues as Cooperative Learning is believed to make educational magic in a uniquely 21st century way.

In the new century, many studies have been conducted to ascertain the effectiveness of collaborative learning in developing achievement and various skills either kinesthetic or mental, including the studies of: (Aa'ati 2015; Ismail 2013; Mahdi, Algazar, Alostaz.2012; Alsayed 2013; Alnamy 2012; Ahour, Mukundan & Rafik-Galea, 2012; Gonzales & Torres, 2016 Tesfamichael, 2016 Nuraida, Muliastuti & Rasyid, 2019).

2.1 Definition of cooperative learning

There are many definitions of cooperative learning in early recent literature. An early definition was given by Slavin who stated that cooperative learning comprised of "a set of instructional methods in which students work in small, mixed-ability groups … to achieve some sort of group goal" (Slavin, 1987, p 8).

For instance, Lewis defines cooperative learning as "an instructional strategy that enables small groups of students to work together on a common assignment. The parameters often vary, as students can work collaboratively on a variety of problems, ranging from simple math problems to large assignments such as proposing environmental solutions on a national level" (2019, p.1). Another definition provided by Teed, McDaris and Roseth defines cooperative learning as "cooperation is not having students sit side-by-side at the same table to talk with each other as they do their individual assignments. Cooperation is not assigning a report to a group of students where one student does all the work and the others put their names on the product as well. Cooperation involves much more than being physically near other students, discussing material, helping, or sharing material with other students. There is a crucial difference between simply putting students into groups to learn and in structuring cooperative interdependence among students" (2018, p.2).

The current research aims to examine the impact of cooperative learning versus traditional teaching on students' achievements and to provide some pedagogical suggestions. Using cooperative learning may yield many benefits. First, it helps learners acquire social skills and values such as cooperation, audacity, self-confidence, and responsibility taking. The great benefit of communicative learning lies in the fact that it is a learner-centered approach that targets the learner and consolidates the teacher's role as a facilitator and a coordinator. Second, it transforms the role of students from passive recipients to active participants and enhances their spirit of self-learning, reflective critical thinking, participation and cooperation. Besides, it tries to abolish the traditional notion that the teacher is the unique source of information. In addition, this study may benefit decision makers, curriculum developers, syllabus designers and teachers in all subjects at

different stages. Eventually, this research addresses the problem of students' repugnance to learn English and their low level of achievement.

2.2 Research hypothesis

Cooperative learning is more effective than traditional teaching in learning English and developing academic achievement. In the recent time, several methods of learning have emerged. The most important ones are those that focus on learners (Learner- centered approaches: LCA). Cooperative work is not a new concept in educational thought; it has long historical roots that extend back hundreds of years. Its historical beginning was a philosophical belief practiced by many educational philosophers including Plato, Russo and Dewey.

2.3 The impact of cooperative learning

Cooperative learning has a positive impact on the educational process. It eliminates the isolation and seclusion of some introvert learners and increases motivation to learn. Furthermore, cooperative learning programs can help solve some of the leaners' low academic achievement and performance. The effectiveness of cooperative learning is due mainly to its dependence on two main pivotal principles: automaticity and the exploit of first language acquisition. After the teacher gives the learners the target language, he monitors their performance in real life-like situations. Learners acquire English typically as they acquired their first language. Cooperative learning helps them learn and use English in an untraditional atmosphere. The most important aspect is that cooperative learning increases the learners' motivation and, if the session is well-planned, encourages them to teach and learn from each other. From the researcher's own experience, learners are more likely to receive and learn from each other. It is also noted that the pieces and chunks of language they learn from each other are more likely to remain in their memory for longer times. Each learner works very hard to understand the minutes of his assigned topic or area. S/he must delve into the depths of his topic in order to help his peers understand it very well. It has a mutual benefit for both the learner and his peers.

A very important benefit of cooperative learning is that it increases student talking time and reduces teacher talking time. Cooperative learning gives the chance to the leaners to practice English appropriately, communicatively and freely. This is the main core of the learning process. In cooperative learning, the teacher is only a guide, a facilitator and a coordinator who monitors and interferes when necessary. The importance of cooperative learning lies in developing the

learners' ability to develop positive attitudes towards the teaching materials and to think critically. Cooperative learning also advances the learner's aptitude to use cooperation in different aspects of life. The impact of this cooperation trains the learner to work cooperatively within the family, society and workplace. It also addresses the problem of increasing the number of students in the classroom providing the learner with a greater opportunity to learn.

Cooperative learning benefits the learner both academically and morally. Adopting cooperative learning improves the learner's performance and teaches him/her the value of teamwork, cooperation, self-denial and initiative taking. Shoeib (2016) mentioned: "It is clear that collaborative learning encourages design proficiency on research, inquiry, and enthusiasm, which is reflected on the students' scientific activity and enhances their ability to self-learning"(Shoeib, p.173).On the importance of cooperative learning, (Gillies, 2007) stated that " cooperative learning is now an accepted and often the preferred instructional procedure at all levels of education. Cooperative learning is presently used in schools and universities in every part of the world, in every subject area, and with every age student"(Gillies, 2007, p. 10).

Johnson and Johnson also emphasized the importance of cooperative learning stating that "teachers spend most of their day structuring learning situations cooperatively and carefully creating positive interdependence, 10 face-to-face promotive interaction, individual accountability, social skills, and group processing, they will in turn approach their colleagues with cooperative attitudes" (Johnson et.al 2017, p. 9-10).

2.4 Elements of cooperative learning

Slavin (1987, p.9) identified two elements for learning to be cooperative:

1. Students must work toward a group goal, such as earning certificates, or some other recognition.

2. Success at achieving this goal must depend on the individual learning of all group members.

Further Johnson et.al provided five elements as basics of cooperative learning:

1. Positive interdependence: Students must feel that they need each other to complete the task of the group.

2. Face-to-face promotive interaction: Students promote each other's learning by sharing educational efforts, explaining, discussing, and teaching what they know for their classmates.

3. Individual accountability: Each student's performance is frequently assessed, and the results are given to the group and the individual.

4. "Social skills: Groups cannot function effectively if students do not have and use the needed" social skills. Cooperative social skills include leadership, decision-making, trust-building, communication, and conflict-management skills. Group processing: Groups need specific time to discuss how well they are achieving their goals and maintaining effective working relationships among members. (Johnson et.al, 2017, p. 3-4)

2.5 Difference between cooperative learning groups and traditional education groups

Kelly (2019, p.1-6) summarizes the differences between cooperative learning groups and traditional education groups in the following points:

2.5.1 Interdependence

"In a traditional classroom group setting, students are not interdependent upon one another. There is no feeling of a positive interaction where the students need to work as a group to produce a quality piece of work. On the other hand, true cooperative learning provides students with incentives to work as a team to succeed together."

2.5.2 Accountability

"A traditional learning group does not provide the structure for individual accountability. This is often a huge downfall and upsetting to those students who work the hardest in the group. Since all students are graded the same, less motivated students will allow the motivated ones to do the majority of the work. On the other hand, a cooperative learning group provides for individual accountability through rubrics, teacher observation, and peer evaluations."

2.5.3 Leadership

"Typically, one student will be appointed the group leader in a traditional group setting. On the other hand, in cooperative learning, students share leadership roles so that all have ownership of the project."

2.5.4 Responsibility

"Because traditional groups are treated homogeneously, students will typically look out for and be responsible for only themselves. There is no real shared responsibility. On the other hand, cooperative learning groups require students to share responsibility for the overall project that is created."

2.5.5 Social Skills

"In a traditional group, social skills are typically assumed and ignored. There is no direct instruction on group dynamics and teamwork. On the other hand, cooperative learning is all about

teamwork and this is often directly taught, emphasized, and in the end assessed through the project rubric."

2.5.6 Teacher Involvement

In a traditional group, a teacher will give an assignment like a shared worksheet, and give students time to finish the activity. "The teacher does not really observe and intervene in group dynamics because this is not the purpose of this type of activity. On the other hand, cooperative learning is all about teamwork and group dynamics. Because of this and the project rubric that is used to assess the students' work, teachers are more directly involved in observing and if necessary, intervening to help ensure effective teamwork within each group."

2.5.7 Group Evaluation

"In a traditional classroom group setting, the students themselves have no reason to assess how well they worked as a group. Typically, the only time the teacher hears about group dynamics and teamwork is when one student feels that they "did all the work." On the other hand, in a cooperative learning group setting, students are expected and typically required to assess their effectiveness in the group setting. Teachers will hand out evaluations for the students to complete where they answer questions about and rate each team member including themselves and discuss any teamwork issues that arose."

2.6   Cooperative learning patterns

Johnson and Johnson (2017) suggest three patterns of cooperative learning as follows:

2.6.1 Formal Cooperative Learnings Groups

Slavin (1987) explains that "the groups usually have four members- one high achiever, two average achievers, and one low achiever. "The students in each group are responsible not only for learning the material being taught in class, but also for helping their group mates learn" (Slavin, 1987, p. 8). They work together to finish their assignment and submit a unified report to the teacher. The teacher indirectly administers the classroom. Cooperation in this pattern is not among members of a single group but includes also groups. The teacher intervenes when necessary, observes the performance of the groups, and assesses the work of each group through their paperwork. In the end, students are individually tested, and the group that reaches the benchmark is rewarded. Johnson and Johnson (2017, p. 5) describes the role of the teacher as follows:

1. Specifies the objectives for the lesson (one academic and one social skill)

2. Makes a series of decisions about structuring the learning groups, considering the group size, how students are assigned to groups, assigning roles to students, organizing materials, and physical arrangement of classroom.

3. Teaches the academic concepts, principles, and strategies that the students are to master and apply and explains the task to be completed and the criteria for success, the positive interdependence, the individual accountability, the expected student behaviors, and the criteria for success.

4. Monitors the functioning of the learning groups and intervenes to teach collaborative skills and provide assistance in academic learning when it is needed.

5. Evaluates student performance against the preset criteria for excellence and ensures that groups process how effectively members worked together.

This pattern can be used in all subject areas which was also followed for the purpose of the present study. The researcher views it as a real embodiment of cooperation and a demonstration of the team spirit without transgressing over the individuals. Compared to other types, it is also easier to apply. It is very effective in imporoving the cognitive, emotional skills. Most importantly, it includes the main elements of cooperative learning:

> "Formal cooperative learning should be used whenever the learning goals are highly
> important, the task is complex or conceptual, problem solving is required, divergent
> thinking or creativity is desired, quality of performance is expected, higher level
> reasoning strategies and critical thinking are needed, long-term retention is desired,
> or when the social development of students is one of the major instructional goals"
> (Johnson & Johnson, 2017, p. 5).

2.6. 2. Informal Cooperative Learning Groups

 In this pattern, the teacher can use a film or a demonstration in order to enhance the learners' expectations and attract their attention. The length of time allotted in this pattern ranges from a few minutes to a whole class period (Johnson & Johnson, 2017, p. 5):

> "Informal cooperative learning groups are often organized so that students engaged
> in three-to-five minute focused discussions before and after a lecture and three-to-
> five minute turn-to-your-partner discussions interspersed throughout a lecture."

Gilles stated two important aspects of using informal cooperative learning groups: "(a) make the task and the instructions explicit and precise, and; (b) require the groups to produce a specific product (such as a written answer)" (2007, p. 30).

2.6.3. Cooperative Base Groups

This pattern is completely different from the last two ones. In this pattern, the group lasts for longer time and the members are stable and fixed. The main aim of this pattern is to consolidate, support and assist all the members in order to reach the highest academic performance. Base groups often have regular meetings in order to deal with several issues including offering help and support to an absent member:

> "They formally meet to discuss the academic progress of each member, provide help
> and assistance to each other, and verify that each member is completing assignments
> and progressing satisfactory through the academic program. Base groups may also
> be responsible for letting absent group members know what went on in class when
> they miss a session. Informally, members interact every day within and between
> classes, discussing assignments, and helping each other with homework" (Johnson
> & Johnson, 2017, p. 5).

Gillies explained that "the teacher's role in using cooperative base groups is to: (a) form heterogeneous groups of four (or three), (b) schedule a time when they will regularly meet (such as beginning and end of each class session or the beginning and end of each week), (c) create specific agendas with concrete tasks that provide a routine for base groups to follow when they meet, (d) ensure the five basic elements of effective cooperative groups are implemented, and (e) have students periodically process the effectiveness of their base groups" (2007, p. 31).

The competition between groups increases the motivation to learn three times higher than among individuals. In this pattern, students are divided in heterogeneous groups, consisting of 4 - 5 members. The lesson begins with a simple lecture the teacher in which the teacher gives clear brief instructions, and then students work within groups with each other on a working paper. At the end of the week, students are divided into homogeneous groups of three members as per achievement (based on the previous achievement). They are provided with educational games on what they have studied. Group members compete, and the degree acquired will be added to their basic group's degree. The winning group will be the one that won the highest degree. Collective and individual rewards should be also offered.

2.7.1 Students are divided into teams according to achievement

It is like games and tournaments pattern. Students are divided into heterogeneous groups of 5-6 members. The lesson begins with the teacher lecturing, and then the students of each group work together on a worksheet. A short 15-20 minute-test is taken at the end of the week. After that, the teacher marks the test and estimates the grade for each learner. He assigns students to homogeneous groups according to the previous achievement, using a system called collection achievement sections considering the past performance. Each group consists of six learners. He places the top six learners, in terms of grades, in section (1) and the following six, in section (2) etc. The teacher then compares the scores of each student in the weekly test with members of his group, which varies from one week to the next, according to previous test results. The highest score of achievement in the team adds 8 points to the student's team, the second 6 points, and the third 4 points. In the end, the teacher collects points and grades the team. The team that scores higher or reaches the mark set by the teacher is announced in the weekly bulletin board. This method increases students' motivation to move to higher grades every week as each member contributes to a higher score for his team.

2.7.2 Cooperative integration of divided information, Jigsaw 1:

Aronson's Jigsaw model is exploited in cooperative learning to create high interdependence among learners by distributing learning tasks among them. The teacher assigns students to a heterogeneous core group of 5-6 members. The subject to be studied is divided into sub-sections based on the number of members of the team. Each member of the team will study a specific part assigned to him by his group. After that, he will receive his peers in the other teams in the group of experts to study their part. Each learner will join his counterpart in other groups, those who studied the same part as his, and then he returns to his group to teach the part that he has mastered and to learn from them the parts that they have learnt themselves. Next, individuals, not groups, undertake an individual test. The test grade is awarded to the individual and not to his group. For example, the teacher can use cooperative learning to help the learners use the passive voice. The topic can be divided into subsections of the verb tenses. For instance, a specific tense can be assigned to a certain member. S/he meets the other members who study the same part. Then, s/he joins back his own group to present the part that has already mastered. Individual members take an individual test and the test results are graded individually.

2.7.3 Cooperative integration of divided information

Students are divided into heterogeneous groups of 4 to 5 members. Students of each group read the entire subject (a chapter of a book, for example). Each member focuses on a specific part of the subject. Then members of different groups meet to discuss the same part they have studied. After that, they come back, each to his original group, to discuss and explain what he has learned. He then takes an individual test that turns his degree to a collective degree, as to "divide students into teams according to achievement" as per the method mentioned above. This pattern is very helpful in teaching novels for example. This is mainly because students deal with different areas which require thinking, discussing and explaining. Tasks can be distributed easily when assigning characters, themes, plot, settings etc.

2.7.4   Individual assistance to the team:

The students are divided into heterogeneous groups. Each group consists of four members. The groups are reshuffled every eight weeks. This pattern is characterized by individualized learning. Based on the individual learner's degree, every learner will learn up to his own ability. However, he can seek help from his group as needed. Individual tests are given each week and collective rewards are offered.

2.8 Role of the teacher in cooperative learning:

In cooperative learning, the learners are the leaders and the active participants. The teacher is only a coordinator and a facilitator who interferes to correct a fatal error or to offer help when necessary. One of the main objectives of cooperative learning is that learners gain and appreciate group-work skills. Since it can not be assumed that learners will learn from each other the way to work together nor how to plan and organize the lesson, the active role of the teacher in collaborative learning is highlighted through the various planning and implementation of work/plans. That will organize the appropriate learning environment and collaborative activities to help learners transform and move smoothly from classroom learning, as one group, to learning in specific groups to achieve the lesson or unit objectives - at the same time.

2.9 Phases of Group Work

El-Aly explains the role of the teacher in cooperative learning as follows (2014, p.18-22):

2.9.1 First Phase (Before the lesson)

1. The first phase begins with setting the educational objectives of the lesson

It is essential for the teacher to clearly define the objectives of the lesson procedurally and gradually and determine the behaviour that everyone in the group should be able to perform at the

end of the lesson. For the strategy of cooperative learning to be successful the objectives should be clear, authentic and attainable. The objectives can be academic, cognitive, psychological and psychomotor.

2. Determining the size of groups

The basic rule for group members is that the lower the number of members, the better the groups; i.e. Groups of 2-4 members are more positive and active than groups that exceed this number. There is no standard size for cooperative learning groups. The teacher changes the number of group members according to the objectives of the lesson, the nature of desired tasks, the possibilities and resources available, the time allotted for cooperative learning, and the age and experience of the students. However, the researcher thinks that the ideal number can never exceed four or five people maximum.

 3. Assigning students to groups

The results of some studies have confirmed that learning in non-heterogeneous groups is better than learning in homogeneous groups. A high-achieving student helps his less-achieving classmate when they have common goals. Therefore, it is better to assign students to non-heterogeneous groups in terms of cultural capacities. There are several ways in which students can be assigned to groups, where they can be randomized or deliberately chosen by the teacher noting that students may choose their own groups.

4. Classroom arrangement

The teacher arranges the classroom so that the students of each group are close to each other to exchange material, maintain visual contact with all members, and speak quietly inside the group without disturbing other groups provided that the educational material is not visually reversed for some members of the same group. The groups are sufficiently spaced, so as not to clutter one group over another as the teacher can easily find his way to each group. In this regard, the arrangement of seats, in cooperative learning classroom, takes many forms including:

a. Cluster arrangement: Students' 4-5 seats and drawers are collected separately.
b. Rotating or moving arrangement: Students' drawers and seats are arranged in the form of wings.
c. Circular arrangement: It is the best way to arrange groups, where the seats are arranged facing each other in a circular way leading to the greatest interaction between group members.

5. Assigning roles to group members

For the success of cooperative learning, the teacher assigns a role for each individual in each group. There are conditions that the teacher must take into consideration when assigning roles. These can be summarized as follows:

a. Describe the tasks of each role.

b. Explain to students how to carry out their roles.

c. Follow-up students' performance for all roles to know the level of mastery of each role. "The teacher's correct use of roles that are thoroughly defined and followed-up will enhance the students' performance and develop their social skills".

d. Exchange roles of group members from one lesson to another or even during one lesson, so that each student can learn how to carry out each role and acquire the social skills associated with such roles.

6. Preparation of aid materials and tools for the lesson

It is the teacher's task to prepare the materials, tools and means necessary for the lesson such as working papers, tools for conducting scientific competitions, and display devices, illustrations, cue cards and others. "The teacher prepares materials according to the task that students will be required to accomplish and distributes them in a way that allows collaborative work and positive interdependence in achieving educational goals".

7. Defining and explaining the criteria for success

One of the most important roles of the teacher in cooperative learning is to determine the criteria for success on the individual and collective levels. The success criteria must be authentic, flexible and realistic for each individual within the group. At the individual level, 90% is considered excellent, 89% is very good, and 70% - 79% is good so on and so forth. At the group level, the group is deemed to have completed its work if its members together receive at least 85%.

8. Preparation of individual written and oral tests:

It is the role of the teacher to prepare short written tests and questions for oral tests conducted randomly on group students. The aim of these tests is to promote individual accountability among students within a group.

2.9.2 Second Phase (During the lesson)

Eldeeb explains that teacher's tasks during the lesson are to (2006, p. 42-43 Translation Mine):

1. Explain and clarify the academic tasks

The teacher explains to the students the educational tasks that they have to do, including the objectives of the lesson and the procedures asking them some questions. He may do this in a worksheet consisting of direct and indirect questions, theoretical and practical. He presents it at the beginning of the lesson after explaining the objectives of the content of the paper, or at the end of the lesson as non-descriptive activities. The worksheet must be related to the topic of discussion to be implemented by students as extracurricular work to be discussed in the next lesson.

2. Explain the success benchmarks for the student

Build interdependence and cooperation to achieve the goal: The teacher helps the students believe that they are in an educational position that requires them to work together and urge them to support each other's learning.

3. Monitor groups to ensure that each individual is doing his work to build individual accountability and ensure that the objectives are met.

4. Intervene and offer help when needed: The following are steps to control the intervention of the teacher in the work of the group:

   a. Inspect the behavior of students

   b. Assist in the performance of the task

   c. Intervene to teach collaborative skill

5. Collect the necessary data on student performance in groups

6. Request a quick report from students about their course of and progress in work and the difficulties encountered in their roles

7. Build and encourage inter-group collaboration by encouraging the group that has completed its work to assist other groups that have not completed their work in applying the correct procedures without giving answers.

8. Reward all students in the classroom when performing their tasks well. In the end, all members of the class from different groups will be given points of encouragement and rewards, as all students have achieved the pre-determined benchmark of excellence." This encourages cooperation among students.

2.9.3 Third phase (After the lesson)

Eldeeb explains teacher's role in closing the lesson (2006, p. 57-59, Translation Mine)

1. The teacher asks groups to exchange papers and worksheets then summarize key points in the lesson. The role of the teacher is to comment on the group discussion when it begins and publicize the answers to the questions to the whole class.

2. Evaluate the groups and learners in the shade of cognitive, psychological and psychomotor objectives (Eldeeb, 2006, p. 59 Translation Mine).

3. The teacher raises questions about the main ideas of the lesson, along with a brief summary of the basic concepts the learners have learned. The learners are asked to provide examples of the concepts, principles or the skills they have learned (Eldeeb, 2006, p. 59 Translation Mine).

2.4 Learner's role in cooperative learning

The role of the learner in cooperative learning is radically different from his role in traditional education. The course in cooperative education is characterized by efficiency, activity, positivity and participation. During the group tasks, each student has several common tasks to fulfil such as:

1. Organize, identify and formulate experience
2. Correct information collection from its sources
3. Select appropriate information after organizing it
4. Link previous experiences with new situations
5. Inter-group interaction
6. Practice individual and collective mental investigation
7. Assist other groups after finishing one's task

3.Methodology

3.1 Research sample

The sample consists of 60 students from Deanship of the Preparatory Year at Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University (IAU), 30 students representing the experimental group, and 30 students of the control group. Table 1 provides a description of the research sample. As shown in Table 1, the size of the research sample comprises of 60 students; 30 students in the control group, and 30 students in the experimental group.

Table 1. *Participants of control and experimental groups*

Group	Number
Control	30
Experimental	30
Total	60

Preparation of the students' worksheets of the experimental group conducted as explained in the next section:

The researcher reworks the contents of the two units into an educational task, consisting of activities or applied questions in worksheets that require students from each group of collaborative learning groups to collaborate and accomplish them in the shortest time and best performance in order to reach the results that achieve the lesson objectives.

3.2 Individual assessment sheets

They are designed to ascertain the extent to which the student achieved the objectives of each lesson of the two units and to achieve the individual accountability of the student. Drafting the assessment sheets, the researcher was keen to determine the time needed to answer and enough space for the answer. Time should be carefully planned, and enough space should be provided in the assessment sheet.

After the preparation of the experimental group's worksheets according to the standards of cooperative learning, the researcher presents them to a group of consultants, specialized in curricula of teaching methods and teaching English language in order to have their views and observations about them. The amendments and recommendations have been made in accordance with their comments and suggestions.

3.3 Preparation of an achievement pre- and post- test

The achievement test was prepared according to the following steps:

a. Determine the purpose of the test:

The achievement test is designed to measure the achievement of the students of the experimental and control groups, for the content of the scientific material in order to know the effectiveness of cooperative learning in the teaching of the English language course for the students of the Deanship of the Preparatory Year.

b. Formulation of the test:

The achievement test has been formulated as a diverse thematic test, including different question types such as, Yes/No, multiple-choice selection, and an essay.

3.4 Credibility of the test

The researcher presents the preliminary copy of the test to a group of consultants specialized in English teaching methodology. He wants to ensure the validity of the content of the test, and the integrity of its content, in terms of scientific and linguistic reach. He also aims at knowing its suitability to the level of students and to what extent its content of vocabulary is relevant to the level of the test**.**When measuring the validity indicator of all the test vocabulary content, the percentage of agreement, in terms of questions representing the target levels, was not less than 93%. In light of this, some of the terms, suggested by some consultants, are reworded, and the test becomes final.

3.5 Calculation of test stability factor

The consistency of the test directly is reflected on the consistency of the results, given by the assessment instrument, if applied to a questionnaire sample of test-takers more than once in similar conditions. The test stability factor was calculated by means of re-application of the test on the sample twice, divided between 12 days, and then calculating the coefficient correlation between the grades of the students at both times using the following Pearson equation:

N (FS)- F x F x S

T= $\overline{}$

[(N S2-(S)2] [-(NF2)-(F)2]

T = Factor of correlation as per the grades of students at both times, and it is the coefficient of stability

N = number of sample members

F = student's first grade

S = student's second degree

It was found that the stability factor of the test is 0.95 and it has a statistical significance at level of 0.01 indicating that the test has a high degree of stability and in these previous procedures, the experiment is possible.

3.6 Implementation of the research experience

The experiment goes through several steps:

- Adjust non-experimental variables: In order to ensure that these variables do not affect the achievement (dependent variable). The researcher thus ensures that the changes in the dependent variable are due to the experimental variable (cooperative learning) as he controls the following variables:

3.6.1 Timeline

T- test is used to calculate the statistical significance of the difference between the average ages of the experimental and control group members. The result is that the value of T = 0.43 which is statistically insignificant (at 0.05). This indicates the parity of the experimental and control groups about the temporal age.

3.6.2 Achievement in English

T-test is also used to calculate the statistical significance of the difference between the average scores of the two sets of research regarding achievement of English. The result is that the value of T = 0.70 is also statistically insignificant at 0.05.

3.6.3 Course content

The experimental and control group students studied the same previously mentioned course content.

Teaching time: Teaching continued (7) lectures per group

3.6.4 Pre-application research tools

After preparing the research tools, selecting the sample, and before starting the experiment, the researcher applies the achievement test on the selected subjects to all members of the research sample in both the experimental and control groups at the same time in order to determine the total pre- score of each student on those tests. The researcher then calculates the students' grades and fills in the data in order to process it statistically using the computer to measure the differences between the experimental and control groups. The statistical program (SPSS) is used for this purpose.

3.6.5 Teaching the two groups

After the researcher identifies the size and structure of the groups, the experimental sample is divided into five homogeneous groups. The number of students in each group was six. After distributing the roles to the students, explaining the necessary information about cooperative learning and how to implement it, the cooperative learning social skills that should be used, and

setting the classroom appropriately, the researcher teaches the experimental group taking into account all the disciplines as well as the steps and tasks of the cooperative learning.

3.6.6 Teaching the control group

The researcher teaches the control group in the usual way followed by most faculty members in teaching. He delivers and discusses the lesson and incorporated some activities with the participation of a few students. He presents some models or teaching aids, reads the lesson from the book and then answers the questions. He clarifies the practical aspect of the lessons and keenly provides the same content and activities to the experimental group.

3.6.7 Post-implementation of the achievement test

After the completion of teaching the selected subjects, the researcher applies the achievement test on both groups at the same time to determine the total post- grade of each student, in the two groups. He then adds up the students 'grades and recorded data in order to address it statistically.

3.6.7 Identification of statistical processing methods

To evaluate the validity of research and determine the effectiveness of cooperative learning in achievement, the following statistical methods are used:

Test (T) for independent data to determine the significance of the differences between the average scores of the experimental and control groups in the post-application of the achievement test.

Data processing, using the improvement ratio equation, to find the differences between the average scores of the pre-test and the post-test for the two groups. The data is processed statistically using the statistical program SPSS.

4. Results and discussion

The first hypothesis states that cooperative learning is more effective than the traditional method in learning English language for students at the Deanship of Preparatory Year and Supporting Studies. In order to verify the validity of this hypothesis, the data were processed using the improvement ratio equation to find the differences between the average test scores of the pre- and post-test and the experimental group .

Table 2 shows that the improvement rate of the experimental group is (88.22%) which is a high indication value, noting that there are significant differences in favor of the post-test.

This indicates the effectiveness of CLM in the teaching of the English language course. In order to check the effectiveness of the CLM in the teaching of English language a T test was applied to measure the differences between the averages of the pre- & post- test scores.

Table 2. *Improvement rate of the experimental group between the pre- and post-measurement*

Test	Average	Standard deviation	Test score out of	Improvement percentage %	Indicative/ Significance
Pre	9.7665	1.9945	20 points	88.22%	Yes
Post	18.383	0.9523			Yes

Table 3 shows the significance of the *differences* between the average scores of students in the experimental group in the pre/post application. The results of the T test which include the average between the application scores (pre and post) is the same as the standard deviation of the average of the difference between the two applications and the value of the T test (equal to 30.680) with a freedom degree of (29) and a level of significance of the two sides which equals (0.000). Hence, we can conclude that there are statistically significant differences at the level of significance (0.001); i.e., the level of uncertainty is low, indicating that there are significant differences in favor of the post-test. This indicates the existence of real differences between the pre- and post- test, in favor of the post-test. Thus, the first result denotes the effectiveness of the method of collaborative learning in the teaching of self-development course for prep year students. Another important result states that there are statistically significant differences between the average scores of students in the control and experimental group in the pre-and post-achievement tests in favor of the post-test. The T-test is applied to calculate the significance of the differences between the averages of the test scores of the pre- and post- achievement test, and the experimental and control groups.

Table 3. *Effectiveness of CLM in teaching English courses to students before and after cooperative learning*

Test	Average	Standard deviation	Sample (N)	Freedom degree	Value (T)	Indication level and direction
Pre	9.7665	1.9945	30	29	30.680	0.01 in favor of Post-
Post	18.383	0.9523				

Table 4 shows that all T values for the control and experimental groups are at the 0.01 level of the test. This indicates that there are real differences between the pre- and post-test for the control group, in favor of the post- test, which proves the second hypothesis.

The third result states that there are statistically significant differences between the average scores of the control and experimental groups in favor of the post achievement test for the experimental group. This finding is compatible with Tesfamichael's study in which she concluded that implementing CLM in EFL class helped that participants "compose better paragraphs" (2016, p.1).

Table 4. *Differences between the pre-test and post-test for the experimental and control groups*

Groups	Test	Average	Non-deviated standard	Sample (N)	Value (T)	Indication
Control	Pre	5.3000	1.5120	30	23.967	0.01 in favor of Post
	Post	14.1333	2.1613			
Experimental	Pre	5.5667	1.9945	30	30.680	0.01 in favor of Post
	Post	18.200	0.9523			

Table 5 shows that all T values for both control and experimental groups are at 0.01 for the post achievement test noting that there are real differences between the control and experimental groups in the post- test in favor of the experimental group. The results of the experimental group outperformed the control group in the post- test, which indicates the effectiveness of the CLM in teaching the English language course. As such, CLM is an appropriate approach for EFL context which confirms the finding of Nuraida's et al's study. In their study, they affirmed the suitability of (CLM) for Indonesian context which is characterized by diverse students.

5. Conclusion

As seen above, the results of this study are in favour of implementing CLM since it affected language learning positively. Therefore, language institution, preparatory year programs may profoundly assist their students' performance. One reason contributing to this approach effectiveness is that it gives learners a chance to review their ideas from peers, avoiding fear of being afraid to answer in class before cross-checking their answers. Hence, they may be become

more confident about verbalizing or producing language. Another reason found in the interest of CLM is that the way groups are divided increases level of responsibility when tasks are distributed, and learners are aware of their roles. Finally, learners get the chance to evaluate their work before the teacher does. Overall, all these factors support implementing CLM approach for language learning classes.

Table 5. *Differences between the control and experimental groups in the post- test*

Groups	Average	Non-deviation standard	Sample(N)	Value(T)	Indication
Control	14.1333	2.5120	30	9.056	0.01 in favor of the experimental

6. Research recommendations

Based on the current research results, the following recommendations can be made:

1. The implementation of cooperative learning in English language teaching in general and the field of studies of the Deanship of the Preparatory Year in particular.

2. Encouraging as well as training faculty members and assistant teachers of English at the Deanship to teach the educational units using various teaching strategies and choosing what suits the nature of the specialized courses to ensure the effectiveness of teaching/learning process.

3. Working to develop traditional methods of teaching/learning/replacing them with more positive ways of teaching to ensure students' interaction throughout the educational process.

7. Study limitations

This study is subject to two limitations. First, it explores the effectiveness of the use of cooperative learning in the teaching of the English language course for students of the Deanship of the Preparatory Year students compared to the traditional teaching method. Second, it covers two teaching units for teaching the English language course for the Deanship of the Preparatory Year students. Future research would be conducted at a large scale including other departments and incorporating more units for teaching English.

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A Speech-based Probe of Korean EFL Learners' Use of Metadiscourse Markers

Maribel N. Zipagan[1]

Biliran Province State University, Naval, Biliran Province, Philippines

maribel.zipagan@bipsu.edu.ph

Jin-Young Tak[2]

Department of English Language and Literature

Sejong University, Seoul, Korea

jytak@sejong.ac.kr

Eun Joo Kwak

Department of English Language and Literature

Sejong University[3]

ejkwak@sejong.ac.kr

Bio-profiles:

Maribel N. Zipagan, Ph.D. in English Language Education, was an ESL teacher in Korea. She is interested in language learning and teaching issues, including proficiency assessment and formulaic expressions. She is currently the International Affairs Director at Biliran Province State University, Philippines.

Jin – Young Tak (corresponding author), a professor of English Language and Literature at Sejong University, earned her master's (1992) and Ph.D. (1997) degrees in Linguistics from Indiana University. She has published papers on phonology, morphology, and EFL. She is recently interested in convergence studies of big data analytics and linguistics framework.

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[1] Maribel N. Zipagan and Jin-Young Tak are both the co-first authors.

[2] E-mail correspondence: *jytak@sejong@ac.kr*.

Eun – Joo Kwak (co-author), a professor at Sejong University, earned her Ph.D. in Linguistics from Brown University in 1996. She has published papers on semantics, pragmatics, translational studies, and interrelationships between EFL and big data analytics.

Abstract

Metadiscourse, a linguistic means that is used in the production and organization of ideas, is vital in achieving successful communication. In language studies, metadiscourse in writing and speaking have been disparately investigated, where the former received more attention than the latter. Thus, the present study analyzes metadiscourse in the speech production of 57 Korean L2 learners purposively chosen relative to their language proficiency. The current results suggest two significant findings. First, the quantitative analysis of metadiscourse *frequency* reveals the interactional category's superiority over the interactive metadiscourse, which implies that the Korean L2 learners are more interested in interacting with the listeners than organizing discourse and asserting their role as speakers. Secondly, the quantitative and qualitative analyses suggest that the *logical connectives, relational markers, hedges,* and *personal markers* are metadiscourse features that significantly predict Korean L2 speakers' speech proficiency. Except for *personal markers,* these proficiency indicators reveal a clear-cut divergence regarding the levels of lexical sophistication and lexical expansion among the proficiency groups using a vocabulary profiler. The present study proves that speech proficiency in the Korean context depends on the employment of metadiscourse in frequency and diversity. Possible future applications and directions relevant to the present study are also provided.

Keywords: *metadiscourse, interactive metadiscourse, interactional metadiscourse, proficiency level, L2 speech, Korean L2 speakers*

1. Introduction

In linguistics and language, there has been a growing number of studies regarding metadiscourse (**MD)**, a linguistic means that speakers and writers employ to interact and connect with the readers or listeners, which in general, affects how ideas are conveyed and understood. MD, as a 'fussy' and 'an umbrella term,' is a word, phrase, clause, or sentence, which is positively

associated with interaction because it helps make texts effective (Hyland, 2005). Simply put, MD studies subtly imply the three-way components of MD, which are essential elements in successful communication: the text/message, the writer/speaker, and the reader/listener. MD can serve as a bridge that links these elements together. Used as a persuasive skill, MD helps the writer make his or her claims well-conveyed to the listeners (Hyland, 1999). Not merely for information transference from the writer/speaker to the reader/listener, MD also signals the writer's attitude or assumptions towards both the content of the proposition and the audience of the text (Hyland & Tse, 2004). On the other hand, these linguistic markers help guide the readers/listeners to the text or production where more attention should be given.

Metadiscourse markers are a concept that receives ample attention. Previous frequency-based MD studies in written discourse have compared MD in the language, culture, discipline, and EFL learning and teaching contexts (Abdi, 2002; Mina & Biria, 2017; Dahl, 2004; Kedri et al., 2013; Kim & Lim, 2013; Kobayashi, 2016; Mur-Dueñas, 2011). Other MD studies also include the investigation of its discursive role in academic lectures (Mauranen, 2001) and collegiate course presentations (Magnuczné Godó, 2012). Most of these studies involve the comparison of the two main categories of MD. In several benchmark studies, these two MD categories have been appointed different names, but mainly the functions are the same: *metatext* and *audience interaction* (Ädel, 2010), *textual metadiscourse*, and *interpersonal metadiscourse* (Crismore et al., 1993; Hyland, 2005; Kopple, 1985), and *interactive metadiscourse* and *interactional metadiscourse* (Hyland, 2005). The first of the MD dichotomy refers to MD features that guide the reader in the text by providing propositional content, while the second involves and guides the reader in and through the text. Besides, most MD studies give light to MD's frequency distribution in the written texts (Kim & Lee, 2014; Kizil, 2017; Yüksel and Kavanoz, 2018), but not many incorporate both frequency and diversity in MD studies (Huh & Lee, 2016).

With this trend in MD, Ädel (2010) raises the concern that the focus of MD studies is mainly on L2 writing, i.e., academic, cross-cultural comparison, frequency-based; while MD in speech has been regarded with little concern (Kizil, 2017; Mauranen, 2001, 2002; Thompson, 2003; Wei-yan, 2014). MD studies that focus on speech production remain scant up to the present. Among the scattered few are MD studies in the rally speeches of prominent political figures (Esmer, 2017; Mai, 2016; Sukma, 2017), but not much is known about MD's use in the speech of second language learners with particular emphasis on the varying proficiency levels. Park and Oh

(2018) mention the correlation of writing proficiency and MD usage and how MD markers are deployed as proficiency advances. With regards to speech proficiency, very few have ventured into the exploration of its association with MD. Thus, Ädel (2006; 2010) and Hyland (2005) call for further exploration of MD, particularly within the speaking component. Crookes (1991) reminds that the neglect of studying such L2 production "is likely to continue unless there is steady pressure to assert its importance and to make the somewhat scattered findings generally accessible (p. 114)." Therefore, the need for a circumspect identification of MD patterns, mainly in the speech production of non-native speakers, can be viewed from several angles. First, it can provide relevant information towards improving second language learners' communication abilities. Secondly, it can lay out a more profound understanding of how non-native speakers interact, connect, and build relationships with their listeners, and lastly, it can serve as a basis for comparison over MD with the previous studies of written production and subsequent MD studies in spoken discourse. To fill in the void of MD studies in speech, the researchers of the current study attempt to explore the presence and use of MD in Korean L2 learners' speech production with varying proficiency levels. In particular, this study is anchored and guided by the following research questions:

1. *Is there a relationship between speech proficiency and the employment of MD in the speech of KEFL learners?*
2. *Is there a significant difference among KEFL learner groups in their utilization of MD diversity and MD frequency?*
3. *Between interactive and interactional MD, which category is manifested as the preference of Korean L2 speaker groups?*
4. *What are the distributional patterns of Korean L2 speakers' MD features, and which MD features are predictive of Korean L2 speakers' proficiency?*

To this end, inspecting the commonalities and divergences of MD usage in the speech of L2 learners with varying proficiency can contribute to our general understanding of MD and its usage in an EFL or ESL context.

2. Literature review

This section presents first the development of MD taxonomies where one of which is this study anchored upon. Also, relevant studies of frequency-based MD categories and MD features

are presented, then specific MD studies in Korean L2 learners' language related to the current study are reviewed.

2.1 Metadiscourse and its different taxonomies

Metadiscourse is not a new concept. It has been studied since the 1960s. Among the first reference that used metadiscourse is Harris (1959), who sought to understand the use of language by concentrating on the way speakers or writers project their speech or present their text that seems to guide the receiver of the discourse. With the growing interest in the concept, Crismore et al. (1993) seem to have unified the various definitions of metadiscourse in their comprehensive statement. Metadiscourse is a "linguistic material in text written or spoken which does not add anything to the propositional content, but that is intended to help the listener or reader organize, interpret or evaluate the information given" (p.40). Hyland (2017) adds that metadiscourse is a recipient-designed filter that helps spell out the intended message to the readers or hearers through our running commentaries. Since metadiscourse interacts with the audience and makes a connection between texts and contexts, several scholars have studied the MD concept, some have attempted and succeeded in putting forward taxonomies to categorize metadiscourse (Ädel, 2006, 2010; Crismore et al., 1993; Hyland, 2004, 2005; Kopple; 1985) for understanding better its discursive, pragmatic and other linguistic roles. Table 1 illustrates the comparison of these prominent categorization samples. Each MD model has two salient categories. As mentioned earlier, one category involves the writer/speaker's propositional content, while the second attempts to involve and guide the reader/listener to the text or discourse. Several corresponding MD features or descriptors exemplify the represented MD category.

One of the benchmarks is the classification system set by Kopple (1985), where a line segregates between the two categories of *textual* and *interpersonal* MD. Crismore et al. (1993) further develop the taxonomy but retain the two major categories' labels. However, the textual MD descriptors are subdivided into two, the textual markers and interpretive markers, which also have more specific sub-classifications. Hyland (2004, 2005) then modifies the categories and improves the two general categories' descriptions. This new improvement can cater not only to the written production but also to the spoken production. The label, *interactive metadiscourse,* replaces textual metadiscourse. The *interactional metadiscourse* label, also known as *stance,* is used for interpersonal metadiscourse. The definition of the categories, however, remains the same.

Table 1 Taxonomies of metadiscourse markers

Kopple (1985)		Crismore et al. (1993)	Hyland (2004)	Hyland (2005)	Ädel (2010)
		TEXTUAL METADISCOURSE		**INTERACTIVE**	**METATEXT**
Text connectives *Code glosses* *Validity marker* *Narrators*		**1. Textual Markers** *Logical connectives* *Sequencers* *Reminders* *Topicalizers* **2. Interpretive Markers** *Code glosses* *Illocution markers* *Announcements*	*Logical connectives* *Frame markers* *Endophoric markers* *Evidentials* *Code glosses*	*Transitions* *Frame markers* *Endophoric markers* *Evidentials* *Code glosses*	**1. Metalinguistic comments** *Repairing* *Reformulating* *Commentating on linguistic form/meaning* *Clarifying* *Managing terminology* **2. Discourse organization** *Introducing topic* *Delimiting topic* *Adding to topic* *Concluding topic* *Marking asides* *Enumerating* *Endophoric marking* *Previewing* *Reviewing* *Contextualising* **3. Speech act labels** *Arguing* *Exemplifying* *Other speech act labelling*
		INTERPERSONAL METADISCOURSE		**INTERACTIONAL**	
Illocution markers *Attitude markers* *Commentaries*		*Certainty markers* *Attributes* *Attitude markers* *Commentary*	*Hedges* *Emphatics* *Attitude markers* *Relational markers* *Personal markers*	*Hedges* *Boosters* *Attitude markers* *Self-mentions* *Engagement markers*	**AUDIENCE INTERACTION** **1. References to the audience** *Managing Comprehension/ channel* *Managing audience Discipline* *Anticipating the audience's response* *Managing the message* *Imagining scenarios*

Mauranen (2001) suggests that the study between spoken and written MD should be investigated separately, but others (Ädel, 2006, 2010; Hyland, 2010; Luukka, 1994) believe they

should be studied in conjunction with each other. The former is known as the *splitting* approach, and the latter is the *lumping* approach. Even if both discourses can be assessed as one, Ädel (2006) further posits that the spoken metadiscourse, when compared with the written discourse, has shown a greater range of discourse actions. This finding is from Ädel's comparison of the spoken data from university lecturers and written essays from highly proficient students. As a result, Ädel (2010) proposes a revised and extended spoken MD taxonomy, which categories are *metatext* and *audience interaction*. Though similar to the previous models, Ädel (2006) includes several subcategories and proposes more MD features. However, Hyland (2010) asserts that MD markers work similarly with both speech and writing, and utilizing the same paradigm in the analysis can provide prospective points for comparison. Therefore, the results in the studies of spoken MD are as significant as the written MD. Of all these mentioned taxonomies to date, the model that is earlier proposed (Hyland, 2004) and later remodified by Hyland (2005) has been the most widely used in different MD studies. In our present investigation, Hyland's taxonomy will be adapted to incorporate both the 2004 and 2005 models.[4] Initially, Hyland's (2004) taxonomy follows the previous categorizations of textual MD and interpersonal MD set by the earlier proponents of MD. This is specifically intended for written texts. In 2005, the categories were renamed and can therefore cover both written and spoken discourses. Since then, there had been a surge of frequency-based studies regarding MD in writing (Akbas, 2012; Dafouz-Milne, 2008; Gholami et al., 2014; Heng & Tan, 2010; Tan & Eng, 2014). Hyland's interpersonal model has been influential even in technology-assisted MD studies. As with other previous MD frameworks, Hyland's model is divided into two general categories: *interactive* and *interactional*. The interactive MD category (viz. *logical connectives, frame markers, code glasses, endophoric markers, and evidentials*) guides the readers/listeners throughout the text or production. On the other hand, the interactional MD category (viz. *attitude markers, hedges, relational markers, personal markers, and emphatics*) involves the reader or listener in the argument.

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[4] Hyland's 2004 and 2005 models are identical, except for relabeling the former MD features to cater to the spoken discourse in the latter. This study incorporates both models because some labels, i.e., *logical connectives, emphatics, relational markers, and personal markers,* are preferred over *transitions, boosters, engagement markers,* and *self-mentions,* respectively.

2.3 Related metadiscourse studies and MD frequency distribution

MD studies in writing provide precedential evidence with comparing the frequency of MD. Studies of the frequency distribution of MD in written discourse have shown contrasting results regarding the prevalence of one MD category over the other. Since MD is context-dependent, i.e., genres, languages, Hyland (2015) posits that MD offers extensive opportunities for numerous interpretations.

Some studies report that the MD interactive category, the one that mainly highlights the writers' propositional content, is more prevalent in the written production of these different English L2 users. In one investigation of MD categories, Farahani (2019) reports the distributional pattern of MD from two corpora - British Academic Spoken English Corpus and British Academic Written English Corpus. In both academic spoken and written English modes, the predilection is more on the interactive category. In another investigation of MD in English medical texts and their Persian-translated counterparts also shows the dominance of the interactive MD category over the interactional MD category in the two texts (Gholami et al., 2014). This means that English authors for medical texts establish a closer relationship with the readers by attempting to comment about the text more. This also explains the reason why Persian translations sound restricted. Mina and Biria (2017) also give the same report about Iranian social science authors who seem to prefer the interactional category more in their research articles.

On the other hand, the study from Yüksel and Kavanoz (2018) reveal that in the texts of Turkish speakers/writers, interactional[5] metadiscourse markers are used more than the interactive MD. However, this finding cannot be generalized because it displays the combined results of participants who differ in language, cultural, and proficiency backgrounds. In Mina and Biria's investigation (2017) between Iranian social science and medical doctors, the latter prefers interactional MD while the former is inclined with interactive MD.

Another interesting result that quantifies the frequency distribution of MD is conducted by Dafouz-Milne (2008). She develops a cross-linguistic and cross-cultural investigation of the pragmatic role of MD in *The Times* and *El País*, British and Spanish newspapers, respectively. She

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[5] The original paper uses *interpersonal* and *textual* MD for *interactional* MD and *interactive* MD, respectively.

attempts to identify the MD category that predominates in the newspaper discourse. The results expose that there is no significant difference with the use of the two general MD categories, but there are minor variations seen with the MD features.

In speech, some research of MD studies concentrates on monologic genres in the academic field, such as lectures and class presentations. Mauranen (2001) inspects the MD standpoint in academic lectures and, she categorizes two subtypes of MD spoken discourse, which include monologic and dialogic. In her conclusion, she states that MD expressions are extensive in academic discourse, and they function to structure an on-going speech. Magnuczné-Godó (2012) also investigates MD in the course presentations of college students. However, the focal points of the study are the interactive strategies that are employed by the students in connection with the responses and the reactions of the audience, as well as the raters' holistic perception of the presentation quality. The results report that the speeches, which are categorized as successful, have incorporated considerable metadiscursive strategies. In a similar study, Magnuczné-Godó (2012) investigates the course presentations of students and concludes that more successful presenters are distinguished by a higher proportion of interactive MD features. In addition to metadiscourse, another investigation regarding text-structuring MD and intonation in academic lectures is presented by Thompson (2003), who argues that intonation also helps in organizing a 'coherent map' that guides the audience or listeners about the lecture. In one study, Kizil (2017) investigates MD in Turkish speech following Adel's (2010) model. The study implicitly reports that Turkish English speakers are inclined to MD interactive category, which in results shows the participants' weaker tendency regarding audience interaction.

Several studies on the discursive functions of MD follow the rally speeches of prominent political figures. Mai (2016) inspects 60 rally speeches of American and Chinese politicians and finds that some features of MD differentiate the American from Chinese speakers. By using specific MD features, the American speeches produce a more credible and persuasive appeal compared to the Chinese speeches. The interactional features of MD also help construct persuasion and emotional bond with the audience, which is evident in the investigation of Barack Obama's speech (Sukma, 2017). The interactional MD helps reveal the clear expression of the personal feelings, commitment, and concern for the country the politicians in Turkey are serving (Esmer, 2017).

In the diverging comparative studies of MD, there is one noteworthy implication. Authors construct their interactions differently, and the use of MD is not uniform across genres, disciplines, and languages (Fu and Hyland, 2014). The employment of varying MD featires depends highly on the cultural, social, and other contexts. Looking at MD from different perspectives gives us a clearer picture of the role of MD in language use. Therefore, MD and its features are the focus on the investigation of the current paper from the perspective of the varying proficiency of Korean L2 speakers.

2.4 Metadiscourse studies about Korean L2 learners

As mentioned, metadiscourse studies in writing are investigated from different viewpoints, of which extent relates to language, culture, discipline, and EFL learning and teaching. Studies about Korean MD include Huh and Lee's (2016) investigation reporting that Korean undergraduate students employ in their writing the metadiscourse markers available to them but are considerably limited in rhetorical sophistication. They also emphasize that metadiscourse is an essential characteristic of effective and persuasive writing. In one comparative study of MD use between the English text by American elementary school students, Kim (2017) finds that American elementary students use more interactive and interactional MD than Korean students. This finding contrasts with Kim's (2009) and Uhm et al.'s (2009) results, who state that Korean writers employ more interactive metadiscourse than their native counterparts. Similar to Choi and Ko's (2005) and Hwang and Lee's (2008) findings, Koreans use more metadiscourse features than native English speakers. This stark contrast is explained by Hong et al. (2003) that, as cognitive psychology suggests, non-native students or writers who write in English may be primed by English culture, and thus, their writing may be influenced by English culture projected in the classrooms or textbooks.

This notion seems to support indirectly Park and Oh's (2018) claim that there is a relationship between proficiency and MD employment. They posit that as language proficiency progresses, the more diverse the range of MD, the lesser reliance on MD features under the interactive category, and the more balanced the use of interactional resources. When the students' proficiency is comparable with the native speakers', not only would the non-native speakers use MD equally with the native speakers, but they would similarly use the language.

On this note, we have established that MD results may vary by culture and by proficiency. Since there are several MD studies in Korean L2 writing, the present study wants to fill the gap by investigating the other modality, which is the speaking component where MD is involved.

3. Methodology

This section presents the participants' profiles, instruments, and how the data is collected, operationalized, and analyzed.

3.1 Participants

Fifty-seven (57) adult Korean EFL learners produced the transcribed speech data in an English learning institute in Seoul City, Korea. The participants are 16-40 years of age, and the proficiency levels are pre-determined by a series of assessment tests from the academy, which includes a simulated OPIc[6] test. The speakers' proficiency levels are pre-identified as Novice, Intermediate, and Advanced. At the onset, 20 speakers are originally selected to represent each proficiency group. However, three participants' speech data, including one for each level, are excluded due to incomplete responses to the speaking tasks. The participants' profile is displayed in Table 2.

Table 2 Participants' Profile

	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced	Total
Female	13	10	12	35
Male	6	9	7	22
Total	19	19	19	57

3.2 Data collection

In the English institute where the participants attend, each student is tasked to have a monthly simulated OPIc test. A set of six questions are provided, and a maximum time limit of 2 minutes for each question is allowed for the test-takers to state their responses. This study's data samples are gathered based on the students' replies to the following questions from their monthly tasks.

1. Can you tell me about yourself?

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[6] The Oral Proficiency Interview by Computer (OPIc) test was selected since it elicits natural and authentic conversational language from the speakers by creating a simulated conversation environment in the act of an interview using a computer. This test is also one of the standardized speaking assessments frequently administered in Korea for university students or job applicants to showcase their speaking skills

2. Tell me about your house? Please describe in detail.

3. Can you describe your typical day from start to finish?

4. Which kind of technology these days do you use the most: a notebook computer, a cellular phone, or any handheld device? Tell me how you use it/them?

5. How do you think technology has changed from past to present? How was the technology you used in the past different from what you use at present?

6. One of my hobbies is traveling to many countries. You can ask me four questions regarding a vacation or trip that I have recently taken.

3.3 Data instruments, operationalization, and analysis

3.3.1 Transcription

The audio data are first transcribed by a text-to-speech tool. To ensure the transcription precision, we manually rechecked the data using *Voicewalker 2.0*, a transcriber's tool that aids speedy transcription. It offers a more reliable transcription process vital for deciphering rapid speech.

3.3.2 Identification, coding, and calculation

With the use of technology, some frequency-based information regarding language usage can be easily identified. When studying MD, some programs and software help assist in revealing its use. These programs further expose which patterns have been overly used and underused. The present study employs and adapts Hyland's (2004; 2005) MD functional model, and it is considered the starting point. *Text Inspector* is a professional web tool, which works as a vocabulary profiler and text analyzer. It is used to inspect the different kinds of MD features present in the production of the speakers. Table 3 below summarizes specific metadiscourse features under the two MD categories, which serve as the leading indices or descriptors of the analysis used in this study. The examples for each feature are provided.

Table 3 Metadiscourse classification model (Hyland: 2004, 2005)

Category	Function	Examples
INTERACTIVE	*Help to guide the reader through the text.*	
Logical connectives	Express relations between the main clause	*in addition, but, thus, and*
Frame markers	Refer to discourse acts, sequences, and stages	
	Sequencing	*finally, next*
	Label stages	*to conclude, in sum*
	Announce goals	*I suggest, I will emphasize*

	Topic shifts	*with regard to, well*
Endophoric markers	Refer to the information in other parts of the texts	*noted above, see figure, in section 2*
Evidentials	State information from other texts	*according to --; -- states*
Code glosses	Expound propositional meaning	*such as, namely, e.g.,*
INTERACTIONAL	*Include the reader in the text*	
Hedges	Emphasize uncertainty and open dialogue	*maybe, perhaps, possible*
Emphatics/Boosters	Emphasize certainty and close dialogue	*certainly, show*
Attitude markers	Express writer's attitude to intentions	*surprisingly, unfortunately, I agree*
Personal markers	Overt reference to authors	*I, we, my, me, our*
Relational markers	Openly build a connection with readers	*you can see that, consider, note*

3.3.3 Analysis

The present study employs quantitative and qualitative analyses in the investigation with two-fold foci, the MD token and the MD type patterns apparent in Korean EFL speakers' speech data. A *type* typically refers to a word or words that are concrete and particular, while a *token* is the occurrence of any type. Therefore, in the sentence *"Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose,"* there are three different words or *types,* but we may count ten *tokens.*[7] For easier identification, MD tokens are hereby referred to in this study as *MD Frequency (MD-F)*, while MD types are identified here as *MD Diversity (MD-D).*

Non-parametric statistical analyses through SPSS are used to compare the MD count differences for both frequency and diversity. The Kruskal-Wallis H test is employed to compare the three proficiency groups, while the Mann-Whitney U test is for the differences of the interactive and interactional categories of the MD-F and MD-D. *To answer the relationship between speech proficiency and MD's employment in terms of frequency and diversity, we use Kendall's tau b.* Lastly, *stepwise multiple regression analysis is applied to assess the predictive power of metadiscourse features concerning proficiency.* In addition to the quantitative analyses, a qualitative investigation assesses in closer detail the characteristics of MD-D using the English Vocabulary Profile as reference.

4. Results and Discussion

This section is composed of three sub-headings that include (1) comparison of speaker/proficiency groups, (2) the MD categories, and (3) the discussion of MD features. The

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[7] From *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* retrieved at https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/types-tokens/

statistical results will be presented in the first two subtopics, and additional qualitative analysis will be incorporated in the last topic.

4.1 Comparison of speaker groups in the employment of MD

In comparing the three groups regarding MD-F and MD-D usage, the Kruskal Wallis test determines the frequency differences. The results shown in Table 4 reveal that the null hypotheses are rejected in both the MD-F and MD-D. This means that the three proficiency groups are statistically different with the use of MD-F, $H(2) = 42.727$, $p = .000$ and MD-D, $H(2) = 38.745$, $p = .000$. However, the pairwise comparisons further disclose the specific differences among the three groups. Table 5 displays the pairwise comparisons between the groups based on the MD-F and MD-D counts.

Table 4   Comparison of MD-F and MD-D across the proficiency groups

	N	*H*	*Df*	*Sig.*	*Decision*
MD-F	57	42.727	2	.000	Reject
MD-D	57	38.745	2	.000	Reject

Table 5 Pairwise comparisons of the proficiency groups

	Groups (Mdn)	*H*	*Std. Error*	*Adj. Sig.*
	Novice (33) – Intermediate (149)	-20.921		.000*
MD-F	Novice (33) – Advanced (265)	-34.974	5.385	.000*
	Intermediate (149) -Advanced (265)	-14.053		.027*
	Novice (8) – Intermediate (19)	-20.89		.000*
MD-D	Novice (8) – Advanced (27)	-33.105	5.379	.000*
	Intermediate (19)-Advanced (27)	-12.211		.070

In the pairwise comparison of MD-F, it has been found out that each group is statistically different from each other. The medians for each group, 33, 149, and 265 for the novice, intermediate, and advanced, are in ascending order and statistically different. The advanced group is statistically higher than the intermediate group, $H(2) = -14.053$, $p = .027$, and the intermediate group is higher than the novice group, $H(2) = -20.921$, $p = .000$.

The pairwise comparison of MD-D showed a different result from MD-F. There is a relatively significant difference between the novice group *(Mdn=8)* and the intermediate group *(Mdn=19)*, $H(2) = -20.89$, $p = .000$ and the novice group *(Mdn=8)* and the advanced group

(Mdn=27), *H*(2) = -33.105, *p* = .000. However, there was no difference between the intermediate group *(Mdn=19)* and the advanced group *(Mdn=27)*, *H*(2) = -12.211, *p* = .070.

These analyses inspect the commonalities or the divergence of the novice, the intermediate, and the advanced Korean speaker groups for the MD use in both frequency and the diversity counts. The MD-F results confirm the order of the proficiency groups in MD usage as novice, intermediate and advanced levels. Their use of MD reflects the upward trajectory alongside proficiency, and the results of the present study confirm the validity and reliability of the proficiency classification administered by the language academy, where the participants of the current study attend. The results inform us that the number of MD-D is spread similarly between the intermediate and advanced groups. However, the novice group's MD employment can be seen as inferior to the other two groups.

The MD-F and MD-F analyses, which present a slightly contrasting result, seem to follow a similar upward trajectory. The direction of progress advances as the level gets higher. These results also agree with Yüksel and Kavanoz' (2018) argument that MD features develop with experience, regardless of the L1 background. Since cohesion and coherence in the discourse can be mostly attained by MD features (Littlewood, 1966), the preliminary results suggest that one should consider MD's employment in both frequency and diversity to acquire richer findings. As much as the MD's frequency is insightful, the number and the accuracy of the MD diversity throughout the spoken discourse are equally important.

To answer if there is a relationship between speech proficiency and MD engagement in terms of frequency and diversity, we employ Kendall's tau-b correlation analysis, and the results are reflected in Table 6.

Table 6   Correlation table between proficiency and MD (frequency and diversity)

		Proficiency	MD Frequency	MD Diversity
Kendall's tau_b	Correlation Coefficient	1	.852	.829
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	57		

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The results show a strong, positive association between proficiency and MD's frequent use, which is statistically significant, τ_b=.852, *p*=.000. Similarly, there is a strong relationship between proficiency and MD diversity, which is also statistically significant, τ_b=.829, *p*=.000. The results

imply that the MD deployment is correlated with the level of proficiency. The findings agree with Park and Oh's (2018) claim that as proficiency increases, the more diverse its range becomes. As MD distinguishes Korean L2 users' good writings from poor ones (Huh & Lee, 2016, Kim & Lee, 2014, Oh & Kang, 2013), the present study also claims that the employment of MD characterizes the speaking proficiency of Korean L2 speakers.

4.2 The interactive and interactional MD categories

Identifying Korean L2 speaker groups' preferences will help distinguish MD's role in Korean L2 speakers' spoken discourse. Mann-Whitney U tests are run to determine if there are statistical differences in MD-F and MD-D between the interactive and the interactional categories for each group.

The statistical results are displayed in Table 7.

Table 7   Comparison of the MD categories by MD-F

		Mdn	*U*	*Z*	*Sig.*
Novice	Interactive	16			
	Interactional	22	266	2.50	.012*
Intermediate	Interactive	72			
	Interactional	93	259.5	2.31	.021*
Advanced	Interactive	121			
	Interactional	158	270	2.61	.008*

Significant results are revealed across the three proficiency levels that prove the interactional MD category's dominance over the interactive MD tokens in the count of MD-F. For the novice group, the median (22) for interactional MD is significantly higher than the median (16) for interactive MD ($U = 266$, $z = 2.50$, and $p = .012$). Similarly, for the intermediate group, the median for interactional MD (93) and interactive MD (72), respectively, are significant ($U = 259$, $z = -2.31$, and $p = .021$). For the advanced group, interactional MD ($Mdn = 158$) is significantly different from the interactive MD ($Mdn = 121$), $U = 270$, $z = 2.61$, and $p = .008$.

However, the results for the MD-F show a diverging pattern from the MD-D (Table 8). There are no statistically significant differences in the median scores of the MD-D between the interactive and the interactional categories, as consistently shown in each of the three groups, $U = 150$, $z = -.891$, and $p = .385$ for the novice group, $U = 178$, $z = -.073$, and $p = .954$ for the

intermediate group, and $U = 159$, $z = -.633$, and $p = .544$ for the advanced group. As a result, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table 8   Comparison of the MD categories by MD-D

		Mdn	U	Z	Sig.
Novice	Interactive	5			
	Interactional	4	150	-.891	.385
Intermediate	Interactive	11			
	Interactional	12	178	-.073	.954
Advanced	Interactive	15			
	Interactional	14	159	-.633	.544

The inspection of the MD incidence for the two MD categories, interactive and interactional MD, discloses a somewhat contrasting outcome. The results show that in the MD-F, the interactional MD markers are more prevalent than the interactive MD. While in the MD-D, there is no significant difference. The results have conflicting outcomes compared with other written MD investigations because the interactive MD is more extensive than the interactional MD in Bal-Gezegin's (2016), Farahani's (2019), and Lin's (2005) studies. Written discourse needs cohesion by nature, and cohesion can be attained by incorporating metadiscourse features since writers need to fully inform the readers of the clarity of their intentions by writing a more coherent and well-organized output. Therefore, interactive MD helps the writers guide readers through the text. However, the widespread use of interactional MD is consistent with the MD studies' results in speech, specifically the political speeches of famous personalities and politicians (Esmer, 2017; Mai, 2016; Sukma, 2017).   Using interactional MD can aid the speaker by considering and involving the listeners in the spoken discourse as reflected in the results of the present study. Also, there are no significant differences in the use of MD-D for the two categories. This result explains that the two MD categories' ratio in the three groups' speech is comparative. A significant difference is how frequently the speakers use these MD types, which eventually leads to a different frequency count, and interactional MD tokens supersede the interactive MD.

Based on the high-frequency use of the interactional MD over the interactive MD in frequency, which is similarly patterned in the three proficiency levels, Korean EFL speakers in this study are categorized as responsible and listener-friendly speakers. The results refer heavily to features that guide and involve listeners in the discourse by asserting their speaker roles more than focusing on self or speaker stance. They are more interested in conducting interaction with

the speakers than organizing the discourse. Reasonable discourse, which includes written or spoken, does not guarantee objectivity and factuality. Hyland (1999) posits that by applying social, linguistic conventions, writers or speakers can only be convincing if the intended audience, including the reader or the listener, finds it persuasive. The Korean speakers try to construct meaning by involving the listeners in the conversation and mutual thinking. Therefore, for the L2 learners to improve their communicative ability, they should enhance their awareness of the significance of metadiscourse, which is more reader-friendly or listener-friendly (Hyland, 2004) and, at the same time, acceptable to the English audience. To convey meaning effectively, both the speaker/writer and the listener/reader are equally crucial to the discourse organization (Kim & Lim, 2013).

4.3 Distributional rankings of MD features

Results have revealed earlier that there was a significant difference between interactive MD and interactional MD in MD-F but not in MD-D. This section will discuss the distributional patterns of MD by closely identifying specific interactive and interactional MD features that the Korean EFL speaker groups frequently and significantly use.

4.3.1 MD Features in Frequency

The interactional MD's significant prevalence over the interactive MD in frequency across all three proficiency groups is visually displayed in Figure 1. It can also be seen in Figure 2 the distribution of MD in diversity count, and as noted, no significant difference between the interactive and interactional MD features. From the two representations, we can see the disparity of MD distribution.
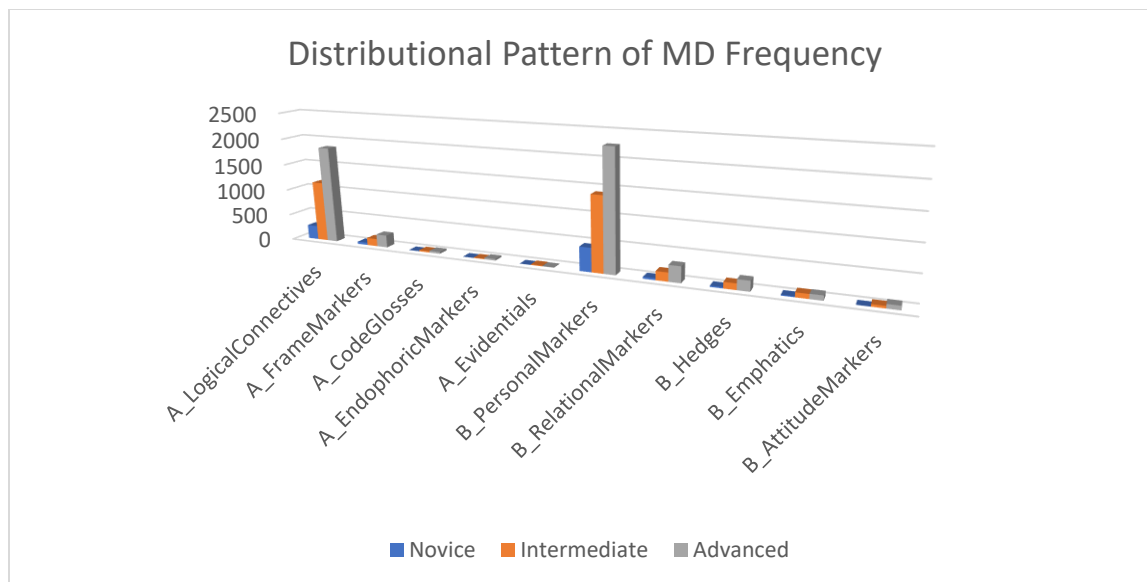
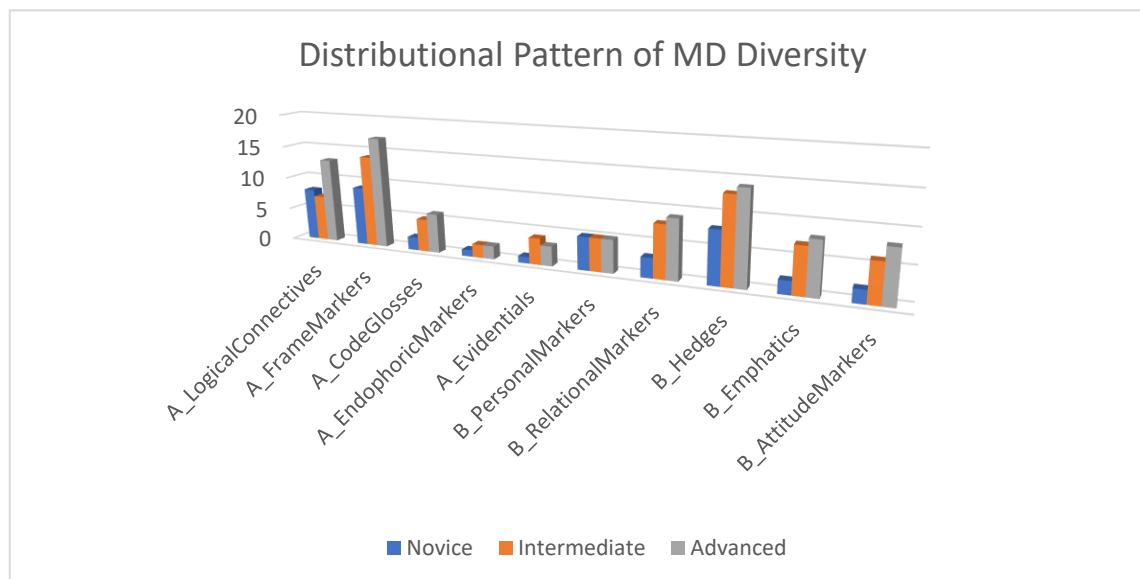Figure 1. Distributional Pattern of MD Frequency

Figure 2. Distributional Pattern of MD Diversity

The statistics presented in Table 9 are the raw counts of MD features for the three levels. The feature that stands out the most in the interactional MD tokens is *personal markers*, which totaled 53.3% (448) for the novice and 44.5% for both the intermediate (1406) and the advanced (2257). Personal markers are followed by much less prominent *relational markers,* which are 4.2% (35) for novice, 5.2% (165) for intermediate, and 5.9% (301) for advanced. *Hedges* come third with 2.7% (23), 3.7% (117), and 3.8% (191) for the novice, intermediate, and advanced,

respectively. *Emphatics* are rarely used at 1.9% (16), and *attitude markers* at .02% (2) are the least used interactional MD tokens.

Table 9. Distributional Pattern of MD-F

MD	Novice (%)	Intermediate (%)	Advanced (%)	Total (5)
A. **Interactive MD**	**316 (37.6)**	**1341 (42.5)**	**2153 (42.5)**	**3810 (42)**
Logical Connectors	265 (31.5)	1151 (36.5)	1847 (36.4)	3263 (36)
Frame Markers	44 (5.2)	141 (4.5)	234 (4.6)	419 (4.6)
Code Glosses	4 (0.5)	25 (0.8)	35 (0.7)	64 (0.7)
Endophoric Markers	2 (0.2)	10 (0.3)	29 (0.6)	41 (0.5)
Evidentials	1 (0.1)	14 (0.4)	8 (0.2)	23 (0.3)
B. **Interactional MD**	**524 (62.4)**	**1816 (57.5)**	**2915 (57.5)**	**5255 (58)**
Personal Markers	448 (53.3)	1406 (44.5)	2257 (44.5)	4111 (45.4)
Relational Markers	35 (4.2)	165 (5.2)	301 (5.9)	501 (5.5)
Hedges	23 (2.7)	117 (3.7)	191 (3.8)	331 (3.7)
Emphatics	16 (1.9)	86 (2.7)	90 (1.8)	192 (2.1)
Attitude Markers	2 (0.2)	42 (1.3)	76 (1.5)	120 (1.3)
Total	**840 (100)**	**3157 (100)**	**5068 (100)**	**9065 (100)**

The subcategory that stands out the most in the interactional MD-F is the *personal markers*, which totaled 448 (53.3%) for the novice, 1406 (44.5%) for intermediate, and 2257 (45.4%) for the advanced. For the interactive MD-F, the predominant MD descriptors are the *logical connectives*, which totaled 265 (31.5%) for the novice, 1151 (36.5%) for the intermediate, and 1847 (36.4%) for the advanced group. The rest of the features are less conspicuous and are lower than 10%.

In general, the distributional patterns of the MD-F disclose that *personal markers* are the most salient in the interactional MD followed by *relational markers*, which occur much less often. With the interactive MD, the *logical connectives* are prevalent, followed by less prevailing *frame markers.* For the overall frequency counts, *personal markers* and *logical connectives* have the most number in all three levels. These two aforementioned features confirm the characteristics of informal spoken language or discourse (Biber et al., 1999). *Personal markers* are used profusely throughout the discourse of the different speakers. Self-mentions or *personal markers* represent in writing the author's identity through the interaction and show their strong presence in the discourse (Faharani, 2019; Hyland, 2005). Similar to Mai's (2016) findings, *personal markers* play an important role in adding a credible appeal in American and Chinese politicians' speeches. Also, speakers emphasize more personal responsibilities about the proposition or the argument if

personal markers are combined with *hedges* and other interactional features. For *personal markers*, it is noticeable that *I* has been the most used self-mentions followed by *my* in all three groups. In the case of the subject plural pronoun, *we* and the dependent possessive *our*, it is noticed that the lower the level, the lower is the incorporation of other individuals in a subjective proposition. It can be inferred that as the level of proficiency progresses, the speaker not only focuses mostly on self but masters the art of involving others as discourse participants. The use of *we* and *our* in a speech discourse can also signal a degree of seriousness and formality (Mai, 2016), such as in the excerpt below from a novice and an advanced Korean speaker, respectively.

> *"**I** use smartphone to chat with my friends or take pictures these days, and **I** also use laptop to only [watching] drama. In the past, **I** used cellphone, which is folder or slide. And ... **I** usually uh send messages or call in the past. But, these days, **I** use smartphone and ... **I** can chat with my friends, and also **I** can do internet ... when **I** go outside". (Nov-12)*

> *"In the past, **I** use the MP3 player when **I** want to listen to the music ... Also, when **I** want to hear music, there was a Walkman or CD player, but these days, **we** don't have that [devices], but **we** can listen to the music anywhere no matter what circumstances. So, it's very different from the past ... the smartphone is ... for [touching], so we have a large screen on smartphone ... **we're** just [touching], so it's very convenient to use ..." (Adv-14)*

On the other hand, transitions or *logical connectives* connect main clauses to the sentences. Therefore, they can add support to the ideas, and they are an integral part of a discourse. By applying these logical connectives, authors or speakers show a willingness to produce a message so that the readers or listeners can unfold their logic (Faharani, 2019). The most common logical connectives used by the three groups are *and so*, followed by *but, because*, and *or.* In the sentence-initial position, connectives such as *and but* are characteristics of conversation, according to Biber et al. (1999). However, some logical connectives have been noticeably misused, overused, and abused, which is the case with *so* in the examples below.

> *"My health is really weak, **so** I have to exercise. My body is so weak, **so** it's really sensitive. **So,** it's tired. **So**, the other person can't understand me. **So**, I'm so sad... **So**, I care about my health." (Int-8)*

> *"I have to use a thick natural book or some kind of paper **so** I can use instead of these hard copies. **So**, uh there are so many benefits in I-pad. **So**, my major is also engineering **so**, I am interested in technology." (Adv-7)*

Similar to the case of *and*, *so* has been frequently used by some of these speakers as an adverb, and at times in the forms of fillers. However, *and* can be inserted as natural fillers between clauses. Substituting *and* with *so* to fill gaps and pauses will result in a disrupted, chaotic message. According to Hinkel (2002), other Asian L2 learners, including Koreans, find it challenging to distinguish coordination from subordination. Therefore, it is recommended that speakers employ variations, such as fillers and hesitation techniques, so as not to overuse and misuse the connective.

4.4 MD features and proficiency

The previous section has mentioned the distributional frequency of MD, and two MD-F features have shown dominance - the *personal markers* and the *logical connectives*. As noted in Table 6 earlier, for MD-F, there is a significant difference among the groups. For MD-D, there is also a significant difference in the novice group, but no statistical difference between intermediate and advanced groups for MD-D. To statistically confirm what specific features are indeed predictive of Korean L2 speakers' proficiency, Tableaux 10 and 11 show the results of stepwise multiple regression analysis tests in MD-F and MD-D.

Table 10. Multiple Regression Analysis Test – MD-F

Model	R	R Square	Df	F	B	Sig.
Personal Markers	.866	.750	(Reg) 2	80.819	.012	.000
Relational Markers			(Res) 54		.015	

Dependent Variable: Proficiency

Table 11. Multiple Regression Analysis Test – MD-D

Model	R	R Square	Df	F	B	Sig.
Logical Connectives	.840	.705	(Reg) 3	42.290	.224	.000
Personal Markers			(Res) 53		.211	
Relational Markers					.109	

Dependent Variable: Proficiency

The first multiple regression analysis results for MD-F, which was conducted to predict MD-F features correlating with proficiency, are shown in Table 10. The linear combination of both *personal markers* and *relational markers* frequency count was significantly related to proficiency, F(2,54)= 80.819, p =.000. The multiple correlation coefficient was .866, indicating that approximately 75% of the variance of the proficiency can be accounted for by the linear combination of *personal markers* and *relational markers*. However, Table 11 for MD-D shows a

slightly different result from MD-F, which includes *logical connectives* to the list with *personal markers* and *relational markers* that were significantly related to proficiency, F(3,53) = 42.290, p.= 000. The results also indicate that with the correlation efficient of .840, approximately 71% of the variance of proficiency can be accounted for the three MD features, *logical connectives, personal markers*, and *relational markers.*

Further qualitative analyses regarding the MD-D reveal a clear-cut variance in lexical choice use to provide further evidence regarding these results. As mentioned, there is no considerable significance on the MD-D counts of intermediate and advanced, except for novice. However, a more conspicuous inspection further discloses a more significant divergence among the groups. When the MD types are placed in a vocabulary level profiler, which is the English Vocabulary Profile (EVP), it is revealed that most of the items on the list of MD features by proficiency go by the vocabulary level. In the CEFR[8]In the investigation, it is discovered that most items in the novice group's list of MD types are at the low level, which is followed by the intermediate level, and the advanced level has the highest CEFR level of the three groups, as seen in Table 12. Three specific MD features have shown considerable attention, *logical connectives*, *hedges*, and *relational markers*. This result is almost similar to the quantitative findings without *personal markers* and *hedges* as an addition. *Personal markers* are not included on the list since there is a limited number of personal markers, *i.e., I, my, we, our,* and all three levels use the same personal markers.

Table 12   CEFR level comparison of Korean EFL speakers

	Novice	Intermediate	Advanced
Logical Connectives			
A1	*also, and, because, but*	*also, and, because, but*	*also, and, because, but*
A2		*since, so. However*	*since, so, however*
B1			*moreover*
B2			*though*
Hedges			
A1	*maybe, mostly, sometimes*	*maybe, mostly,*	*maybe, mostly,*
A2		*sometimes*	*sometimes*
B1		*almost, could*	*almost, could, probably*
B2		*frequently*	*frequently*
			relatively
Relational markers			

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[8]***Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*** *is an international standard for describing language ability with six descriptive levels: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, and C2.*

A1	*you, your*	*you, your, us*	*you, your, us*
B1	*let*	*let, notice*	*let, notice*
B2		*note*	*note, imagine, recall*
C1			*consider*

In the case of the *logical connectives*, the MD-D list for novice speakers is limited to *also, and, because*, and *but,* which can be categorized as the A1 level. The intermediate group employs additional words, such as *since, so*, and *however,* which belong to the A2 level. In addition to the A1 and the A2 level words, the advanced group uses B1 and B2 levels that include *moreover* and *though.* The advanced group not only uses more types of logical connectives, but it also uses high-level and sophisticated choices, which is referenced on EVP. In the use of hedges, both the advanced and intermediate speakers show no considerable differences both with the types and the tokens. Similar to the EVP ranking of the logical connectives previously mentioned, novice speakers utilize hedges that are ranked A1, such as *may be, mostly,* and *sometimes.* Statistically, there is no difference between the intermediate and the advanced speakers in MD-F and MD-D. However, an EVP investigation reveals that intermediate speakers include only A2 and B1 hedges, e.g., *almost*, *could, frequently*, and the advanced speakers employ B1 and B2 in addition to the list, e.g., *probably* or *relatively*. This pattern is similar to *relational markers*, the MD features that explicitly build relationships with the readers or the speakers. The novice group needs to learn more *relational markers* in order to reach the listeners. Aside from the limited list, most of them are low vocabulary profile markers. Although the intermediate and advanced groups are not significantly different, the choice of high-level vocabulary words as *consider, imagine,* and *recall* still put the advanced group on a pedestal compared with the intermediate's *notice, note,* and *think about.*

In these salient features, it is known that lexical variety and sophistication in the number of types correspond with the proficiency level. Therefore, it is proposed that the number of *logical connectives*, *hedges,* and *relational markers,* can be good indicators of proficiency. Suppose Chiang (2018) claims that the vocabulary size is one strong predictor of Taiwanese students' TOEIC scores. In that case, it is logical that we propose in this study that the most divergent MD types, precisely that of *logical connectives, hedges*, and *relational markers*, can also be indications of proficiency because they show diversity along with the progression of proficiency. Even though it is not directly stated, Mai's (2016) intercultural analysis regarding the persuasive power MD markers between the Chinese and the American political speeches identify the Chinese speakers' lack of *logical connectives* and, most specifically, *hedges*. These two indexes are identified as the contributors to the American speeches' rational and credible appeal by expressing respect to the listeners and audience. They also show the level of proficiency displayed by the American native-English speakers compared to the L2 Chinese speakers.

As for the speakers' general lexical choice, the advanced speakers employ a more sophisticated MD vocabulary with a high CEFR level over the intermediate and novice speakers. Low-level learners need

to expand their working vocabulary repertoire, so appropriate words can be aptly chosen to convey meaning successfully. As Parvaresh (2008) suggests, MD's explicit instructions can be an excellent benefit for lower proficient learners in particular, not only with speech competency but even with text comprehension. Cheng and Steffensen (1996) and Tavakoli et al. (2010) also attest that by increasing the number of MD after an intentional instruction, the subjects have successfully conveyed higher scores in their essay activities. For the intermediate group, specific MD types need to be developed as well. *Relational markers* and *hedges* are used more, but other markers are either underdeveloped or underused, such as *emphatics*, *frame markers,* and *attitude markers*. The advanced group has displayed a more balanced use of MD, and the areas needed to enhance more include *emphatics, code glosses,* and some features of *frame markers*. *Evidentials* and *endophoric markers,* which broadly characterize written MD, are generally the least used MD features. To help draw learners' attention to the explicit instruction of MD, Kizil (2017) strongly notes to language practitioners the importance of the use of authentic materials i.e., instruction.

5. Conclusion

This study investigates the use of metadiscourse in Korean EFL learners' speech and examines the similarities and differences of the types and tokens used by novice, intermediate, and advanced speakers. The present study shows a few findings that are briefly stated below.

With the comparison of the Korean proficiency groups, the MD tokens' frequency count significantly follows the proficiency levels' trajectory trend. The advanced level accounts for the highest use of MD features, followed by the intermediate group and then the novice group. Having a considerably higher interactional MD in the Korean EFL's speech is consistently revealed in all three levels, and the results show an opposite direction from that of MD in writing (Bal-Gezegin, 2016; Farahani, 2019; Lin, 2005), where the interactive MD is widespread. In written texts, writers need a more coherent and well-organized output, and thus, interactive MDs are more widely used. However, in spoken discourse, the speakers endeavor to involve and accommodate the listeners as reflected in the present study. In agreement with Mulholland (1999) and Sukma (2017), the discursive interactional MD in speech is used by the speakers as persuasive strategies by constructing an affinity and an emotional bond with the audience. If these features are missing or omitted, the message may be spoiled by losing cooperation and harmony. The findings illustrate that the Korean speakers are more interested in conducting interaction with the audience rather than organizing discourse. *Personal markers* and *logical connectives* are the most dominant features in the interactional and interactive categories, respectively. In contrast with the previous studies' results about written MD, *endophoric markers* and *evidentials*, which are more frequent in writing, are the least used with spoken MD in speech.

In the MD-D analysis, no considerable quantitative differences in the MD-D count are found between the interactional and the interactive categories. However, further quantitative and qualitative considerations reveal the clear-cut divergence on the CEFR level of the MD vocabulary list. The level of sophistication, i.e., the use of advanced MD types, has progressed with proficiency. This finding leads the present study to propose that the varying MD-D employment depends on the learner's proficiency level. This assumption can add to the existing knowledge of MD, which states that the employment of MD in the discourse considers proficiency as another factor in addition to cultural factors (Kobayashi, 2016; Mur-Dueñas, 2011), language (Kim & Lim, 2013; Dafouz-Milne, 2008), and discipline (Abdi, 2002; Mina & Biria, 2017; Dahl, 2004; Kedri, Heng & Ebrahimi, 2013).

Also, the lexical variety or diversity and the CEFR level progression of specific MD features, i.e., *logical connectives, hedges,* and *relational markers,* can be good indicators of the Korean speakers' proficiency level. The use of *personal markers* also varies with proficiency, wherein high-level speakers tend to include others as *we* or *our* in the proposition rather than *I* and *me* as commonly used by the lower level. Less MD-D can lead to *underuse, overuse, misuse,* and *abuse* of some MD features. If the L2 learners' lexical repertoire is more diverse, more appropriate, and more explicit, the meaning can be conveyed if the words are appropriately selected from an extensive vocabulary list. Lexical sophistication, measured by EVP, can therefore be considered in the general knowledge and teaching of metadiscourse.

The current investigation has provided descriptive definitions of metadiscourse's discursive roles in Korean L2 learners' speech. To develop a more comprehensive understanding of the issue, we leave open questions for further investigations. This paper's findings warrant follow-up studies that could explore and verify the results by extending the exploration to a larger sample from different EFL or ESL contexts or speech corpus in general for more optimum and substantive results. Such findings can help researchers, teachers, practitioners, and L2 speakers, in general, to build up additional knowledge regarding the relevance of metadiscourse topics that apply to different learning contexts.

Acknowledgments

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Mindsets of High School Students in English Language Learning

Jeffrey Dawala Wilang

School of Foreign Languages, Institute of Social Technology,

Suranaree University of Technology, Thailand

wilang@g.sut.ac.th

Abstract

High school students' beliefs toward their abilities could be fixed or malleable, and mindset may differ between boys and girls. The aim of this article is three-fold: to examine the beliefs of students as to whether their abilities are fixed or malleable in the context of English language learning, to know if mindsets of boys and girls are significantly different, and to provide an understanding of what difficulties students face in English language learning. Using a modified mindset survey, data from 467 students enrolled in regular programs in public schools in Bangkok was analyzed quantitatively. Findings indicated that students have a growth mindset on their own ability, others' success, criticisms, obstacles, and challenges. However, they tend to have a fixed mindset about putting effort into learning English. Similar to previous studies, there was no significant difference found between girls' and boys' mindsets. Concerning difficulties faced by students in an EFL setting, cognitive, affective challenges, and other challenges were coded. Cognitive challenges cover difficulties in remembering grammar rules and vocabulary, difficulties in understanding some words and accented speech, difficulty in translating from L2 to L1, difficulty in selecting words to use in a specific context, difficulties in listening, reading, and writing, lack of vocabulary knowledge and knowledge about basic English, lack of ability to speak English and practice to speak English, and slow cognitive processing. Meanwhile, affective challenges include fear of

making mistakes, high anxiety, lack of interest in studying grammar rules, and lack of self-confidence and attentiveness. Other codes include negative peer influence and perceived negative teacher acts. Teaching and research implications are discussed to help students build a growth mindset because challenges are ubiquitous in English language learning.

Keywords: *Fixed Mindset, Growth Mindset, High School Students, English Language Learning*

Introduction

> *"I'm not smart. I don't have any courage. I can't speak."*
> *"I am not that smart. Can't catch what I just heard. Can't speak."*

The above utterances may be expected in English language learning among high school students, specifically in EFL settings. It is somehow heartbreaking to some teachers to listen to such utterances when students experience difficulty in English language learning. Added to that, high school students, who are in their teenage life, may suffer from lack of confidence, lack of engagement, and other undesirable behaviors (e.g., Blackwell, Trzesniewski & Dweck, 2007; Eccles, 2004; Watt, 2004).

"*I'm not smart*" or "*I'm not that smart*" could be attributed to "mindsets," "implicit theories of intelligence," or "self-theories of ability" (Dweck, 1986). Dweck's theory posits a continuum of mindset – from a fixed (an entity theory of ability) to a growth mindset (an incremental theory of ability). At one end of the continuum, students ascribed that intellectual ability "as something of which people have a fixed, unchangeable amount." They dislike challenges, avoid obstacles, depreciate effort, dislike feedback, threatened by the success of others, and keep proving and showing their ability (Dweck, 2006; Sudnawa et al., 2019; Zeng et al., 2016). On the one hand, students with malleable or growth mindsets "see intellectual ability as something that can be grown or developed overtime" (Yeager & Dweck, 2012, p. 303). In the academe, they use setbacks and challenges to keep learning and developing their own ability (Degol et al., 2018; Dweck, 1986; Zeng et al., 2016).

Literature review

Research shows growth mindset can lead to better cognitive and affective states in learning (Aronson et al., 2002; Costa et al., Good et al., 2003; Blackwell et al., 2007). Zeng et al. (2016) found a positive impact of growth mindset on Chinese students' (*n*=1279) psychological well-being and school engagement. Other studies have shown that students with incremental view earned significantly higher grades or greater academic performance (Aronson, Fried, & Good, 2002; Blackwell et al., 2007; Good, Aronson, & Inzlicht, 2003; Henderson & Dweck, 1990; Romero, Master, Paunesku, Dweck, & Gross, 2014; Yeager & Dweck, 2012), deeper perceptual level (Grant & Dweck, 2003), higher task value (Degol, Wang, Zhang, & Allerton, 2018), more adaptive to learning (Yeager & Dweck, 2012), greater interest in classroom activities (Aronson et al., 2002; Hidi & Renninger, 2006), boost self-confidence (Abdullah, 2008; Dweck, 2007; Kamins & Dweck, 1999), higher psychological well-being and engagement (Zeng, Hou, & Peng, 2016), higher happiness (Costa, 2018; Sudnawa, Theeranate & Yailaibang, 2019), resilience (Dweck, Chiu, & Hong, 1995) and higher motivation in writing (Truax, 2017).

On the one hand, students who have more of an entity view may have reduced expectancies for future success (Burnette, O'Boyle, VanEpps, Pollack, & Finkel, 2013; Komarraju & Nadler, 2013), a downward trajectory in grades (Aronson, Fried, & Good, 2002; Blackwell et al., 2007; Rattan, Savani, Chugh & Dweck, 2015), and low growth in self-efficacy (Jourden, Bandura, & Banfield, 1991; Wood & Bandura, 1989). Moreover, they blame or make excuses when repairing their self-esteem after experiencing failure (Stoycheva & Ruskov, 2015).

Among university students, 81 percent of Japanese university students with computer major were found to have a fixed mindset (Ocampo, 2017). Findings revealed that Japanese students "believed that the only thing preventing them from being fluent in English is because of their own lack of effort" (p. 1198). From a fixed mindset viewpoint, those students who put effort into learning have intellectual deficiencies (Dweck, 2006).

Mindset can be a predictor of cognitive and affect in language learning. In the cognitive domain, Rui and Muthukrishnan (2019) investigated the mindset of Chinese high school students and teacher feedback as a predictor of language performance. Findings have shown that growth

mindset, together with process and self-regulation types of feedback, help improve high school EFL students' language performance. Among elementary students, Sudnawa et al. (2019) performed a cross-sectional analytic study about 441 grade 6 pupils' mindsets. Except for English, the high mindset was found to predict O-NET (annual national proficiency examination for grades 6, 9, and 12) in Thai, Math, and Science. Concerning affect, in Hong Kong, Bai and Wang (2020) reported that growth mindset among primary school students predicted self-regulated learning as compared with self-efficacy and intrinsic value. Lou and Noels (2020) found that a growth mindset is significant and moderately associated with language anxiety among thousands of foreign-born university students in Canada.

Denworth (2019) noted some pushbacks in the current scholarship wherein "little," "weak," and "no effect" was reported concerning the relationship of growth mindset and student outcomes. In one study, Sisk et al. (2018) conducted two meta-analyses of the relationship between growth mindset and achievement, and the effectiveness of growth mindset interventions. In the first study, findings suggested a low and non-significant relationship between growth mindset and achievement. In the second study, however, those students with a high chance of failing benefited from growth mindset intervention. Like study 1 results, Brooks (2017) reported a very minimal change in the overall mindset of 17-second grade students in Colombia after repeated measures.

In another criticism, Kohn (2015) argued that developing ability through effort is akin to blind obedience by the students instead of questioning what is taught or how the lesson is taught. He further pointed out that praise itself is a form of manipulation that reduces interest in learning. While excessive praise may be problematic, Dweck (2006) suggested limiting the use of praise for their effort – "doing what it takes to succeed" (p. 72). In their study, 90 percent of the students who had their effort praised wanted another challenging task, while those who were praised for their ability thought they were not smart at all.

Mindset seemed to be a complex concept in English language learning (Lou, 2019; Lou and Noels, 2019). Thus, a unitary interpretation of mindset becomes problematic, for example, when considering some factors of challenges, obstacles, effort, criticism, and others' success (Dweck, 2006). For example, Puvacharonkul and Wilang (2020) reported that graduate students studying

English foundation courses viewed challenges, obstacles, and others' success toward growth mindset conditions. Moreover, students who had a *neutral* mindset on other factors, including effort, criticisms, and perceptions of their own ability, tended to fixed mindset condition or otherwise. Lou and Noels (2017) posit that language learners endorse different degrees of fixed or growth mindset conditions, and mindset should not be viewed as categorical or unidimensional construct. As mindset seemed to be a complex construct (Dweck; 2006; Lou, 2019), perhaps, contextualizing studies to aid in the interpretation of findings as well as identifying specific factor(s) of mindset (i.e., challenges, obstacles, effort, criticisms, success of others, and general viewpoint on own ability) could provide meaningful results to further research on this topic.

Reports on the difference between boys' and girls' mindsets remain inconclusive. Sudnawa et al. (2019) found no difference in mindset based on gender, parental education, and socioeconomic status among Thai elementary students. However, in math achievement, research suggests girls with lower self-concepts, lower competence, and lower expectations of success than boys (Else-Quest, Mineo, & Higgins, 2013; Herbert & Stipek, 2005; Sadler, Sonnert, Hazari, & Tai, 2012). Girls with a growth mindset may express greater interest in taking additional math courses (Good et al., 2012) and higher math achievement (Degol et al., 2018). Boys with a growth mindset predicted mathematics self-efficacy (Huang, Zhang, & Hudson, 2019). Like in mathematics, it is hypothesized that boys' and girls' mindsets may differ in English language learning.

In EFL settings, numerous challenges persist, which could be attributed to affective and cognitive factors. For example, anxiety remains pervasive and had adverse effects on language learning (Al-ahdal & Abduh, 2020; Rehelmi, 2020; Zemni & Alrefaee, 2020). Apart from inaccurate written outputs, anxious students suffer from low self-esteem or lack of confidence (Al-ahdal & Abduh, 2021; Rehelmi, 2020). In reading, students were anxious due to unknown vocabulary, new words, unfamiliar topics, fear of making errors, and difficult pronunciation (Zemni & Alrefaee, 2020). Similar sources were also found to provoke anxiety in speaking and listening (Horwitz, Horwitz, & Cope, 1986; Elkhafaifi, 2005; Woodrow, 2006; Zhang, 2013). Previous research has identified other challenges such as interference L1, lack of opportunity to practice English daily, lack of lexical resource, lack of motivation to study, lack of self-confidence to speak, being passive in class, low range of grammatical and vocabulary, and lack of responsibility to improve themselves

(Noom-ura, 2013; Tanmongkol et al., 2020). Thus, it is essential to know the difficulties students face in Thai high school EFL settings, affecting their learning English mindset.

Research objectives and questions of the present study

How students perceived their abilities in English language learning has implications for their language goals and future self. So, the present research hopes to answer the following objectives. As research on mindset in the context of English language learning in Thailand is limited, the first objective would be to examine the beliefs of high school students as to whether their abilities are fixed or malleable (growth). Also, because previous research in other subjects have shown differences in how girls and boys view their own ability (Degol et al., 2018; Good et al., 2012; Huang et al., 2019), the next objective is to know if mindsets based on gender are significantly different in English language learning. Moreover, since challenges are ubiquitous in language learning, the last objective is to understand the difficulties high school students face in an EFL context.

Three research questions are posed in the present study.

(1) What are the mindsets of high school students toward English language learning?
(2) Are there differences in the mindsets of high school students based on gender?
(3) What are the difficulties faced by high school students in English language learning?

Methodology

Context of the study

The schools in the study are government high schools in Bangkok offering regular programs only. A regular program in a government high school typically offers four periods (at least 50 minutes per period) of English in a week. A Thai teacher usually teaches three periods of general English focusing on grammar, and a non-Thai teacher teaches another period of conversational English.

Participants and procedure

The data was collected from 467 high school students enrolled in public schools in Bangkok by using convenience sampling. To increase the number of participants in the study, teachers were asked to administer the online survey to their students regardless of year level, language proficiency, ethnicity, among others. Only gender was required to help answer the question if the mindsets of girls and boys differ. In total, there were 160 boys and 307 girls who voluntarily responded to the survey.

Mindset survey

Mindset in the present study means beliefs about language learners' attributes related to their abilities or intelligence, of which students with fixed mindset believed that their abilities or intelligence could not be changed while those with a growth mindset have malleable abilities or intelligence (Blackwell et al., 2007; Dweck, 2006; Bernecker & Job, 2019; Lou & Noels, 2019). In the present study, six composite factors were identified in English language learning, including challenges, obstacles, effort, criticisms, others' success, and general viewpoint on own ability (see Dweck, 2006; Puvacharonkul & Wilang, 2020).

To know students' mindsets toward English language learning (ELL), the English Language Mindset Survey (Puvacharonkul & Wilang, 2020) was used, which was adapted from Dweck's (2006) work and the well-validated Implicit Theory of Intelligence Measure (Blackwell et al., 2007). Since the students are in government high schools studying in regular programs, where students' L1 is the primary language of instruction, the survey was translated into the Thai language to aid comprehension. Students were asked to choose a response from the 12-item survey varying from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (2). Two items – one fixed and the other growth statement were included in each of the six factors: Challenges, Obstacles, Effort, Criticisms, Success of Others, and General Viewpoint on Own Ability. Sample growth mindset statement is "*Feeling challenged in learning English makes me want to try harder,*" and a fixed mindset statement is "*If I have to work hard during the EL class, it means I am not smart.*" Six items that fall under fixed mindset were reverse-coded and summed, then compared with items under growth mindset. A higher score in each factor represents either a fixed or growth mindset. The mindset survey was interpreted using Dweck's (2006) framework (see Table 1). In addition

to the 12 items, an open-ended question was added, "*What difficulties do you face in English language learning?*"

Table 1. Adapted Dweck's (2006) mindset framework

Factor	Students with a growth mindset…	Students with a fixed mindset…
1. Challenges	*like challenges in ELL*	dislike challenges in ELL
2. Obstacles	*confront obstacles in ELL*	avoid obstacles in ELL
3. Effort	*appreciate effort in ELL*	depreciate effort in ELL
4. Criticisms	*look for constructive criticism in ELL*	cannot tolerate constructive criticism in ELL
5. Success of Others	*inspired by the success of others in ELL*	threatened by the success of others in ELL
6. General Viewpoint on Own Ability	*try to learn and improve ability in ELL*	try to prove and show off ability in ELL

The reliability of the English Language Mindset Survey (ELMS) was established at 0.95 by running Ministep, a component of Rasch analysis (Puvacharonkul & Wilang, 2020).

Data analysis

To examine the students' beliefs about their ability to change their level of intelligence, descriptive statistics were computed. An Independent *t*-test was used to know if the mindsets of boys and girls significantly differ. To understand the difficulties faced by high students in English language learning, their responses from the open-ended question, "*What difficulties do you face in English language learning?*" were translated, coded, and counted accordingly. Inter-rater coding was calculated at 92 percent.

Results

Question 1: What are the mindsets of high school students toward English language learning?
Table 2 presents the mindsets of high school students in all six factors. Generally, students like challenges, confront obstacles, look for constructive criticisms, be inspired by others' success, and learn and improve their abilities. However, when students had to work hard during the English language class, they thought they were *not* smart.

Table 2: Mindsets of high school students (*n*=467)

Statement	M, *SD*	Mindset
General viewpoint of own ability		
I can do things differently in the EL class, but the important parts of who I am can't be changed. *	3.12, *1.08*	*Growth mindset*
I can always change the basic things about the kind of person I am when I learn English.	3.84, *0.83*	
Success of others		
When other students do better than me in the EL class, it makes me feel inferior. *	2.79, *1.16*	*Growth mindset*
When other students succeed in the EL class, I feel inspired.	4.07, *0.81*	
Challenges		
In the EL class, I avoid trying things that are hard. *	3.67, *0.90*	*Growth mindset*
Feeling challenged in learning English makes me want to try harder.	4.14, *0.76*	
Obstacles		
I usually quit when something gets difficult in the EL class. *	2.44, *1.05*	*Growth mindset*
I don't mind making mistakes in the EL class because I can learn.	3.93, *0.88*	
Effort		
If I have to work hard during the EL class, it means I am not smart. *	2.57, *1.15*	*Fixed mindset*
The more difficult the English task is, the more motivated I become to put in effort.	2.52, *1.00*	
Criticisms		
I dislike negative feedback on my performance in the EL class, even if it helps me improve. *	2.93, *1.17*	*Growth mindset*
In studying English, I rarely take criticisms as personal attacks.	4.23, *0.85*	

Note: * *indicates a fixed mindset statement*

Question 2 Are there differences in mindsets based on gender?

Table 3 presents the descriptive results of mindsets based on gender. Girls showed to have a growth mindset in all factors. Unlike girls, boys tend to have a fixed mindset concerning their effort, *"If I have to work hard during the English class, it means I am not smart."*

An independent sample *t*-test was conducted if a statistical difference between boys' and girls' mindsets exists (see Table 4). The result shows no statistically significant difference concerning girls' and boys' mindsets, with *t*(465)=.758, *p*=.449.

Table 3: Mindsets of high school students based on gender (*n*=467)

Statement	Boys(*n*=160) M, *SD*	Girls (*n*=307 M, *SD*
General viewpoint of own ability		
I can do things differently in the EL class, but the important parts of who I am can,t be changed. *	3.23, *1.10*	3.07, *1.07*
I can always change the basic things about the kind of person I am when I learn English.	3.89, *0.85*+	3.82, *0.82*+
Success of others		
When other students do better than me in the EL class, it makes me feel inferior. *	2.71, 1.18	2.83, 1.14
When other students succeed in the EL class, I feel inspired.	4.03, *0.85*+	4.09, *0.78*+
Challenges		
In the EL class, I avoid trying things that are hard. *	3.79, 0.90	3.60, 0.90
Feeling challenged in learning English makes me want to try harder.	4.11, *0.76*+	4.16, *0.76*+
Obstacles		
I usually quit when something gets difficult in the EL class. *	2.39, 1.13	2.46, 1.00
I don,t mind making mistakes in the EL class because I can learn.	4.03, *0.82*+	3.88, *0.91*+
Effort		
If I have to work hard during the EL class, it means I am not smart. *	2.70, *1.24*+	2.51, 1.09
The more difficult the English task is, the more motivated I become to put in effort.	2.44, 1.00	2.57, *1.00*+
Criticisms		
I dislike negative feedback on my performance in the EL class, even if it helps me improve. *	2.70, 1.15	3.05, 1.16
In studying English, I rarely take criticisms as personal attacks.	4.09, *0.95*+	4.31, *0.78*+

Notes: * *indicates a fixed mindset statement*

+ *indicates the mindset in each category*

Table 4. Independent sample *t*-test

	Equality of variances	Levene's test for equality of variances		*t*-test for equality of means				
		F	Sig.	*t*	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean diff.	Std. error diff.
Mindset	Assumed	7.666	.006	.758	465	.449	.25478	.33605
	Not assumed			.708	267.562	.480	.25478	.36005

Question 3 What are the difficulties faced by high school students in English language learning?
Three general codes were elicited from the responses of the students. These are Cognitive challenges, Affective challenges, and Other challenges. Moreover, specific codes, sample statements, and frequency are shown below.

Cognitive challenges

Cognitive challenges cover difficulty in remembering grammar rules *"I can't remember the grammar rules"* (57), difficulty in remembering vocabulary *"I can't remember the words"* (53), difficulty in understanding some words *"Many words I don't understand"* (47), lack of vocabulary knowledge *"There are load of vocabs I don't know"* (41), difficulty in translating from L2 to L1 *"I can't translate the words"* (38), lack of ability to speak English *"My English ability is very low compared to others"* (29), difficulty in selecting words to use in a specific context *"I don't know if the word is correct to use in my major course"* (18), difficulty in reading *"I don't understand what I'm reading"* (19), difficulty in listening *"I have a problems with listening"* (15), lack of practice to speak English *"I don't have chance to practice to express my thought"* (8), lack of knowledge about basic English *"There are so many things I don't know about English"* (7), difficulty in writing *"I don't writing and some principles"* (6), and slow cognitive processing *"The processing in my head is very slow"* (6), difficulty in understanding accented speech *"Some accents are hard to understand"* (4).

Affective challenges

Affective challenges include lack of interest in studying grammar rules *"I never open my mind to learn grammar"* (25), lack of self-confidence *"My friends are better than me"* (23), fear of making

mistakes *"I'm afraid to make a mistake when I speak"* (9), high anxiety *"I'm very nervous when I am called to answer a question"* (4) and lack of attentiveness *"I don't pay attention to the lessons"* (2).

Other challenges

Other codes include negative peer influence, *"My friends don't want to study and so am I"* (4), and perceived negative teacher acts *"The teacher looks down on me when I speak English"* (1).

Discussion

This study's objectives were to investigate whether students' beliefs in the context of English language learning are fixed or growth. Differences in mindsets based on gender were also explored. Difficulties faced by high school students in English language learning were established. In this study, we found evidence that students' mindsets toward the six factors were varied. Of all six factors, students tend to only have a fixed mindset on one factor, which is effort. Moreover, no statistical difference was found between boys' and girls' mindsets toward English language learning. Three factors of challenges were coded, including cognitive, affective, and others.

Like Japanese students, Thai high school students held a fixed mindset on their effort (see Ocampo, 2017), and such mindset toward effort could be provoked by numerous difficulties they faced in English language learning (see Noom-ura, 2013; Ocampo, 2017; Tanmongkol et al., 2020). The fixed mindset could be explained by the cultural attitudes of "*sabai sabai*" or *easy-going* and "*mai pen rai,*" or *it is okay*. Rather than putting effort to overcome cognitive and affective challenges in English language learning to attain learning goals, students may opt to feel relaxed and say *mai pen rai*. This attitude would result in a lack of responsibility to improve their ability (Noom-ura, 2013; Tanmongkol et al., 2020). Knowing that learning English has never been easy since grade 1, many high school Thai students may accept the fact that they are "*mai keng pasa angkreet"* or *not smart* in English and select some less challenging tasks. From a fixed mindset viewpoint, whether they exert effort or not in language learning, their English proficiency would not improve simply because they are *not smart*. Another practice in schools that encourages *sabai sabai* attitude in learning is the 'no-fail" policy initiated by the Ministry of Education (Cadias, 2008). The policy could be disadvantageous as it may dissuade high school students from attaining higher learning

goals. Instead of putting the same effort into learning other subjects, they would pay less attention to English, knowing that they would pass without putting effort into it.

Further findings found no significant difference concerning girls' and boys' mindsets. This could be explained by some learning experiences they have in common in the English language class, such as cognitive and affective challenges. For example, all are exposed to a rote-learning system (Sumter, 2019), where grammar-based teaching is prioritized, further deteriorating students' affective state, provoking fear of losing face in English language learning. In fact, mindset could be shaped by some thwarting conditions in the immediate learning environment (Lou & Noels, 2019).

Regardless of the difficulties in English language learning, like most Thai elementary pupils who held malleable mindsets (Sudnawa et al., 2019), Thai high school students were found to have positive views on other factors such as challenges and obstacles, criticisms, success of others, and viewpoint on own ability. Perhaps it would not be too demanding for teachers to raise awareness on some metacognitive strategies to counter pessimistic views on their effort as it could negatively affect their academic aspirations in life (see Burnette et al., 2013; Dweck, 1986; Komarraju & Nadler, 2013; Yeager & Dweck, 2012). As pointed out earlier, there is a significant risk if language students think of effort negatively. This finding has important implications for teaching and research in the EFL context.

Implications for teaching

In light of the findings concerning numerous cognitive and affective difficulties faced by high school students in English language learning as well as their fixed mindset toward the effort, teachers "should not praise children for being 'smart' when they do well, but rather, to promote resilience, praise them for the process they engaged in – their effort, their strategies, their focus, or their persistence" (Yeager & Dweck, p. 311). However, teachers should be wary of using praise (Brooks, 2017; Kohn, 2015). Moreover, in the case of using critique, teachers should provide it constructively so that students would not feel "*ngoo*" or stupid.

Teachers may explore the strategic use of language to help boys or girls who tend to think that they are *mai keng* in English. When students cannot attain the expected outcomes, teachers should provide explicit feedback on what is wrong and what should be done (Stoycheva & Ruskov, 2015). Instead of giving up, teachers may scaffold students to keep doing the task to meet the expected outcome. Otherwise, students' attitudes of *sabai sabai* and *mai pen rai* will be cultivated further. When scaffolding, teachers may set up a one-on-one conversation to avoid loss of face. Teachers may ask each student about difficulties they experienced in the lesson and find other ways to explain a concept. If necessary, chunk information when cognitive load is heavy. Also, extend wait-time if the student needs more time to do the assigned task.

Teachers may explore newer concepts in education, for example, positive education, as it equips students to develop a flourishing life (see Mercer, MacIntyre, Gregersen, Talbot, 2018; Zeng et al., 2016.) When students are aware that "*working hard"* does not mean "*not being smart,"* students may develop a malleable or growth mindset, which would also cultivate the 21st-century skills along with resilience, optimism, positive relationships, and character strengths (Yeager & Dweck, 2012; Zeng et al., 2016). Among Japanese students, Ocampo (2017) recommended FEMA, a family-like classroom environment atmosphere embracing failure as part of the English grammar and reading journey and a positive attitude toward mistakes. Further, teachers may assess their own mindset and seek growth mindset pedagogy (Kuusisto, Tuominen & Tirri, 2019) or mindset methodology (Sumter, 2019).

Since there seems to have a complex interplay of difficulties attributed to cognitive and affective factors in learning, teachers may teach, encourage or raise awareness among students about self-monitoring (Ardoin & Martens, 2004; Polirstok, 2017; Margolis & Cabe, 2006). Self-talk, a form of verbal instruction, and fix-up strategies could also help students defeat negative thoughts when encountering difficulties in learning (see Polirstok, 2017).

Implications for research

One of the findings was high school students' tendency to have a fixed mindset toward their effort in English language learning. With the understanding that growth mindset plays a critical role in students' performance or academic outcomes (Aronson, Fried, & Good, 2002; Blackwell et al.,

2007; Good, Aronson, & Inzlicht, 2003; Henderson & Dweck, 1990; Romero, Master, Paunesku, Dweck, & Gross, 2014; Yeager & Dweck, 2012), designing contextualized intervention studies focusing on metacognitive strategies (i.e., *How does self-talk affect the mindset of students with low, intermediate or high proficiency in English language?*) and positive education in English language studies can be promoted. Like in previous studies, those students who received the intervention showed improvements compared with students in the control group (see Blackwell et al., 2007; Yeager & Dweck, 2012). Thus, increased attention on research about high school students' mindsets in EFL settings is more necessary than ever. Future research may also consider qualitative paradigms to gain deeper insights into this scholarship.

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Stroke Effect of English Teachers on the Learners' L2 Motivational Self-System

Samaneh Naderi

PhD. Student, TEFL, English Department, Yazd University, Yazd, Iran

Email: samane.naderi61@gmail.com

Muhammad Ajmal

Assistant Professor, Department of English Language and Literature,

University of Lahore, Pakistan

ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1085-7046

Email: muhammad.ajmal2@ell.uol.edu.pk

Dr. Muhammed Salim Keezhatta

Assistant Professor, Department of English, College of Science and Humanities in Al Kharj,

Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia

Email: m.keezhatta@psau.edu.sa

Dr. Sohaib Alam

Assistant Professor, Department of English, College of Science and Humanities in Al Kharj,

Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia

Email: s.alam@psau.edu.sa

ORCHID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9972-9357

Correspondence: Dr. Muhammed Salim Keezhatta, m.keezhatta@psau.edu.sa

Bio-profiles:

First Author, Samane Naderi is PhD student in TEFL in Yazd University, Iran. She is lecturer at Applied Science and Technology University. Her main interests are new technologies in language teaching and learning, teacher education and education psychology.

Second author, Muhammad Ajmal is perusing his PhD in English Language and Literature from International Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan. He has been teaching at various universities for the last 10 years and currently working as an Assistant Professor at the University of Lahore. He has secured Indigenous and International scholarships from Higher Education Commission of Pakistan and visited Universitat Heidelberg Germany. He presented his research paper at James Joyce Conference in Universitat Roma Tre, Italy. He is also member of Poetics and Linguistic Association (PALA), UK. His research interests include ELT, Applied Linguistics, Corpus Stylistics, Literary Stylistics, Text Linguistics and Narratology.

Third Author, Dr. Muhammed Salim Keezhatta is presently working as an Assistant Professor of English at Department of English, College of Science and Humanities in Al-Kharj, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia. His multifaceted research focuses mainly on Applied Linguistics, English Language Education, Neurolinguistics, Discourse Analysis, British literature and English for academic purposes. He has published several articles in various international journals and presented papers in many national and international conferences. He has been teaching English for over 12 years.

Fourth Author, Dr. Sohaib Alam is currently working as an Assistant Professor of English at Department of English, College of Science and Humanities, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia. He holds a Ph.D. in English Language Teaching (ELT) from Aligarh Muslim University, India. His areas of interest are Applied Linguistics, Pragmatics, Teaching Methods, Blended Learning, and Pedagogic Theory. He has presented papers at both national and international conferences, published research articles and papers in various journals.

Abstract

This study investigated the effect of English teachers' stroking behaviors including positive verbal conditional (PVC), negative verbal conditional (NVC) and no stroke (NS) on the learners' motivation within Dörnyei's Theory of L2 Motivational Self-System. Sixty intermediate EFL learners were chosen as the participants. They were randomly divided into three groups each consisting 20 learners. The motivation questionnaire was administered for three groups to evaluate their level of motivation before treatment implementation. The same content was instructed by one teacher for all three groups. Each group received one type of determined three strokes. At the end

of the term, the very motivation questionnaire was applied again for three groups. In addition to the questionnaire, the researcher had interviews with 24 members of participants about their attitude towards the effect of the kind of stroke which they experienced. Analysis of variance (ANOVA), multivariate analysis of covariance (MANCOVA), and qualitative content analysis were used. The results showed that the teacher's stroking behaviors had significant effects on the learners' language learning motivation. Moreover, there were significant differences among the three types of strokes on three subcategories of L2 Motivational Self-System. The results of the interviews confirmed the quantitative data analysis findings.

Keywords*: Stroke; L2 Motivational Self-System theory (Ought-to self, Ideal L2 self, and L2 Learning experience); transactional analysis (TA)*

Introduction

The interaction between teacher and learner can be considered as a fundamental element in the educational contexts. Hall and Walsh (2002) asserted that the quality of teacher-learner interaction in the language learning contexts is a major factor to have an effective and efficient learning and teaching process. Moreover, this kind of interaction has an essential role in progressing a positive learners' academic development and a social enhancement as well. In fact, the promoted interaction between teacher and learners provides a safe and suitable environment for both learners and teacher. To clarify the essence and effect of teacher-learner interaction in pedagogical contexts, it is needed to scrutinize the psychological dimension of this interaction. Different aspects of human interactions have been examined through Transactional Analysis (TA) which was introduced originally by Eric Berne (1958). Transactional analysis is a theory within the psychology and psychotherapy domain; according to Stewart and Joines (1987), it is the personality's theory and a kind of psychotherapy for personal improvement.

The TA theory is applicable in different domains including education, psychotherapy, management, counseling and totally in any domain that requires individual and communication comprehension (Stewart and Joines, 1987). The TA theory comprises the following concepts: transactions, ego-states, games, life-script, and strokes (Berne, 1988; Stewart and Joines, 1987).

One of the principal components within TA domain which is directly allied to the teacher-learner interactions is stroke. Based on Shirai's (2006) definition, stroke can be any action pertaining to

confirmation of other's existence. It refers to being seen by others through which some human's affective needs can be met. There are various kinds of strokes: positive and negative, verbal and non-verbal, conditional and unconditional. Verbal stroke is using words in both forms of oral and written, non-verbal stroke are the actions such as smiling and frowning, positive stroke is the actions that result in pleasant feelings in receiver of stroke; athwart, negative stroke results in unpleasant experiences. Conditional stroke betokens what a person does, while unconditional stroke refers to what a person is (Stewart & Joines, 1987). Francis and Woodcock (1996) believe that stroke is a related term to motivation and different kinds of strokes can be used to motivate or demotivate people.

> Strokes are units of recognition. When we communicate, we recognize one another; we transmit energy through words and non-verbal language. Some transactions provide less of these strokes (like "Hello – Hello") and some provide more (like "I love you – I love you too"). People need strokes in their lives in the same way as they need food or water. That's why we structure our time so that we get the amount of strokes that we need, from isolation to intimacy (Gheorghe, 2007).

Study about motivation started with Gardner and Lambert (1972), which underlined the concept of integrativeness, then in the 1990s it tended to the cognitive aspect, attribution theories and the self-determination. Dörnyei (2009) proposed L2 Motivational Self System theory which extended the existing L2 motivation conceptualizations by the use of psychological aspects of the self and consists of three components: the Ought-to self, the Ideal L2 self, and L2 Learning experience. The Ought-to L2 self "concerns the attributes that one believes one ought to possess to meet expectations and to avoid possible negative outcomes", the Ideal L2 self refers to the "L2-specific facet of one's 'ideal self'", the L2 Learning experience refers to "situated, executive motives related to the immediate learning environment and experience" (Dörnyei, 2009, p. 29). This theory is according to some theories in the psychosocial domain whose focuses are on the individuals' identities and the selves as an L2 learners, and based on the fact that it is not possible for all L2 leaners to be always in close contact with target language situations and groups; therefore, the traditional concept of integrativeness changed into selves and individual identity. Based on this perspective, a learner can embody his future self and considers it as a motivational force to

decrease the differences between future and present selves. Thus, the L2 learner's motivation results from the positive attitude towards the learning process itself (Dörnyei, 2009).

Statement of the problems

As it was previously mentioned, teacher-learner interaction is an irrefutable effective factor in learning and teaching process and because of this utmost importance, it has been taken into account by many researchers in the realm of education (Roorda, Koomen, Spilt and Oort, 2011; Kato, Tscholl and Kunnen, 2018; Hamre and Pianta, 2001; Thijs and Koomen, 2008; Keezhatta, 2020; Aldridge and Fraser, 2016; and Henderson and Fisher, 2008).

Pishghadam, Zabihi, and Shayesteh (2015) postulated that the main purpose of education within psychological and humanistic framework is to make a learner become a good decision maker in his life and to promote his psychological aspects consisting of critical thinking, autonomy, emotional abilities and self-determination. Pishghadam, Zabihi, and Kermanshahi (2012) contended that a language teacher should be trained in other allied disciplines in order to recognize learners' affective, mental, psychological, social and ethical needs for improving the overall quality of their lives. Indeed, Pishghadam et al. have taken into account the underlined assumptions of TA in the education domain. Considering these assumptions, a language teacher should heighten motivational features for learning by optimal application of different types of strokes in the respective situations.

Recent attention to the psychological aspects of teacher-learner interaction including the use of strokes to ameliorate learners' motivation made the researcher interested in investigating the effect of English teachers' stroking behaviors on the learners' motivation within Dörnyei's theory of L2 Motivational Self-System. For this purpose, the researchers investigated the effect of positive verbal conditional stroke (PVC), negative verbal conditional strokes (NVC) and no stroke (NS) in this study.

Research question

For this study the following research questions were posed:

1. Does the English teacher's application of positive verbal conditional stroke and negative verbal conditional strokes and lack of stroke have any significance effect on the learners' motivation for learning a language within Dörnyei's theory of L2 Motivational Self-System?

2. Is there any significant difference among the effect of using positive verbal conditional stroke and negative verbal conditional stroke and lack of stroke on three subcategories of Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self-System theory (the Ought-to self, Ideal L2 self, and L2 Learning experience)?

3. What is the EFL learners' attitudes towards the effect of the English teacher's application of positive verbal conditional stroke and negative verbal conditional strokes and lack of stroke on their motivation for learning a language within Dörnyei's theory of L2 Motivational Self-System?

Methodology

Subjects

To accomplish the aim of the study, the researchers picked three groups each including 20 female EFL learners in the intermediate level via convenience sampling because of some limitation in sampling process and to control the gender variable just female learners were selected. Total number of participants were sixty Iranian EFL learners from a language institution. Their age varied from 16 to 47 and they have different socio-economic backgrounds. Their levels of education ranged from high school to MA degree.

Instrumentation

In this investigation, a motivation questionnaire which was adopted from a designed questionnaire by Taguchi et al. (2009), was employed. It was prepared to measure three subcomponents of Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self-System theory (Ought-to self, Ideal L2 self, and L2 Learning experience). It includes 30 items in the five-interval Likert scale. An example of each follows:

1. Ideal L2 Self: 10 items, example: "I imagine myself as someone who is able to speak English".

2. Ought-to l2 Self: 10 items, example: "I study English because close friends of mine think it is important".

3. L2 learning experience: 10 items, example: "I find learning English really interesting".

The questionnaire was piloted among 30 EFL learners at the intermediate level and its reliability was achieved through Cronbach's alpha (0.787).

Study Design

The design was utilized for this investigation is quasi-experimental because it is an empirical study to investigate the causal effect of using positive verbal conditional stroke and negative verbal

conditional stroke and lack of stroke on three subcategories of L2 Motivational Self-System theory without random assignment.

Procedure

First of all, 73 Iranian EFL learners were selected for this study. To see that the subjects were at almost same English proficiency level, the researcher administered the 'Interchange/Passages Objective Placement Test' (Lesley, Hasen & Zukowski, 2005) at the first session. Based on the test results, the appropriate subjects were picked for the study. Then, the selected subjects were assigned randomly to three groups. Each group was consisted of 20 female EFL learners at the intermediate level. Before starting the course, the motivation questionnaire was administered for three groups to evaluate their level of motivation before treatment implementation. The same content was instructed by one teacher for all three groups during almost two months in the pre-appointed three sessions in a week each one took about one and a half hours. For the content of the course the book of American English File 2 was chosen whose four lessons were taught to the EFL learners. For the group in which positive verbal conditional strokes were applied, the teacher frequently tried to use some before-planned words and expressions implying positive conditional stroke such as "you did well or excellent" and "I am satisfied with your assignments" in each session and she usually ignored the negative aspects of learners' learning process it means that she concentrated on the positive aspects for providing stroke. For the group in which negative verbal conditional strokes were used, the teacher frequently included some before-planned words and expressions implying negative conditional stroke in her feedbacks such as "you did not well" and "I am not satisfied with your assignments"; she did not consider the learners' positive aspects in their learning process and mostly gave stroke to their negative aspects. Finally, for the group in which no strokes were applied, the teacher usually gave the learners feedbacks bearing no emotional concepts and themes such as "it is not correct, pay more attention" or "it is correct think about the other one". In the final session, the very motivation questionnaire was applied again for three groups to investigate the effect of using two strokes and lack of stroke on the EFL learners' motivation after treatment implementation. In addition to the questionnaire, the researcher had interviews with 24 members of participants, eight ones randomly from each group, about their attitude towards the effect of the kind of stroke which they experienced during the course through some open-ended questions such as: "what kind of stroke are you more comfortable with?"; "what

is your idea about these types of strokes"; "what type of stroke would you apply for your students if you were in your teacher's shoes?"

Results

Both kinds of quantitative and qualitative data were gathered for the present study. For analyzing the quantitative data in this investigation, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 19, was employed. First, descriptive statistics were applied for the three components of Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System (Ought-to self, Ideal L2 self, and L2 Learning experience) among three groups at the pretest which are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of the three components of Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System between the three groups at the Pre-Test.

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Pretest of ideal L2 self	PVC	20	36.0000	6.85181	1.53211	32.7933	39.2067	21.00	47.00
	NVC	20	36.0000	5.95598	1.33180	33.2125	38.7875	20.00	44.00
	NS	20	34.0000	6.89011	1.54068	30.7753	37.2247	19.00	42.00
	Total	60	35.3333	6.53716	.84394	33.6446	37.0221	19.00	47.00
Pretest of ought to self	PVC	20	24.0000	9.64638	2.15700	19.4854	28.5146	9.00	41.00
	NVC	20	25.0000	5.63822	1.26074	22.3612	27.6388	17.00	38.00
	NS	20	26.0000	6.44001	1.44003	22.9860	29.0140	19.00	42.00
	Total	60	25.0000	7.36460	.95077	23.0975	26.9025	9.00	42.00
Pretest of L2 learning experience	PVC	20	29.0000	9.14215	2.04425	24.7213	33.2787	12.00	42.00
	NVC	20	29.0000	6.12158	1.36883	26.1350	31.8650	19.00	41.00
	NS	20	28.0000	7.34130	1.64157	24.5642	31.4358	19.00	48.00
	Total	60	28.6667	7.52097	.97095	26.7238	30.6095	12.00	48.00
Pretest of whole motivation	PVC	20	89.0000	14.41856	3.22409	82.2519	95.7481	58.00	117.00
	NVC	20	90.0000	9.18809	2.05452	85.6998	94.3002	78.00	107.00
	NS	20	88.0000	18.22376	4.07496	79.4710	96.5290	67.00	126.00
	Total	60	89.0000	14.20432	1.83377	85.3306	92.6694	58.00	126.00

To check whether there are any significant differences in learners' L2 Motivational Self System and its three components in three groups and whether they are appropriate for the study, three groups' mean scores were analyzed at the pre-test by the use of a one-way ANOVA. The *F*-

observed values were .616, .361, .114 and .096 respectively for L2 Motivational Self System components and itself as a whole. Also, p-value for them were .544, .699, .892 and .909 in order. The amount of *F*-values was lower than the critical value of F and p-values were higher than the significance level of .05 (see Table 2).

Table 2

One-Way ANOVA on the Three Groups at Pretest

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Pretest of ideal L2 self	Between Groups	53.333	2	26.667	.616	.544
	Within Groups	2468.000	57	43.298		
	Total	2521.333	59			
Pretest of ought to self	Between Groups	40.000	2	20.000	.361	.699
	Within Groups	3160.000	57	55.439		
	Total	3200.000	59			
Pretest of L2 learning experience	Between Groups	13.333	2	6.667	.114	.892
	Within Groups	3324.000	57	58.316		
	Total	3337.333	59			
Pretest of whole motivation	Between Groups	40.000	2	20.000	.096	.909
	Within Groups	11864.000	57	208.140		
	Total	11904.000	59			

Thus, based on the Table 2, there were no significant differences among three groups' mean scores at the pre-test (F (2, 57) = .616, p> .05), (F (2, 57) = .361, p> .05), (F (2, 57) = .114, p> .05), and (F (2, 57) = .096, p> .05) and these groups are acceptable ones for this study.

In Table 3 the groups' homogeneity of variances was indicated.

Table 3

Test of the three groups' Variances Homogeneity at the pretest

	Levene's Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Pretest of ideal L2 self	.673	2	57	.514
Pretest of ought to self	1.797	2	57	.281
Pretest of L2 learning experience	1.111	2	57	.336
Pretest of whole motivation	1.975	2	57	.133

Regarding the results of the Levene's test of homogeneity of variances it was found that all groups possess homogenous variances; namely, no significant differences were found among three groups' variances. Therefore, one-way ANOVA's results were reliable (see Table 3). The descriptive statistics for the three groups at the post-test are displayed in the Table 4.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics of the three components of L2 Motivational Self System between the three groups at the Post-Test.

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Posttest of ideal L2 self	PVC	20	41.0000	6.84413	1.53039	37.7968	44.2032	30.00	58.00
	NVC	20	22.0000	3.79751	.84915	20.2227	23.7773	18.00	32.00
	NS	20	20.0000	4.75727	1.06376	17.7735	22.2265	12.00	32.00
	Total	60	27.6667	10.86694	1.40292	24.8594	30.4739	12.00	58.00
Posttest of ought to self	PVC	20	30.0000	6.19847	1.38602	27.0990	32.9010	20.00	41.00
	NVC	20	24.0000	6.19847	1.38602	21.0990	26.9010	16.00	39.00
	NS	20	21.0000	4.07818	.91191	19.0914	22.9086	14.00	30.00
	Total	60	25.0000	6.65875	.85964	23.2799	26.7201	14.00	41.00
Posttest of L2 learning experience	PVC	20	43.0000	5.47723	1.22474	40.4366	45.5634	32.00	50.00
	NVC	20	16.0000	4.65663	1.04125	13.8206	18.1794	11.00	29.00
	NS	20	17.0000	3.21182	.71818	15.4968	18.5032	12.00	23.00
	Total	60	25.3333	13.37296	1.72644	21.8787	28.7879	11.00	50.00
Posttest of whole motivation	PVC	20	1.1400E2	11.53941	2.58029	108.5994	119.4006	97.00	138.00
	NVC	20	62.0000	7.13037	1.59440	58.6629	65.3371	51.00	87.00
	NS	20	58.0000	6.70428	1.49912	54.8623	61.1377	40.00	67.00
	Total	60	78.0000	27.11870	3.50101	70.9945	85.0055	40.00	138.00

To see whether the use of three kinds of strokes caused any differences in the three groups' mean scores at the post-test, MANCOVA was applied. The Wilk's $\Delta = .041$, $F (8, 108) = 52.88$, $p < .05$, the partial eta squared $= .797$. (see Table 5).

Table 5

Multivariate Tests on the Three Groups at Post-Test.

	Effect	Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	Pillai's Trace	.992	1.770E3[a]	4.000	54.000	.000	.992
	Wilks' Lambda	.008	1.770E3[a]	4.000	54.000	.000	.992
	Hotelling's Trace	131.116	1.770E3[a]	4.000	54.000	.000	.992
	Roy's Largest Root	131.116	1.770E3[a]	4.000	54.000	.000	.992
group	Pillai's Trace	1.040	14.898	8.000	110.000	.000	.520
	Wilks' Lambda	.041	52.889[a]	8.000	108.000	.000	.797
	Hotelling's Trace	21.215	140.546	8.000	106.000	.000	.914
	Roy's Largest Root	21.121	2.904E2[b]	4.000	55.000	.000	.955

a. Exact statistic

b. The statistic is an upper bound on F that yields a lower bound on the significance

level.

c. Design: Intercept + group

According to Table 5, there are significant differences among the mean scores of the three groups on post-test. The partial eta squared, was found to be .797. This figure shows the degree of association between the dependent (post-test scores) and independent (three types of strokes) variables, which is almost a large size (Cohen, 1988; Richardson, 2011).

The Leven's test of homogeneity of variances reveals that the three groups had homogenous variances F (8, 108) = 52.88, p < .05; therefore, results of the MANCOVA were reliable, namely, there was not any significant difference between the variances of the three groups at the post test.

Table 6

Test of the three groups' Homogeneity of Variances at the posttest

	Levene's Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Posttest of ideal L2 self	2.358	2	57	.104
Posttest of ought to self	3.039	2	57	.056
Posttest of L2 learning experience	2.509	2	57	.090
Posttest of whole motivation	3.220	2	57	.052

The result of MANCOVA revealed that there are differences among the means, but its precise place was not specified. To demonstrate the exact place of differences, a post hoc comparison of the means was conducted. Thus, an analysis of Bonferroni confidence intervals was applied as a follow up test (see Tables 7). The results of the post hoc comparison show that L2 Motivational Self System as a whole and its three subscales (Ideal L2 self, the Ought-to self, and L2 Learning experience) differed significantly between the three groups.

Table 7

Post hoc comparison for subscales of L2 Motivational Self System as a whole and its three subscales (Ideal L2 self, the Ought-to self, and L2 Learning experience)

Dependent Variable	(I) group	(J) group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Posttest of ideal L2 self	PVC	NVC	19.00000*	1.67227	.000	14.8750	23.1250
		NS	21.00000*	1.67227	.000	16.8750	25.1250
	NVC	PVC	-19.00000*	1.67227	.000	-23.1250	-14.8750
		NS	2.00000	1.67227	.710	-2.1250	6.1250
	NS	PVC	-21.00000*	1.67227	.000	-25.1250	-16.8750
		NVC	-2.00000	1.67227	.710	-6.1250	2.1250
Posttest of L2 learning experience	PVC	NVC	6.00000*	1.76516	.004	1.6459	10.3541
		NS	9.00000*	1.76516	.000	4.6459	13.3541
	NVC	PVC	-6.00000*	1.76516	.004	-10.3541	-1.6459
		NS	3.00000	1.76516	.284	-1.3541	7.3541
	NS	PVC	-9.00000*	1.76516	.000	-13.3541	-4.6459
		NVC	-3.00000	1.76516	.284	-7.3541	1.3541
Posttest of ought to self	PVC	NVC	27.00000*	1.43759	.000	23.4539	30.5461
		NS	26.00000*	1.43759	.000	22.4539	29.5461
	NVC	PVC	-27.00000*	1.43759	.000	-30.5461	-23.4539
		NS	-1.00000	1.43759	1.000	-4.5461	2.5461
	NS	PVC	-26.00000*	1.43759	.000	-29.5461	-22.4539
		NVC	1.00000	1.43759	1.000	-2.5461	4.5461
Posttest of whole motivation	PVC	NVC	52.00000*	2.76253	.000	45.1857	58.8143
		NS	56.00000*	2.76253	.000	49.1857	62.8143
	NVC	PVC	-52.00000*	2.76253	.000	-58.8143	-45.1857
		NS	4.00000	2.76253	.459	-2.8143	10.8143
	NS	PVC	-56.00000*	2.76253	.000	-62.8143	-49.1857
		NVC	-4.00000	2.76253	.459	-10.8143	2.8143

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

According to Table 7 and also comparison of the pretest's and posttest's mean scores in the Tables 1 and 4, the positive verbal conditional strokes (PVC) have had positive effect on the L2 Motivational Self System as a whole and its three subscales (Ideal L2 self, the Ought-to self, and L2 Learning experience), it caused the development of L2 Motivational Self System as a whole and its three subscales in EFL learners. Negative verbal conditional strokes (NVC) and no strokes (NS) affected the L2 Motivational Self System as a whole and its three subscales in negative way and decreased them among learners. Between negative verbal conditional strokes and no strokes, no strokes had more negative effects on the L2 Motivational Self System as a whole and its three subscales and caused more decline in them. On the other hand, positive verbal conditional strokes (PVC) had the most positive effect on the Ideal L2 self-component in comparison with the other two ones. In addition, negative verbal conditional strokes (NVC) and no strokes (NS) also had the most negative effect on the Ideal L2 self as well.

The results of the interviews confirmed the quantitative data analysis based on which L2 Motivational Self System as a whole and its three subscales in EFL learners can be developed through positive verbal conditional strokes and between negative verbal conditional strokes and no strokes the learners prefer negative verbal conditional ones rather than no strokes. In their opinions, without any strokes from teacher they feel that they have been ignored by teacher.

Discussion and Conclusion

The significance of the teacher-learner interaction as an effective factor in education process has attracted many researchers' attention to investigate its related effects (Roorda, Koomen, Spilt and Oort, 2011; Kato, Tscholl and Kunnen, 2018; Hamre and Pianta, 2001; Thijs and Koomen, 2008; Henderson and Fisher, 2008).

The findings of Pishghadam, Zabihi, and Shayesteh's study (2015) indicated that the objective of education by the special regarding to psychological and humanistic framework is to change a learner to a good decision maker in his life and to augments his psychological dimensions including critical thinking, autonomy, emotional abilities and self-determination. According to Pishghadam, Zabihi, and Kermanshahi (2012), a language teacher should be trained in other related disciplines to enhance the whole quality of the learners' life by considering his affective, mental, psychological, social and ethical aspects. Therefore, Pishghadam et al (2015) have considered the underlined assumptions of TA in the education process and believe that a language

teacher should promote the learners' motivational feature by appropriately using different kinds of strokes in educational settings. Another study was carried out by Pishghadam and Khajavy (2014) where they revealed that stroke was positively related to extrinsic and intrinsic motivation; thus, it can be considered as a significant factor in the motivational aspects of learning a language.

Regarding the afore-mentioned significance of teacher-learner interaction and its contribution to learners' motivation, this study aims to investigate the effect of English teachers' stroking behaviors on the learners' motivation within L2 Motivational Self-System. The researchers investigated the effect of positive verbal conditional stroke (PVC), negative verbal conditional strokes (NVC) and no stroke (NS) in this investigation.

The results of the study displayed that the English teacher's application of positive verbal conditional stroke and negative verbal conditional strokes and lack of stroke have significant effects on the learners' motivation of language learning within L2 Motivational Self-System. Moreover, based on the findings, there were the significant differences among the effect of using positive verbal conditional stroke and negative verbal conditional stroke and lack of stroke on three subcategories of L2 Motivational Self-System theory (Ought-to self, Ideal L2 self, and L2 Learning experience). On the other hand, the results of the interviews backed up the quantitative data analysis findings regarding the effect of the English teacher's application of positive verbal conditional stroke and negative verbal conditional strokes and lack of stroke on the language learning motivation within L2 Motivational Self-System. According to them, L2 Motivational Self System as a whole and its three subscales in EFL learners can be developed through positive verbal conditional strokes and between negative verbal conditional strokes and no strokes the learners prefer negative verbal conditional ones rather than no strokes. In their opinions, without any strokes from teacher they feel that they have been ignored by teacher.

The present study's results can provide new horizons for the scholars, teacher educators and teachers in this domain by considering the affective aspects and using different types of strokes in educational settings. Consequently, much more study is still needed to investigate the effect of other types of stroke (such as: positive non-verbal conditional stroke (PNC); negative non-verbal conditional strokes (NNC); positive verbal unconditional stroke (PVU), negative verbal unconditional strokes (NVU); etc.) on learners' motivation or other psychological components.

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Morphosyntax Variations of the *Surigaonon* Language
in North-eastern, *Mindanao*, Philippines

Lesley Karen B. Penera

Cebu Technological University, Philippines

les_penera@yahoo.com

Bio-profile:

Lesley Karen B. Penera's 17-year career in higher education commenced in 2002 and the publication of Philippine English: An Exploratory Mixed-Methods Inquiry on Digital Immigrants and Digital Natives' Variety in the Scopus-indexed, The Asian EFL Journal and Syntactic Analysis Preference: How Filipinos Do with Globally-Ambiguous Sentences in the International Forum Journal is her latest achievement.

Abstract

Anchored on Labov's notion that some linguistic features may exhibit variants among speakers of the same language within the same community as well as on Parker and Riley's language variation theory, this inquiry which employs a qualitative-content [manifest] analysis assumes that *Surigaonon* exhibits some linguistic variations hence the identification of its lexical and syntactic variants, determination of the morphological processes revealed by the variants, and documentation of the rules of morphological unit combinations established by the morphological processes. This inquiry is propelled by the belief that intermarriages and employment among others have steered *Suriganonons* to encounters with people who speak other languages thus speak some of these languages themselves in formal circumstances resulting into the "adoption and use of non-*Surigaonon* terms" [and structures] and "nativizing" them. Data were sourced from published studies, *Surigaonon* dictionary and handbook, as well as recorded responses from *Surigaonons* obtained by adapting Labov's "rapid and anonymous observations" technique. Findings prove that *Surigaonon* exhibits some linguistic variations which reveal a number of morphological processes establishing several rules of morphological unit combinations. Although some are distinctively native *Surigaonon* alternatives, many are evidently results of the identified morphological processes which include [among others] lexical borrowing, affixation including

circumfixation, alternation, clipping, compounding, metathesis, and stylistic syntactic variation through contraction, exclusion, and single morpheme equivalents. Moreover, despite following rules in word formations with majority of the lexical and syntactic variants, *Surigaonons* speak other alternatives that imply language innovation without apprehension of any deviation from established universal convention. Some display nonconformity which might also be the rationale for many of the complex word formations in the same collection despite prior described and established patterns.

Keywords: *Surigaonon*, language variation, lexical borrowing, circumfixation, metathesis, exclusion

Introduction

Growing interest in the study of language variation is becoming evident in current linguistics. It has even been revealed that its inclusion has already gone beyond being a mere "footnote in linguistic description" (Holyk, p. 17) which may have been driven by Labov, Cedergren, and Sankoff's notion that variation is intrinsic in the system of a language.

This, therefore, does not make *Surigaonon* which is the *Surigaonons*' functional daily mode of expression an exception in the study of language variation. In 2009, W. Hall indicates *Surigaonon* speakers from *Surigao Del Norte* along with speakers in north *Agusan Del Norte* and north of *Surigao Del Sur* provinces at 400,000 (Lewis, Simons, & Fennig, 2015) and in 2015, Dumanig made it known that this Philippine regional language is spoken by 95% of the people in the province of *Surigao Del Norte*.

Although in casual conversations, the *Surigaonons* speak their *Surigaonon* language, *Surigaonon* speakers in *Surigao* City and the neighboring towns in *Surigao Del Norte* can swiftly shift to *Cebuano-Visayan* (Lewis et al., 2015) when the situation requires as in a politician when interviewed by the media or a school principal when presiding over a meeting with members of the Parents and Teachers Association (PTA). Apart from shifting to *Cebuano-Visayan*, *Surigaonon* speakers have the propensity to use English or *Tagalog* when speaking in other formal gatherings (Penera, 2017).

Intermarriages, employment, trade and industry, education, and tourism have steered native *Suriganons* to encounters with people who speak the aforementioned languages (Penera, 2017)

and others who speak Boholano and *Waray* (Dumanig, 2015) resulting into the "adoption and use of some non-*Surigaonon* terms" as well as structures and "nativizing" them (Penera, 2017, p. 3).

All these along with scant published scholarship on *Surigaonon* language which focused on the exploration of some of its aspects except its existing variants have compelled this scholar to uncover [thru qualitative-content analysis at the manifest level] existing *Surigaonon* variations by specifically identifying lexical and syntactic variants evident in the language, ascertaining the morphological processes undergone by these variants, and determining the rules of morphological unit combinations established by the morphological processes. Doing such [this author believes] may not only help lay the groundwork for future scholars whose investigations might be anchored on Biber's notion that "change is to be found in variation" (Holyk, 2018, p. 18) but it could also lend them some "potential diagnostic points for future linguistic change" (Sankoff, Labov & Kroch as cited in Holyk, p. 18) in future scholarship on *Surigaonon* language and language change [among others]. Most importantly, this inquiry's findings may also have a facilitative function in levelling the field for *Surigaonon* Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) curriculum developers and setting off the development of contextualized and localized instructional materials (Penera, 2017) to offer a better alternative for the *Cebuano-Visayan* sounding instructional materials currently being utilized for pre-schoolers in *Surigao* City. Such could become this inquiry's findings' direction since despite the statement that the Department of Education's (DepEd's) MTB-MLE is currently using 19 languages which include *Surigaonon* to facilitate students' grasp of rudimentary concepts (Manabat, 2018), Cruz's (2015, p. 1) assertion that the employment of MTB-MLE in classrooms where teachers have to contend with either insufficient or incompatible instructional materials which is still "found wanting" is positively confirmed by the utilization of *Cebuano-Visayan* sounding instructional materials for *Surigaonon* pre-schoolers as evidenced by a learning material of this scholar's nephew. This certainly creates the need and makes it imperative to make instructional materials in their native tongue available for these learners and determining variations evident in *Surigaonon* may prove vital.

Review of Literature

This inquiry is anchored on William Labov's theory of language variation and change as well as Parker and Riley's theory of language variation.

Although conventional theorists have the propensity to de-emphasize the significance of variation and to regard it as an inconsequential phenomenon, its existence has not been disputed (Gordon, 2014).

Labov who established the field branded as "variationist sociolinguistics" (as cited in Gordon, 2014) upholds the existence of linguistic variation in a speech community where linguistic features may exhibit variants among speakers of the same language within the same community (Penera, 2017). This adheres to the field's fundamental principle that variation is intrinsic to language and that the manner in which it is articulated (and penned) varies among individuals, just as how it varies across contexts that confront the same individual.

The existence of language variation is evidently and prominently demonstrated in Labov's research which reveals that linguistic variation is widespread and remarkably structured. These variations, according to him, are typical as well as essential in order for language to function (Gordon, 2014).

Underpinning Labov's theory, Parker and Riley's (2005) language variation is the study of the features of a language that differ systematically when different groups of speakers of the same language are compared or when the language features of the same speaker in different situations are compared.

This theory examines three types of variation existing within a language: 1) it explores regional varieties of a language as in the use of pail in Northern United States and bucket in the south (Parker & Riley, 2005) both meaning a large container used to carry water; 2) it scrutinizes social varieties of the same language as in the use of 'I ain't sorry' by someone from a lower socioeconomic status and someone who says 'I am not sorry' (Parker & Riley, 2005); and 3) it investigates the stylistic varieties of one language, as in how one writes 'thank you for your consideration' when penning an application letter, but informally says 'thanks for your time' to mean the same thing (Parker & Riley, 2005). Such examples certainly suggest that language variation [depending on its impelling cause] manifests regionally, socially, and stylistically influenced variants (Parker & Riley, 2005).

Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams (2014) reveal that despite speaking the same language, that is English - Bostonians, New Yorkers, Texans, the African-Americans in Chicago, and the Hispanics in Albuquerque all demonstrate variation in speech. Reflecting the same phenomenon, *Surigaonons* who evidently speak the same *Surigaonon* language which is [to borrow Belahsen &

Ouahmiche's (2017, p. 25) label] the "functional daily mode of expression in casual conversations," appear to exhibit variations in speech because they can swiftly shift to *Cebuano-Visayan* (Lewis et al., 2015) and have the predisposition to use English or *Tagalog* when the situation requires (Penera, 2017).

Moreover, these *Surigaonons*' encounters [with individuals who speak other Philippine regional languages] that have been driven by factors such as intermarriages, employment, trade and industry, education, and tourism, resulted into the "adoption and use of some non-*Surigaonon* terms" [as well as structures] and "nativizing" them (Penera, 2017, p. 3).

This can certainly be substantiated by Parker and Riley's (2005) notion of regional variation exhibiting mainly lexical variants such as the ones found in Dumanig's (2015) Descriptive Analysis of the *Surigaonon* Language where the lexical variant *latajan* which in this scholar's vocabulary is *latayan* for wooden foot bridge tendered part of the initial data.

Correspondingly, Liwanag's (2017) paper which revealed five *Surigaonon* orthographic issues afforded this inquiry some of its preliminary data when it presented two lexical varieties for face [*wayung* and *nawung* although this scholar also refers to it as *kawaynganan*]. Her examples also included *huy-ab*, *hoy-ab*, *huyab* meaning 'yawn' which could also be variants of *hujab* (Liwanag, 2017).

Finally, Dela Cerna's (2017) paper that focused on *Surigaonon* segmental phonemes offered the last set of this inquiry's earliest data for in this paper, the *Surigaonon* word for 'donations' or 'charity' is *ayuda* which is in this scholar's vocabulary would be *hinabang*; *matukudan* meaning 'to build' would be *matukuran*; *haman* or *hain* both meaning 'where' could be *hain man*; and '*ya* meaning 'none' could also be *waya* in this scholar's native tongue.

These lexical variations could be rationalized by morphological processes of deletion, alternation, metathesis (Dumanig, 2015) and [among others] borrowing. The last, according to Fromkin et al. (2014), arises when multilingual speakers frequently interact with each other.

In the same study by Dela Cerna (2017), the Surigaonon sentence, *Umay imu trabahu*? (What is your job?), for instance, which can be rendered *Uno may imu trabahu*? by another *Surigaonon*, as well as *Bisan kun dili kita musugut*, *waya may atu mahimu* (Even if we disagree, we can do nothing) which may become *Bisan kun dili 'ta musugut, way atu mahimu* or *Musugut 'ta o dili, way atu mahimu* could be substantiated by social and stylistic variations' mainly manifesting morphological and syntactic variants (Parker & Riley, 2005) [among others]. The

same may also be supported by Parker and Riley's stylistic morphological variation thru contractions [a word reduction phenomenon (Fromkin et al, 2014) such as] and clipped forms. Both of which are generally linked with informal registers (Parker & Riley, 2005). Others in the examples may likewise be supported by Labov's [copula] element deletion which could further knowledge on any language's "linguistic structure" (as cited in Adger & Trousdale, 2007, p. 274) as well as structure reduction (Zanuttini, 2014) as in Edelstein's (2014) Alternative Embedded Passive (AEP) example, 'The cat needs fed' as a syntactic variant of its longer version, 'The cat needed to be fed'.

All these have set the groundwork for this inquiry that focuses on the identification of lexical and syntactic variants in *Surigaonon* through which the identification of morphological processes in the language is built upon which in turn becomes the basis for establishing the *Surigaonon* rules of morphological unit combinations [eg. noun+-atic→systematic] (Fromkin et al., 2014). Such rules of morphological unit combinations are conventions on how morphemes combine with other morphemes to create new words. These morphemes could be single sounds as in a- in amoral, a single syllable such as child, a two-syllable word as in childish, three-syllables like crocodile, or a four-syllable word as in accelerate (Fromkin et al., 2014).

This inquiry takes into account all the aspects presented.

Methodology

This inquiry employs a qualitative-content [manifest] analysis which is deductive in design.

Content analysis, Downe-Wambolt says, is a research method that offers methodical and impartial approaches in formulating legitimate inferences based on "verbal, visual, or written data to describe and quantify a specific phenomenon" (as cited in Bengtsson, 2016, p. 9) and can be employed inductively or deductively (Bengtsson, 2016).

This inquiry's qualitative-content [manifest] analysis is a combination of qualitative data collection and data quantification. Qualitative data is collected from a variety of "qualitative sources" (Nassaji, 2015, p. 130) to ensure a "more comprehensive view of the phenomenon" (Sargeant, 2012, p. 2) whereas data quantification, when merged with the qualitative attribute according to Berg and Morgan (as cited in Bengtsson, 2016) would render the extent of the phenomenon investigated more evident. This data quantification is carried out by employing

McEnery and Wilson's (2001) corpus linguistics frequency count. An arithmetical count of classified items in a specific scheme is performed thereby giving numerical values to collected *Surigaonon* lexical and syntactic variants which include those obtained by adapting Labov's "rapid and anonymous observations" technique thru which sales clerks from high-end stores and bargain-basements were asked 'where the female shoes were' to elicit variations in /r/ thru answers like "…the fourth floor" (as cited in Feagin, 2002, p. 34). In this inquiry's modified version, native *Surigaonons* were asked questions like 'How do you express what did you just say in *Surigaonon*?' to elicit variants like unoy imu laung and its single morpheme equivalent, ha.

Deductive reasoning design which requires the creation of a coding list before the process of analysing commences (Bengtsson, 2016) is adopted in this study for according to Catanzaro (as cited in Bengtsson, 2016, p. 12), "it is much easier to obtain high reliability with code lists generated deductively rather than inductively." These codes are used in the templates utilized in carrying out this inquiry's three phases.

Presenting data in words thereby rendering the feasibility of results interpretation, this qualitative-content analysis that is deductive in design is carried out at the manifest level since the linguistic presentation and the subsequent description of the sourced data are not only based on this inquiry's focus but also on the informants' own words which are utilized in the description of what is "visible and obvious in the text" (Berg; Catanzaro; and Downe-Wambolt as cited in Bengtsson, 2016, p. 10) to justify the description of the *Surigaonon* language variation phenomenon.

Preliminary data [28 *Surigaonon* variants for 13 items] were sourced from three published studies on *Surigaonon* language. A considerable number of variants were also collected from a 2017 dissertation as well as the recorded responses of native *Surigaonons* [who are residents of the city] that belong to the following groups: 1) senior citizens (60-above), 2) professionals and non-professionals (25-59), and 3) tertiary students (aged 19-24). The bulk of this inquiry's data, however, is obtained from Fredesuendo Ong's *Surigaonon* Dictionary published in 2015 as well as his *Surigaonon* Words and Expressions handbook which was published in 2004.

This inquiry is carried out in three phases: phase 1 entails the collection of *Surigaonon* lexical and syntactic variants, phase 2 involves the identification of morphological processes, and phase 3 necessitates the determination of the rules of morphological unit combination.

Results and Discussion

Collected Surigaonon Language Variants

The *Surigaonon* language variants collection is classified into a compendium of lexical variants and an inventory of syntactic alternatives.

Table 1 presents the arithmetical count of the collected *Surigaonon* lexical variants.

Table 1. *Surigaonon* **Lexical Variants Collection**

Grammatical Class	*Surigaonon* Words	Variants
Nouns	307	400
Verbs	253	410
Adjectives	150	240
Adverbs	9	15
TOTAL	**719**	**1,065**

Findings reveal that a total of 1,065 lexical variants were recorded for a combination 719 *Surigaonon* nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. Majority of these lexical variants were collected from Ong's (2015) *Surigaonon* Dictionary as well as his 2004 *Surigaonon* Words and Expressions handbook.

Four hundred (400) variants were recorded for 307 *Surigaonon* nouns which include [among others] *latajan* for *latayan* [wooden foot bridge] (Dumanig, 2015), *nawung* for *wayung* [face] in Liwanag's (2017) paper although this scholar sometimes refers to it as *kawaynganan*, *baji* for *babaji* [woman/girl/female], and *ampalaya* as well as *paliya* for *amarguso* [bitter gourd].

Two hundred fifty three (253) verbs listed 410 variants comprising [among others] *dungagi* for *dugangi* [add], *huy-ab* for *hujab* [yawn], *mangilu* for *manguli* [wash/wipe anus after excretion], and *haja* for *tuwaw* [cry] – the former of the last pair is typical of *Surigaonons* from *Siargao* whereas the latter is distinct of *Surigaonons* in the city.

One hundred fifty (150) adjectives reveal 240 variations including [among others] *tim-as* for *pid-as* [ashen], *nagsiniki* for *nakasiki* [barefoot], *ngaguy* for *habul* [blunt], *lingap* for *danghag* [clumsy], as well as *gahi* and *tig-a* for *magahi* [hard].

Lastly, 15 variants were collected for the only nine (9) adverbs found to have alternatives which include [among others] *bitaw* for *balitaw* [indeed], *suod* for *apiki* [near], *panagsa*, *usahay*, and *isahay* for *panyagsa* [sometimes], *pagkatapus* for *pagkahuman* [afterwards], and *ngadtu* for *didtu* [there].

Table 2 reveals the number of *Surigaonon* syntactic variants collected in this inquiry.

Table 2. *Surigaonon* **Syntactic Variants Collection**

Sentence	*Surigaonon*	Variants
Declarative	16	33
Imperative	13	23
Interrogative	13	22
TOTAL	**42**	**78**

Table 2 shows a total of 78 syntactic variants for a combination of 42 *Surigaonon* declarative, imperative, and interrogative sentences.

Thirty-three (33) variations were collected for all sixteen 16 declarative sentences like *Waya ako kahibayu* [I don't know] with variants, *Ya ko kabayu* and *Inday*. The latter which also means 'I don't know' is the single morpheme equivalent of the first two *Surigaonon* declarative sentences. The variants, *Igu ra dimu* for *Kaigu ra dimu* [Serves you right], and *Maskin tagkapuy sija, nutrabahu gihapun* for *Maski na tagkapuy sija, nutrabahu gihapun* [He's tired but he went to work regardless] also make up the rest of the 33 syntactic variants [among others] for the *Surigaonon* declarative sentences.

Thirteen (13) imperative sentences revealed 23 alternatives consisting [among others] *Sudlaya imu buhok*, or its one-word counterpart *Panudlay* for *Sudlaja imu buhok* [Comb your hair],

Pagdali for *Pagdali ditun* [Hurry up]; the single-word equivalent *Janay* for *Huyat anay* both meaning 'Wait;' as well as *Labang* for *Tabuk* meaning 'Get to the other side of the road.'

Finally, all 13 *Surigaonon* interrogative sentences listed a total of 22 variants which include [among others] the single-syllable equivalent with its rising intonation, *Ha* as the corresponding item for *Unoy imu laung* or 'What did you just say?' or the question, *Uno 'tun* for *Uno itun* meaning 'What is that?'; *Unoy imu gusto* and *Umay imu gusto* for *Uno may imu gusto* [What do you want?] as well as *Haman kaw naghuya* for *Hain man kaw naghuya* [Where do you live?].

In a nutshell, the lexical and syntactic variants collection suggests the existence of linguistic variation in *Surigaonon* which could only mean that it is at a stage [early or otherwise] of language change. Such language change, Fromkin et al. (2014) revealed, becomes evident through the addition of words that are readily apparent. Additionally, Biber believes that "change is to be found in variation" (as cited in Holyk, p. 18) while Labov confirms that variation in language can in time lead to language change (cited in Penera, 2017) which can already be observed as it occurs – a discovery, Belahsen and Ouahmiche (2017) reveal, that commenced with empirical variation studies.

The collection further suggests that it renders the language richer lexically and syntacticly bestowing *Surigaonons* a range of expressions especially when language variation does not only embody an individuals' self-expression but it is also an evidence of their societal communication engagements (Crystal as cited in Madeja et al., 2017) picking up bits and pieces from various speakers and eventually adopting and nativizing them thereby adding more into their own language lexicon while enriching their language repertoire.

Identified Morphological Processes

The identified morphological processes are categorized as ones revealed by the *Surigaonon* lexical variants and ones undergone by the syntactic alternatives.

Table 3 shows the morphological processes that the collected *Surigaonon* lexical variants underwent.

Table 3. *Surigaonon* Lexical Variants' Morphological Processes

Morphological Processes	Lexical Items
Alternation	205
Inflected Variant	158
Deletion	135
Clipping	89
Borrowing	83
Affixation	49
Metathesis	32
Circumfixation	26
Reduplication	3
Reduplicated Variant	4
Compounding	1
Blending	1
[Variant Morphemes]	[279]
TOTAL	**1,065**

Although 279 are branded as variant morphemes – many of which are distinctively native *Surigaonon* alternatives, majority of the 1,065 collected lexical variants of the combined 719 *Surigaonon* nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs underwent 12 morphological processes – three of which [deletion, alternation, and metathesis] have already been identified by Dumanig (2015).

Two hundred five (205) underwent **alternation** which according to Dumanig (2015) is substituting /l/ with /y/ and /y/ with /j/ based on a more established *Cebuano-Visayan*. The former occurs when /l/ is in between vowels as in *wayu* from *walu* [eight], *hayad* from *halad* [offering], and *bayun* from *balun* [victual] among others; whereas the latter occurs when /y/ is in between two vowels like *hajup* for *hayup* [animal], *dapajun* for *dapayun* [slap], *hayhajan* for *hayhayan* [clothesline], and *latajan* for *latayan* [wooden foot bridge] among other items. Phonetic alternation in *Surigaonon*, however, is much complex than what has been described. *Butakay* from *butakal* [boar], for instance, as well as *langjaw* from *langyaw* [immigrant] underwent the same alternation even when /l/ and /y/ are not in between vowels.

Moreover, items like *banhud-binhud* [cramp], *dilamita-dinamita* [dynamite], *idu-iru* [dog], *salapati-kalapati* [dove], *kuyo-kuko* [fingernail/toenail], *purgas-pulgas* [flea], *kuptanan-kaptanan* [handle], *pagsugot-pagtugot* [permission], *agas-awas* [water flow], *salipdan-salimdan*

[barricade], and *ingkibun-ingkitun* [bite] among others make up some of the 205 lexical items under this morphological process yet apparently they are not alternations between /l/ to /y/ or /y/ to /j/. *Surigaonon* alternation even includes double phonetic substitution in single-word variants as in *kubu*t from *kibit* [pinch], in single-word reduplication as in *imudmud* for *imusmus* [shove down], and in hyphenated reduplication as in *kisi-kisi* for *kiwi-kiwi* [jiggle] suggesting thus that alternation in *Surigaonon* is not always as straightforward as has been previously described.

One hundred fifty-eight (158) of the 1,065 *Surigaonon* lexical alternatives are categorized as **inflected variants**. According to Fromkin et al (2014), inflection is a morphological process employed for a variety of purposes from the –s inflected English verbs suggesting third person singular agreement to the inflected Finnish nouns conveying "temporary state of being" as well as the "strong negative intention" of the Japanese inflected verbs. The *Surigaonon* inflected variants [which are labelled such for they literally are alternative morphemes that have been inflected] come as nouns, verbs, and adjectives. Inflected noun variants include *tinunto* for *binuang* [mischief], *kalooy* for *puangod* [mercy], *ag-agan* for *sayaan* [sieve], and *tunghaan* for *iskuylahan* [school] among others. *Bijaan* for *panawan* [abandon], *samukon* for *buysitun* [bother], *bilangun* for *ihapun* [count], as well as *lupogun* and *lantun* for *apasun* [chase] are just few of the examples of inflected verb variants. Lastly, the inflected adjective variants include [among others] *kaya-kinamaguyangan* [eldest] and *datu-sapian-kwartahan* [rich].

One hundred and thirty-five (135) of the collected *Surigaonon* lexical variants underwent **deletion** which, as Dumanig (2015) revealed, can be observed in *Surigaonon* through the roots' final vowel omission after the suffixation of *-han*, *-an*, *-i*, and *-ha*. Although seven words in this study's collection are suffixed with *-han*, not a single one underwent deletion but other variants afforded this inquiry the addition of the suffixes *-un*, *-hun*, *-a*, *-anan*, and *-anun/-onun* to the identified pattern of a root's final vowel deletion after suffixation. The variants that illustrate this morphological process include [among others] *tugot+an→tugotan→tugtan* [to allow], *huya+anan→huyaanan→huy-anan* [house], *saka+a→sakaa→sak-a* [to climb], and *huut+i→huuti→hut-i* [to tighten].

This final vowel deletion of the root pattern also applies after the circumfixation of *ka-anan*, *ka-un*, *kina-an*, *na-an*, *hi-an*, *ma-an*, *ka-an*, *pa-un*, *pa-hun*, *ha-an*, and *in-han* [among others].   *Ka+wayung+anan→kawayunganan→kawaynganan*   [face]   and

ka+isug+an→kaisugan→kaisgan [scold] are just some of the variants that model deletion applied to some words after root circumfixation of the aforenamed circumfixes.

Deletion, however, does not only occur after suffixation and circumfixation of a root as it is also employed in words wherein a phoneme is omitted like *asidu* from *aksidu* [acid], *agik-ik* from *hagikhik* [chuckle], *dyaga* from *dayaga* [bachelorette], *yabi* from *lyabi* [key], *sala* for *salas* [living room], *kilat* for *kidlat* [lightning], *kugan* from *kugang* [scab], and *sumat* for *sukmat* [reproach]. Others delete the infixation as in *gamus* from *ginamus* [salted, aged tiny fish] and *paksiw* from *pinaksiw* [dish made out of fish cooked in vinegar, salt, garlic, ginger, and oil] whereas a few simply drop part of the affixation like *tagpasubraan* [where the phoneme /h/ is dropped] from *tagpasubrahan* [added more].

Clipping is another morphological process that 89 of the 1,065 collected *Surigaonon* lexical variants underwent. Resulting from a "grapho-phonemic reduction of a word," clipping, Adeniyi defines, is a "pseudo-lexical unit" which still bears the "semantic and paradigmatic relationship with the full form of the word" (as cited in Unubi & Yusuf, 2017, p. 437). *Surigaonon* lexical variants formed out of this morphological process include, [among others] *bujog* from *bubujog* [bee], *baji* from *babaji* [girl/female/woman], *kuyo* from *kuyotuy* [shrink], and *saktu* from *iksaktu* [accurate]. This is supported by Fromkin et al.'s (2014) account of clipping as the process of truncating longer words into shorter ones by "leaving out one or more syllables" (p. 355). Such could be carried out by dropping a word's affixation or a part of it. Examples for the former include *bahin* from *kabahinan* [allotment], *iban* from *kaiban* [companion], *lasang* from *kalasangan* [forest], *lipa* from *malipa* [filthy], and *lampara* from *lamparahan* [gas lamp]. Models for dropping part of the affixation include *ihawan* from *ihawanan* [abattoir], *higdaan* from *higdaanan* [bed], *hugasan* from *hugasanan* [lavatory], and *galingan* from *galinganan* [mill]. All of which were taken from Ong's *Surigaonon* Dictionary.

Borrowing, which Fromkin et al. (2014) claim as a vital fount of new words, makes up 83 of the total *Surigaonon* lexical variant collection. Borrowing, they say, occurs when speakers of a language add into their own lexicon a word from another language like the *Surigaonon* lexical variants *adurno* [adornment] and *bintana* [window] from Spanish, *trak* [truck] and *imbargu* [sequestration] from English [the latter is of Spanish origin], *ampalaya* [bitter gourd] and *sitaw* [string beans] from *Tagalog*, as well as *tapulan* [lazy] and *sihag* [see-through] from *Cebuano-Visayan*. This morphological process is corroborated by Dela Cerna's (2017) findings that lexical

borrowing is evident in *Surigaonon* due to the consistent language contact among speakers of different languages or among multilingual speakers (Formkin et al., 2014) within a community. Such morphological process which brought about a considerable number of *Surigaonon* lexical variants in the collection is amplified by population mobility [which may distort if not eliminate dialect features] (Parker & Riley, 2005) that led *Surigaonons* to encounters with individuals who speak other languages. These encounters are either brought about or compounded by intermarriages, employment, trade and industry, education, and tourism in the city thereby bringing some of these individuals' vocabulary into the *Surigaonon* lexicon through the "adoption and use of some non-*Surigaonon* terms" and "nativizing" them (Penera, 2017, p. 3) thereby contributing in part to the existence of *Surigaonon* lexical variation.

Forty-nine (49) of the 1,065 collected lexical variants are categorized as products of **affixation** which is a process of word-formation carried out through the addition of affixes that give the word additional "lexical and grammatical information" (Igaab & Kareem, 2018, p. 92). In this study, however, *Surigaonon* lexical variants that underwent affixation indicate the same word but affixed differently as in *trangkahi* for *itrangka* [lock]. Other examples include *baliha* for *ibali* [reverse], *itipun* for *tipunun* [assemble], and *ikiling* for *kilingun* [tilt] incuding *pang-utoray* for *ig-utoray* [clipper] both meaning the same thing despite different affixation – a morphological process regarded as the most common among the languages of the world (Fromkin et al., 2014).

Metathesis which is another morphological process first identified by Dumanig (2015) is evident in *Surigaonon* when a word's phonemic sequence is reordered following the phonemic reordering process of *Cebuano-Visayan* that deletes the final vowel of the root after suffixation before carrying out phonemic transpositions. Some of the identified *Surigaonon* lexical variants do follow this pattern just as how Dumanig described it in his paper. Examples include word formations such as *atup+an→atupan→atpan→aptan* [to put a roof] and *balus+an→balusan→balsan→baslan* [to retaliate].

A number of *Surigaonon* lexical variants under this morphological process, however, employ deletion that is not of the root's final vowel. Deletion before metathesis for these variants varies from omission of the initial consonant sound as in *tagai* from *hatagi* [to give] or *aya* from *laay* [boring], to a medial consonant sound deletion like *aguyo* from *aguroy* [moan in pain] and deletion of a medial vowel sound as in *kyaling* from *kalaying* [rust]. Nonetheless, many have simply undergone two phonemic transpositions without undergoing any deletion as in *kawajan*

from *kajawan* [bamboo], *dungagan* from *dugangan* [add], *supaun* from *usapun* [chew], *landug* from *danlug* [slippery], *hutdun* from *hudtun* [consume], *mulangtud* from *mulungtad* [lasting], *mangilu* from *manguli* [wash/wipe anus after excretion] and *isbug* from *sibug* [move]. This certainly suggests that word-formation through this process as a source for some of *Surigaonon* lexical variants could be as complex alternation.

Circumfixation is a morphological process in which both prefix and suffix jointly called a circumfix or discontinuous morpheme is attached around a root word – the first half of which is affixed before the root and the second half after it thereby expressing a single sense (Unubi & Yusuf, 2017). This morphological process provided another source for and created 26 *Surigaonon* lexical variants for several *Surigaonon* words. *Igtahalay* and *pantahalay* for instance are variants for *pantahal* [shapener], *intignawan* for *tagtignaw* [cold], *katuyogun* for *tagtuyog* [drowsy], *kinaulahian* for *pinakaulahi* [hindmost], *kailadman* for *pinakailayum* [innermost], and *kinamanghuran* for *pinakamanghud* [youngest] among others suggesting thus that circumfixation is employed by *Surigaonons* to convey the exact same denotation thereby in part contributing to the existence of *Surigaonon* lexical variants.

Reduplication which Madeja et al. (2017) define as the repetition of the root or part of the root that may or may not result into a meaning change registered only three (3) *Surigaonon* lexical variants. This is a far cry from the rich and diverse reduplication evident in *Surigaonon*. This nevertheless suggests that such morphological process accounts for a portion in the existence of *Surigaonon* lexical variants as exemplified by masuki-suki for masuki [rebel], *ija-ija* for *ijahay* [sectionalism], and *bikangkang* for *bikang* [spread legs]; whereas *Usik-usik* for *kanam-kanam* [squander] and *utro-utro* for *isab-isab* [flighty] can only be categorized as **reduplicated variants**.

The last two *Surigaonon* lexical variants of the 1,065 in the collection each represented the last two morphological processes: compounding and blending. Despite the singular representation made by *may sakit* for *masakitun* [sick], this collection actually includes several other **compounds** like *dili makit-an*, *dili kit-an*, and *dili makita* for *dili hikit-an* [invisible] as well as *way kwarta* for *wayay kwarta* [penniless] and *daku karajaw* for *grabi kadaku* [huge] but they could not be categorized as lexical variants made out of compounding since the expressions for which they were created as variants are already compounds.

As to **blending**, although Fromkin et al. (2014) explained that it is comparable to compounds as blends result from a combination of two words with different senses as in 'smog'

from 'smoke' + 'fog' or Lewis Carrol's 'chortle' from 'chuckle' + 'snort' and children's blends like 'crocogator' from 'crocodile' + 'alligator,' the last entry in the *Surigaonon* lexical variants collection could only be regarded as *Surigaonons*' playful innovation combining the *Surigaonon* term *utin* [penis] with the *Tagalogs*' *titi* [meaning the same] resulting into the blend and *Surigaonon* lexical variant, *titin* – certainly a digression from the conventional blending of two words with different senses – but a blend nonetheless. This certainly illustrates that the human language faculty is astronomically innovative and that this ingenuity "extends to ways in which words may be altered and created" (Fromkin et al., 2014).

Finally, the 279 *Surigaonon* lexical alternatives labelled as **variant morphemes** include [among others] *tak-ang*, *sun-ad*, *tugna*, and *luto* for *digamu* [cook], *lagas* for *tiguyang* [senior citizen], *pipi*, *pirit*, and *bisung* for *bilat* [vagina], *baba*, *abid*, and *ijut* for *kijud* [sexual intercourse], as well as *tulilu*, *pay-ung*, and *lipung* for *alimpapajug* [dizziness] - each is obtained from Ong's *Surigaonon* Dictionary. Many of these morphemes which make up the greatest number in the *Surigaonon* lexical variants collection are particularly native alternatives.

Table 4 specifies the morphological processes undergone by the *Surigaonon* syntactic variants.

Table 4. *Surigaonon* **Syntactic Variants' Morphological Processes**

Morphological Processes	Items
Contraction	25
Exclusion	16
[Single Morph Equivalents]	[4]
TOTAL	**4**

Although clipping, deletion, alternation, affixation, inflected variants, and variant morphemes are still represented in the collected *Surigaonon* syntactic alternatives, Table 4 displays only the morphological processes that are syntactically relevant in this inquiry.

Contraction registered the most in the collection of *Surigaonon* syntactic variants with 25 alternatives. Contraction, according to Parker and Riley (2005), is one of the features most commonly associated with more informal stylistic registers like *I'm* for *I* am, *you're* for *you* are, and *he'll* for *he will*. Informal – that is exactly what these syntactic variants are since the language

is the *Surigaonons'* "functional daily mode of expression in casual conversations" (Belahsen & Ouahmiche, 2017, p. 25).

Contractions in the collection include [among others] the following samples:

Surigaonon: <u>Hai</u>n <u>man</u> kaw naghuya?

Variant: **Haman kaw naghuya?**

Gloss: Where do you live?

Surigaonon: <u>Uno</u> <u>may</u> imu gusto?

Variant: **Umay imu gusto?**

Gloss: What do you want?

Surigaonon: <u>Sin-u</u> <u>man</u> an mama ni Cassie?

Variant: **Siman an mama ni Cassie?**

Gloss: Who is Cassie's mother?

Surigaonon: Namahaw sija nan <u>isa</u> <u>ka</u> hungit.

Variant: **Namahaw sija nan iska hungit.**

Gloss: He just had a spoonful of breakfast.

Surigaonon: <u>Uno</u> <u>may</u> imu gusto?

Variant: **Unoy imu gusto?**

Gloss: What do you want?

Surigaonon: <u>Pila</u> <u>may</u> imu idad?

Variant: **Pilay imu idad?**

Gloss: How old are you?

Surigaonon: <u>Maski</u> <u>na</u> tagkapuy sija, nutrabahu gihapun.

Variant: **Maskin tagkapuy sija, nutrabahu gihapun.**

Gloss: He's/She's tired but went to work regardless.

Surigaonon: *Taya na.*

Variant: **Tyana**

Gloss: Let's go.

Contractions in the first six examples are straightforward. In the first three, contractions are carried out by attaching the second of the two combining words with the first after dropping the phoneme/s in the second half of the first word as in *hain man* to *haman* [where], *uno may* to *umay* [what], and *sin-u man* to *siman* [who]. This is shared with *isa ka* to *iska* [a or one] in *namahaw ra sija nan iska ka hungit* [He/She just had a spoonful for breakfast]. Whereas the fifth and the sixth pairs illustrate contraction that is much like the English I'm and you're – attaching only the second word's last phoneme to the first word. In like manner, *Surigaonon* attaches the combining second word's last phoneme at the end of the first word as in *uno may* to *unoy* [what] and *pila may* to *pilay* in *pilay imu idad* [How old are you?]. And finally, the last two pairs are a deviation from these two identified patterns for although *maski na* to *maskin* drops part of the second word, it is not the last phoneme that is attached with the first and although *taya na* to *tyana* [Let's go] drops part of the first of the combining words, what is dropped is not the second syllable but part of the first.

These contractions along with clipping and deletion manifest both stylistic syntactic variation and speech style suitable for informal registers hence they certainly do not reflect "careless speech" (Parker & Riley, 2005, p. 167).

Exclusion listed 16 *Surigaonon* syntactic variants. This process is revealed in the variants, *Silum kuno sija mularga* and *Mularga kuno sija silum* from the lengthy *Laung nija silum kuno sija mularga* [He/She said, he/she will leave tomorrow] excluding the expressions *laung nija* in both syntactic variants thereby suggesting that Surigaonons have the propensity to discard "semantically redundant" and "grammatically omissible" (Rohdenburg & Schluter as cited in Callies, 2013, p. 255) syntactic items. The *Surigaonon* words *Laung nija* have been excluded in the variants *Mularga kuno sija silum* and *Silum kuno sija mularga* since the expression *kuno* is a counterpart of *Tagalog's* particle *daw* whose variant is *raw*. Both roughly translate into 'it is said' or 'he/she/somebody said' as in *Aalis ka raw* meaning 'You're leaving (I'm told)' ("daw"). *Kuno* has the equivalent function hence it fills the gap that results from the exclusion of *Laung nija* which means the same thing: 'he/she/somebody said' creating what Rohdenburg and Schluter call a "trend towards grammatical economy" (as cited in Callies, 2013, p. 255).

Lastly, **single morph** [for morpheme] **equivalents** are used as variants for some *Surigaonon* syntactic constructions. Single morph equivalents like *janay* for *huyat anay* [wait], *panudlay* for *sudlaja imu buhok* [Comb your hair], *inday* for *waya ako kahibayu* [I don't now], and the widespread, monosyllabic [with raised intonation] *ha* operating as a variant for *Unoy imu laung* [What did you just say].

This revelation of the morphological processes undergone by the *Surigaonon* lexical and syntactic variants certainly implies that *Surigaonons* have a rich resource of words and are innovative when it comes to language. Although a considerable number of variants have undergone reduction through some morphological processes such as deletion, clipping, contraction, and exclusion, this does not translate into *Surigaonons* being lazy and careless in speech [Parker & Riley, 2005]. It instead implies these *Surigaonons'* innovativeness in language thereby allowing them to adapt in any speech situation while in the process enriching the *Surigaonon* language with the existence of its linguistic variations which could be viewed by leading variationists as evidence of [either the beginning or on-going] language change.

Established Rules of Morphological Unit Combinations

Many of the verbs in the *Surigaonon* lexical variants collection are formed by the suffixes *-an*, *-ha*, *-i*, *-un*, *-hun,* and *-a*. Although several do not entail a final vowel deletion of the root as some suffixations are straightforward like *huyat+-an→huyatan* [await], some words make it compulsory as exemplified by *hagas+-an→hagasan→hagsan* [to whisper]. This is supported by Dumanig's (2015) final vowel deletion of the root word after suffixation of the first three of the aforementioned suffixes. Others undergo alternation by replacing the phoneme /y/ with /j/ when the former is the root's last phoneme like *likay+an→likayan→likajan* [to evade] (Dumanig, 2015). Nevertheless, all three are based on the same elementary rule of morphological unit combination, **Verb + *-an* → Verb**.

Moreover, while several are clear-cut suffixations resulting into nouns such as [among others] *isturya+-hanay→isturyahanay* [conversation] adhering to the rule, **Verb + *-hanay* → Noun** and *sumbag+-ay→sumbagay* [fistfight] based on the **Verb + *-ay* → Noun** rule, a number undergo final vowel deletion [like most verbs] as in *hilabut+-anun→hilabutanun→hilabtanun* [meddler] and *kupot+-anan→kupotanan→kuptanan* [handle]. Others undergo optional suffix reduction as in *higda+-anan→higdaanan→higdaan* [bed] and *agi+hanan→agihanan→agihan*

[walkway]; whereas the rest go through phonemic substitution/change as in *sugid+anun→sugidanun→sugilanun* [tale], phonemic addition and alternation like *ilis+an→ilisan→ilisdan→alisdan* [replace], or phonemic transposition such as *supa+un→supaun→usapun* [to chew].

Circumfixation [like suffixation] maybe simple like *kina-+maguyang+-an→kinamaguyangan* [eldest] and *pa-+abut+un→paabutun* [await], but many involve final vowel deletion of the root after circumfixation such as *Ka-+wayung+-anan→kawayunganan→kawaynganan* [face], *kina-+mubo+-an→kinamuboan→kinamub-an* [shortest], and *na-+sakup+-an→nasakupan→nasakpan* [caught]; whereas others undergo alternation as in *tag-+laay+-an→taglaayan→taglaajan* [bored] and *ka-+kahuy+-an→kakahuyan→kakahujan* [grove]. One evidently showed optional circumfix reduction [or OCreduc] as in *pang-+bisbis+ay→pangbisbisay→pangbisbis* [watering can] along with all the other complex circumfixations involving [among others] phoneme modification/change [*ta+kilid+un→takilidun→takilirun* for tilt], phoneme reduplication [*ma+luoy+un→maluoyun→maluloy-un* for compassionate], phoneme addition [*na+pasangil+an→napasangilan→napasanginlan* for blamed], and phoneme assimilation [*mang+barang+ay→mangbarangay →mamarangay* for sorcerer].

Straighforward prefixation of ***i-*** [*i+trangka→itrangka* or lock], ***tag-*** [*tag+sira→tagsira* or closed], ***nang-*** [*nang+isug→nangisug* or got angry], **nu-** [*nu+inum→*nuinum or drank], ***na-*** [*na+ligu→naligu* for bathed or bathing], ***mang-*** [*mang+uyab→manguyab* or court a lady], ***mag-*** [*mag+tabaku→magtabaku* or smoke], and ***mu-*** [*mu+hagas→muhagas* or will whisper] which [among others] indicate aspect also contributed to the verbs' long list in the *Surigaonon* lexical variants collection. Others, however, involve deletion like *mang+kumpra→mangkumpra→mangumpra* [will shop] and assimilation as in *mamuyak* from *mang+buyak→m*angbuyak→m*ambuyak* [will bloom] suggesting plurality since *mubuyak* [will bloom] is its singular counterpart. Several of the adjectives as well resulted from the clear-cut prefixation of ***ma-*** [*makuti*/intricate], ***ha-*** [*halaju*/far], ***kaha-*** [*kahalaju*/far], ***ka-*** [*kalaju*/far], and ***pinaka-*** [*pinakabata*/youngest] whereas *may*, *wayay*/*way*, *grabi*, and *dili* form either phrasal verbs or adjectives through compounding.

Finally, word formations requiring a glottal stop in between a consonant and a vowel sound is carried out though hyphenation as the word *sig-ab* [burp], the result of a final vowel deletion as

in *kalaj-un* [distance], the outcome of alternation as in *hujab/huy-ab* [yawn], and the upshot of reduplication as in *tili-tili* [drizzle].

These established rules of morphological unit combinations categorically reveal how some *Surigaonon* words are formed. This likewise suggests that *Surigaonons* do follow rules in word formations even with lexical and syntactic variants. Nevertheless, some alternatives like the only one that resembles a blend [*titin* meaning 'penis' from the *Tagalogs' titi* and the *Surigaonons' utin* both meaning 'penis'], imply that *Surigaonons* engage in language innovation without apprehension of any deviation from established universal convention. This might find some backing from Labov who said that "the history of our leaders of linguistic change is a history of nonconformity" (as cited in Hazen, 2011, p. 32). This nonconformity [which is certainly exhibited in the *Surigaonon* lexical variants collection's only blend] might also be the rationale for many of the complex word formations in the same collection despite prior described and established straightforward patterns.

In its entirety, these findings prove that *Surigaonon* exhibits some linguistic variations which reveal a number of morphological processes establishing several rules of morphological unit combinations. Although some of the identified linguistic variants such as *kawaynganan* for *wayung* (face), *bangku* for *ingkuran* (chair), *sayud* and *kayus* for *kabu* (fetch some water) are distinctively native *Surigaonon* alternatives, many are evidently results of the identified morphological processes which include [among others] lexical borrowing, affixation including circumfixation, alternation, clipping, compounding, metathesis, and stylistic syntactic variation through contraction, exclusion, and single morpheme equivalents.

These findings suggest that while *Surigaonon's* only role as a language is being the natives' functional daily mode of expression used among family members at home, among friends at hang-outs, among workmates during breaks etc., when this study's findings get adopted by curriculum developers thus fulfilling its facilitative function in levelling the field and setting off the development of MTB-MLE instructional materials, *Surigaonon* linguistic variation may no longer be restricted in casual conversations nor the language itself be labelled as a mere mode of expression for daily functions. It may eventually find its way and become part of instruction in the MTB-MLE classrooms thereby further suggesting its inclusion in the young ones' first language acquisition thus making them native speakers of *Surigaonon* that is characterized by its lexical and syntactic variations. Such adoption in instructional material development which translates into its

inclusion in the children's first language acquisition could impact not only the preservation of this particular regional language but may also be valuable in sorting out "variation-related challenges that confront language policy makers" (Bulusan, 2019, p. 231). This may correspondingly prove vital especially to those who advocate for local culture integration in language material design and language assessment formulation (Labiste, 2019).

Such findings may likewise lay the groundwork for future scholars whose investigations might be anchored on Biber's notion that "change is to be found in variation" (Holyk, p. 18) and could lend these future scholars some "potential diagnostic points for future linguistic change" (Sankoff, Labov & Kroch as cited in Holyk, p. 18) in *Surigaonon* and other potential scholarship on language, and language change among others.

Conclusion

The foregoing findings prove that *Surigaonon* exhibits some linguistic variations which reveal a number of morphological processes establishing several rules of morphological unit combinations that are either straightforward or complex. Although some are distinctively native *Surigaonon* alternatives, many are evidently results of the identified morphological processes. Moreover, despite following rules in word formations with majority of the lexical and syntactic variants, *Surigaonons* speak other alternatives that imply language innovation without apprehension of any deviation from established universal convention. Some display nonconformity which might also be the rationale for many of the complex word formations in the same collection despite prior described and established straightforward patterns.

Pedagogical Implications

In view of the findings and conclusion drawn, it is recommended:

1. that habitual use of the alternatives existing in the *Surigaonon* linguistic variation collection be ensured to guarantee its preservation through the younger generation's first language acquisition;

2. that the identified morphological processes undergone by *Surigaonon* linguistic variants be utilized by MTB-MLE curriculum developers in instructional material development for the Mother Tongue instruction; and

3. that the inclusion of the *Surigaonon* rules of morpohological unit combinations as foundation in word formation language instruction be considered in MTB-MLE classrooms.

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EFL Teachers' Assessment Practices of Students' Interactions in Online Classes: An Activity Theory Lens

Abdullah Alshakhi

King Abdulaziz University, Saudi Arabia

amalshaikhi1@kau.edu.sa

Bio-profile:

Dr. Abdullah Alshakhi is an Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics at the English Language Institute at King Abdulaziz University. Dr. Alshakhi is currently serving as the Head of Curriculum and Testing Unit at the English Language Institute at King Abdulaziz University. With particular research interests in language testing and assessment, assessment literacy, and language policy, Dr. Alshakhi has been published in both local and international journals. He is actively involved in several workshops involving language assessment and testing through the Educational Testing Service (ETS), Cambridge Assessment and the European Association of Language Assessment and Testing (EALTA). Further, he is an enthusiastic member of the Center of Assessment, Research, and Development at the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL).

Abstract

The present study aims to investigate how EFL teachers assess students' participation and interaction in virtual classrooms. With the sudden shift of many students and teachers around the world transitioning from teaching and learning in physical classrooms to virtual ones, it is critical now to investigate how the process is functioning for teachers and their students. Utilizing a variety of methods, EFL teachers were consulted about the ways they assess and monitor university student engagement in online classes in Saudi Arabia. Activity Theory was adopted as a framework to analyze the relationships and themes that emerged from the study to better understand how each element has the potential to affect all other elements involved. The study used a qualitative approach to collect data from five male EFL teachers with different backgrounds and ethnicities in a university setting. The purpose was to gain insight into their experience of teaching, assessing, and monitoring student engagement in an online setting. The study investigates the difficulties and

challenges EFL teachers encounter when engaging and assessing students in an online classroom, what strategies EFL teachers use to engage students in an online classroom, and how EFL teachers assess students in an online classroom. The data was collected from the teachers' personal experiences and reflections on their process by collecting a written pre-reflection, a two-week journal of their teaching experience, a written post reflection, as well as follow-up interviews after submitting the data. Eight themes emerged from the data highlighting the importance of using grades as a form of extrinsic motivation by attaching points to tasks and assignments to encourage participation, implementing teacher training sessions to ensure all teachers are prepared to teach and conduct their lessons online, and the reconciliation of teacher/student expectations in an online environment. By understanding how different elements involved in teaching, assessment, and engagement are interconnected, it is possible to change the outcome in a particular context. The study takes the stance that assessment for learning (AFL) as opposed to assessment of learning (AOL) would be more beneficial for students and teachers, especially when teaching and learning online. Assessment for learning encourages more teacher/student interaction and helps to motivate student participation. Assessment for learning encourages collaboration between teachers and students and creates a more open and democratic atmosphere. Teachers are able to provide clear targets to assist students in meeting their goals. The study also offers recommendations and pedagogical implications for the EFL context in assessment of online interactions and engagement.

Keywords: *online assessment, Activity Theory, assessment for learning, engagement, student participation, EFL online classes*

1. Introduction

This article frames and examines the online assessment practices of EFL teachers in online classrooms. It focuses mainly on how EFL teachers assess students' interactions, engagement, and participation in an online setting. I take the position that despite the emergence of different forms of EFL assessment practices today, including (Belanoff and Elbow 1997; Messick, 1996; Shohamy, 1998, 2001; Tollefson, 1995), more research needs to be conducted pertaining to the assessment and engagement of online students during the Covid-19 pandemic. A deeper investigation and reflection as to the best practices for accountability and performance will help to

improve online classroom interactions for both teachers and students in contemporary higher education (HE) settings.

Before examining ways to better assess and teach in an online environment, let us consider the complex issues surrounding assessment in general. To illustrate the issues, it is important to recognize assessment as a key component of education which comes in many forms and practices. Assessment is often a complex web charged with unequal-power relations and other social consequences (as noted in Shohamy, 1998; Madaus, 1991; Noam, 1996). Shohamy has explained the role that language tests play in society, how tests define linguistic knowledge, how they can be used to determine membership, classify people, as well as signify the success and failure of people from individual groups. Madaus supports these views of tests as social technology is deeply embedded in education, as well as in government and business. Ultimately, they are the mechanism used to enforce power and control. Noam is also in agreement and views tests as having the power to support or destroy someone's career. Tests can place an unfair burden on individuals by placing unnecessary obstacles in their path to success. Now more than ever, it will be important to reevaluate the ways we are assessing students in an online environment. Many educators and students around the world have suddenly transitioned from learning and teaching in a classroom to an unfamiliar and new way of teaching, learning, and assessing online. As students and teachers adjust to the sudden changes inflicted upon them during the era of Covid-19, it is an opportunity to consider whether assessment for learning or assessment of learning might be more suitable.

Generally, and for the purposes of this study, I will be looking closely at what it means to teach and assess students in an entirely online environment. Traditionally the definition of assessment is, "The process of gathering, interpreting, recording, and using information about pupils' responses to an educational task" (Harlen, Gipps, Broadfoot, & Nuttall, 1992, p. 217). However, Shohamy (2001) defines assessment in a more democratic way. The traditional way that tests have been used is seen as more of an abuse of power, which in essence goes against democratic practices. Shohamy suggests a number of democratic principles to safeguard vulnerable groups against the agendas of people in various positions of power in traditional testing. One way to safeguard students, in a more democratic and interactive way, is the use of assessment for learning (AFL) to promote learning as opposed to assessment of learning (AOL) in an online setting.

1.1 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study uses Activity Theory to highlight the different themes that emerged from the teacher interviews in order to interpret and analyze the data. Activity Theory shares connections with Sociocultural Theory in that teaching, student engagement, and assessment are all part of a social construct. The goal of Activity Theory is to encourage dialog among different perspectives within a system. Activity Theory can be used to better understand the current context of assessment and engagement in online classrooms. Newton et al. (2018) have stated that in order for assessment to be successful, one must first take into consideration all of the elements involved. Assessment in any form requires multiple areas of involvement, such as teachers, students, the institution, the curriculum, and so forth. Jeffery & Wilcox (2014) are also in support that assessment is both socially and culturally situated. Assessments rely heavily on the communication involved among all elements in the context. Elmberger et al. (2018) believe that Activity Theory can be used as a framework for improvements and changes within a system. By utilizing Engeström's (2001) Activity Theory to analyze the current situation in online teaching, assessment, and engagement, possible recommendations can be made for educational changes and improvements in the future.
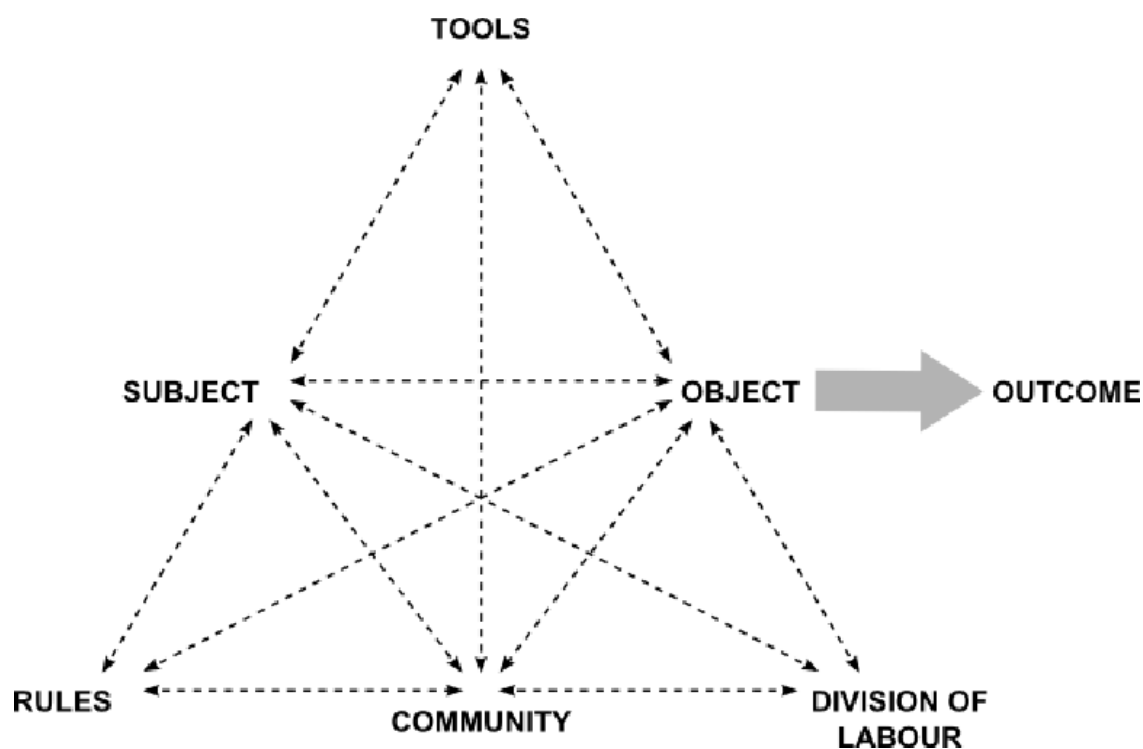
Fig. 1. Engeström's (2001) Activity Theory Diagram

2. Literature Review

The process of learning a language is certainly complex and involves a myriad of factors and influences on the learner. Learning English can be supported through communicative language teaching (CLT) where the process of learning is very social in nature. CLT involves not only learning from the teacher, but as well from their peers. The teacher is not viewed as the only form of knowledge, and students are encouraged to take authorship and responsibility for their learning (Richards, 2006).

In recent years there has been a shift from face-to-face classroom instruction to learning languages online through a variety of platforms and resources. Currently many classes around the world have suddenly shifted from in-person lessons in a classroom to learning a language in an entirely online format due to the pandemic of Covid-19. In order for both teachers and students to be successful, changes must be made from how we used to teach, learn, and assess in a traditional classroom setting, to a modified and adapted new approach (British Council, 2020). When we try to apply traditional classroom techniques and ways of assessment in an entirely different format, we are not setting ourselves and students up for the best opportunity of success. The delivery of information and content, as well as the way we receive work from students has changed. We must adapt and readjust our expectations to best support students in their online classes (British Council, 2020). Teachers cannot simply ask for students to submit assignments, take tests and quizzes, and perform in the same ways that they used to in the classroom. Moving forward, this new approach will need to be interactive and engaging to keep students interested and active participants in their online language learning experience.

Many teachers and students around the world have suddenly found themselves in unfamiliar territory. Moving forward, it'll be important for teachers to think how they can motivate and engage students in untraditional ways (British Council, 2020). Students and teachers no longer have the classroom as a physical space to get to know one another and interactively engage with each other in person. Not only is it more difficult for the teacher to get to know the students more personally, but the same challenges are there for students as well. Learning a language is not well supported by isolation. Learning needs to be communicative, interactive, and engaging. The former ways of traditional classroom instruction and assessment will need to change. Teachers will need to consider assessment for learning instead of assessment of learning in these new environments. Green et al. (2005) are in support of a redesign for online teaching and learning.

They have suggested four key ways in how to go about reforming the online teaching and learning experience. First, it is critical that learners are able to make informed decisions about their education. Second, we must recognize and diversify different forms of knowledge and skills. Third, we must create environments which are diverse. Finally, we must include forms of feedback and assessment which are learner focused. The challenge will ultimately be to focus on less prescriptive forms of teaching and be open to new tools and strategies.

Bañados (2006) is also in support of online learning and the many benefits that afford both students and teachers. Bañados has focused on three main areas: interaction through tasks, feedback, and a change in teachers' and students' roles. Interaction through tasks focuses on three main ways to engage learners through tasks: interpersonal and intrapersonal communication, and learner-computer interaction. As for roles for teachers and students, teachers can be viewed as guides who are able to support students through collaboration and feedback. Students need to become active learners who participate in the learning process and are responsible for their learning. One way educators can help meet the needs of students in an online setting is through the use of assessment for learning as opposed to the more traditional classroom use of assessment of learning.

Assessment can be viewed in two distinct ways: assessment for learning (AFL) and assessment of learning (AOL). As described by Lee & Coniam (2013), assessment for learning allows teachers to use what they know about students' knowledge to better understand and inform their teaching practice. Instead of focusing on students' mistakes, teachers focus on providing feedback to students about their learning in order to improve. Assessment for learning is a continuous process where not only the teacher is involved in the assessment process, but the students as well. The teacher and students are able to work together to improve learning and increase motivation. Assessment for learning provides students with clear learning targets and helps students to differentiate the quality of their work (Alshakhi, 2018). A key aspect of assessment for learning is that it is not entirely the teacher who assesses students' work, but a collaboration of both teacher and student.

Assessment of learning allows teachers to assess students' achievements against standards and goals. Examples are typically seen in the way we traditionally have assessed students through the use of tests, quizzes, and exams. This type of assessment does not involve the students input directly. Assessment of learning assesses what students have learned and allows teachers to assess to what extent students have achieved an understanding of the concept being assessed. However,

assessment of learning does not emphasize improving students' learning, but it does try to account for responsibility to meet previously established standards. The teacher is the primary person responsible for assessing students' learning and lacks the collaboration between student and teacher which is seen in assessment for learning (Lee & Coniam, 2013).

Ultimately, the educational world is at a pivotal point in history. As more and more classes move online for the unforeseeable future, it is essential now to examine what are the best practices moving forward. Specifically, this research is going to focus on how EFL teachers assess engagement and interaction in online classrooms.

2.1 Assessment for Learning in Online Classes as a Form of Alternative Assessment

McLoughlin & Lee (2008) have recommended an innovative learning paradigm that the authors have named Pedagogy 2.0. It is a set of teaching and learning strategies that enables greater engagement of learners. It allows students to actively shape the education they receive by personalizing their voice, providing options for participation, as well as the opportunity for co-production with other students. Some of the practices involved in innovative pedagogy include: areas that focus on performance and creativity, meta-learning strategies, learning that includes aspects of learner-driven content and collaborations, as well as peer-to-peer learning. This style of learning is less concerned with the knowledge of the individual learner, and is more concerned with collaboration, connection, and social interaction. Maintaining and promoting these skills is essential for lifelong learning within societies that are socially and digitally connected.

The notable characteristics of Pedagogy 2.0 include generating knowledge and learning through diverse opinions, the process of learning by making connections, combining emotions and cognition into making meaning. The three Ps of Pedagogy 2.0 stand for Personalization, Participation, and Productivity. In Personalization we find learner's choice and agency, customization, and self-regulation and management. In Participation we seek community, collaboration, and connection. In Productivity there is opportunity for learner-created content, an active contribution to knowledge, generativity, creativity, and innovation.

McLoughlin & Lee (2008) argue that we need to move away from the traditional classroom of "closed classrooms" which emphasized teachers and institutions and move towards more socially-based examples which are more engaging for both teachers and students. Inherently within

Pedagogy 2.0 there is less focus on a prescriptive curriculum and more focus on teachers and students working together where teachers are also seen as co-learners.

Here we can see the importance of moving away from what we know about "traditional classroom" environments and moving more towards what Lee (2005, p. 17) has described here for online settings:

> [W]e have already managed to overcome the confines of the physical classroom, but … still remain unknowing prisoners of the instructor centered online classroom. To move further ahead, we will need to demolish these virtual walls so as to create social learning spaces, in which learners and … [teachers] … become associates in a community of practice, participating in networks of interaction that transcend the old-fashioned constructs of institutions and organizations (p. 17).

2.2 Research Questions

1. What are the difficulties and challenges EFL teachers encounter when engaging and assessing students in an online classroom?
2. What strategies do EFL teachers use to engage students in an online classroom?
3. How do EFL teachers assess students in an online classroom?

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This research is a qualitative study which closely examines the data received from teachers currently teaching EFL in an online environment. It is important to note that this method was chosen to closely investigate and identify assessment practices that are being used in an online environment. According to Dörnyei (2007), language acquisition and its use depends on many factors, including social, cultural, and situational. These factors allow us to use qualitative research in order to investigate and reveal insights of these conditions. Dörnyei also notes the importance of qualitative research in the investigation of language testing and in the field of applied linguistics. According to Dörnyei, it is also common to use interviews as one of the main methods in qualitative research. Qualitative research was selected as an appropriate method for this paper to understand and discover how EFL teachers assess students' interactions, engagement, and participation in an online setting.

3.2 Participants

Five male EFL teachers working in the English foundation program at the university were selected to participate. The teachers represent different nationalities. All of the qualified teachers hold MA TESOL degrees and have 3 or more years of teaching experience. The sample size is considered adequate for this study as qualitative research seeks to provide deeper, more in-depth information from fewer participants than a quantitative survey or study. The instruments used were rigorous in the attempt to emphasize the depth of information collected from participants. Co-constructing knowledge between participants and researcher allowed for a deeper investigation and understanding of answers. Follow-up interviews with participants provided an opportunity to more deeply understand and explain the responses provided.

By using more than one instrument for data collection, this allowed the data to become more robust through the triangulation of journal keeping, reflections, and interviews. The importance was placed on the quality and depth of the data as opposed to the quantity. Due to time constraints and length of commitment from participants in this study, it was also difficult to recruit and retain a larger number of participants. Morse (2000) has suggested that qualitative studies can adequately range from 5-50 participants. Morse mentions the difficulty in providing a blanket statement for what is an appropriate number of participants, but instead recommends for researchers to consider factors, such as the quality of the data and the study design. Similarly, Kırkgöz (2013) selected six participants in the study of novice teachers of English while Luchini & Garcia (2007) used only four participants for their EFL research.

3.3 Instruments

The research consisted of four key areas which helped gain a better insight over a two-week period. The key areas were: a pre-thought reflection of EFL teachers' online assessment experience so far; a written journal for two weeks where teachers recorded their reflections and provided feedback revolving around the topic of "evidence of learning"; after the completion of the two-week journaling process, teachers wrote a post reflection on their experience; and after collecting feedback from the previous three areas, teachers were invited to participate in a brief follow-up interview.

The pre-thought reflection was selected to better understand the view and position of teachers with their experience of online assessment up until this point. The questions sought to understand areas

that were difficult or troublesome for teachers, areas of strength and aspects that were going well for them, as well as recommendations they had for the improvement of online assessment tools.

The two-week written journal that teachers kept was chosen to allow teachers to report on different aspects of their online classes. Teachers had the opportunity to write about the types of activities they selected, the motivation of students and what type of activities they found motivating for them, how they assessed and graded different assignments, and how they assessed the quality of student participation.

After the two weeks of journaling and reporting of their online teaching practice, the teachers then wrote a post reflection. The purpose was to find out their thoughts and feelings compared to what they wrote in the reflection prior to beginning this process. The teachers compared their feelings before and after the process, noted any changes or similarities, and gave their final recommendations for how to improve the quality and participation of online teaching in the future. This stage of the process was a critical stage that allowed teachers to convey their personal experiences from the past, present, and make recommendations for the future.

The final stage in this process was to conduct personal one-on-one interviews in order to gain a deeper and better understanding of the teachers' experiences. This was an important stage in the process which allowed teachers to elaborate on their experience of teaching and assessing students in online classrooms. By using narrative inquiry, it allows the research to better understand a particular situation. Narrative inquiry is a collaboration between participants and researchers in a particular setting or context over time (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

3.4 Data Analysis

The data was analyzed by using qualitative methods. Stake (2010) has emphasized the importance of human perception and understanding as the basis of qualitative research. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) stress the importance of the process and how reality is socially constructed along with the relationship between researcher and what is being studied. Creswell (2007) states the importance of the research design which involves multiple procedures. Initially research begins with an assumption, an inquiry into the situation to discover and reveal social and real-world problems, then an interpretation from the research includes the voice of participants which ultimately calls for change in the real world.

Narrative inquiry was primarily chosen for the data analysis process as it allows the researcher to utilize multiple forms of data in order to identify meaningful information. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) have suggested various sources, such as journal records, interviews, field notes, and personal philosophies as appropriate forms of narrative inquiry. In conducting my narrative inquiry research, I employed the following for analysis: pre and post written reflections from teachers, teaching journals, and follow-up interviews.

Marshall & Rossman (2011) have recommended the use of "digital storytelling" for self-reflection. In this case, the reflections were written and were not done orally nor digitally recorded. Teachers wrote pre and post reflections of their feelings and described how they assessed students in an online setting.

Connelly and Clandinin (1990) have recommended the use of journaling as an appropriate form of narrative inquiry in qualitative research. By allowing the teachers to keep written records of their experiences throughout the two-week process, they were able to record and reflect upon their experiences following their lessons. The ease of being able to quickly jot down some notes and ideas during a lesson to later come back to and expand upon was selected so teachers could easily keep track of their thoughts throughout this process.

Follow-up interviews were conducted in a semi-structured way as described by Patton (1990). This way allows for the researcher to be more flexible and is quite common in qualitative studies. By not strictly controlling the interview process, this potentially allows for richer narratives to unfold. Upon receiving the data from the teachers, it was then coded and categorized into themes. Using the analytical procedures as identified as guidelines from Marshall & Rossman (2011), I analyzed the data through five stages. First, the data was collected and organized. Second, I read through and familiarized myself with the data from the teachers in order to get a better understanding of what each teacher had reported. Third, I identified preliminary categories in order to identify and give meaning to larger themes. Fourth, the identified categories and themes were then coded appropriately. Finally, upon examination of the coded themes, I was able to offer interpretations of the themes that emerged. According to Patton (2002), making inferences, drawing conclusions, attaching meaning, and offering explanations is all part of the reflective process in order to identify and code data.

Finally, Activity Theory (Engeström, 2001) was used to analyze the data from teachers in regard to the research questions. The following themes that emerged were then examined using Activity

Theory as a basis for identifying and examining the current state of data reported by the teachers in regard to their online teaching experiences. By examining how the different elements are interconnected and ultimately have an influence on the potential outcome, recommendations can be made for future implementations and improvements within this context.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

While the minimization of ethical considerations involved in research should carefully be assessed, I have used what Lincoln and Guba (1985) have identified as four key areas to consider when conducting research according to their trustworthiness criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

In regard to credibility, Schwandt (2007) addresses the issues surrounding the participants' input and the interpretation of the researchers' reconstruction based on their own understanding of the situation. Taking this into consideration, I tried to remain as faithful to the participants original meaning and input as possible.

In terms of transferability, the use of thick descriptions should be used to allow readers to decide if the information and conclusions made can be applied to other contexts (Creswell, 2007).

Dependability regards the importance and responsibility of a well-documented and logical process of the inquirer (Schwandt, 2007). I too was reflective in my own practice on recording and interpreting the data at each step of the process.

Finally, Schwandt (2007) discusses the importance of confirmability. The interpretations of an inquiry should not simply be the imagination of the inquirer, but rather that the inquirer has established them based on the facts of the data.

4. Results and Discussion

With the sudden shift teachers and students encountered when switching from teaching and assessing students in a traditional classroom environment to an entirely online one, several issues became apparent. Teachers noted the difficulty in engaging students online, as much of their materials and previous experience had been conducted in person in the classroom. The reported issues from teachers ranged from technical issues due to a lack of internet or poor connection, to students not having the required resources to attend online classes. Several teachers noted the difficulties they encountered due to a lack of teacher training and familiarity required when

conducting classes entirely online. Cultural issues seemed to play a role in students not being able to fully participate in their lessons as other family members were present in the room at the time of the lessons. Teachers also reported students not feeling fully motivated to participate unless there was a grade or points strictly attached to the task at hand. Teachers mainly assessed students following a standard rubric provided by the department which did not reflect any changes from teaching in person to online, while another teacher created his own participation rubric to use in the newly found online setting. It was reported that due to the lack of face-to-face teaching and learning, it is important to try and maintain motivation and joy from both teachers and students as this was noticeably lacking in the online setting.

Teachers used an array of strategies to engage students online from trying to make the material more personalized to students interests and backgrounds, to creating friendly, open, and personal relationships with students, and also being available to provide quick feedback to students when they had troubles studying online or in response to their assignments. One teacher reported using random elicitation of students in order to keep them prepared and ready to participate when called upon. All teachers reported that implementing a participation grade that is highly weighted in the course could help contribute to students actively participating and being prepared to engage in their online classes.

Teachers assessed students following the rubric provided by the department as well as implementing some of their own strategies in the online classroom. Several teachers mentioned the use of different writing assignments to assess student's participation, engagement, vocabulary, grammar, etc. The use of concept checking questions was used to immediately determine if students were closely following along and participating in the class. Other teachers reported monitoring students during breakout sessions and pair work in order to assess their engagement and work conducted in the online lessons.

Finally, Engeström's (2001) Activity Theory diagram was adapted to fit the needs of this study.

Figure 2 represents the system before analyzing the data from the teachers and Figure 3 represents Activity Theory after applying the data.
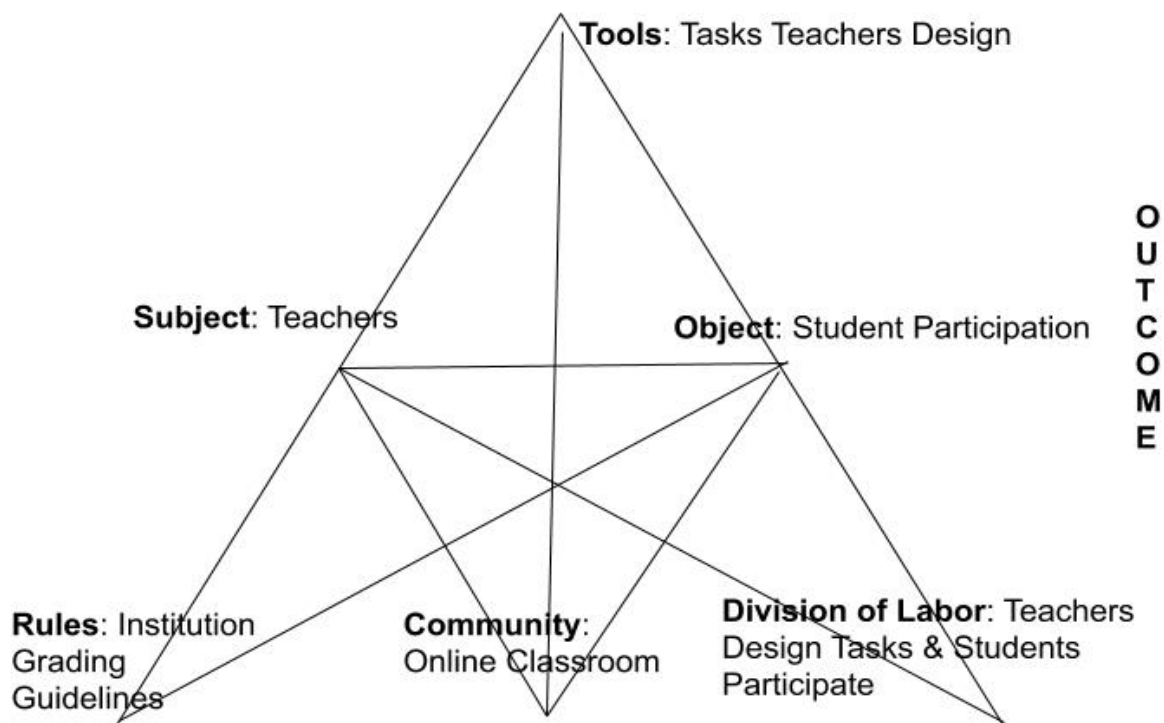
Fig. 2. Engeström's (2001) Activity Theory Diagram

4.1 Grades as a Motivational Stick

All of the teachers reported that their students did not appear to be highly motivated to participate in the online version of their classes. Many teachers noted that students were not motivated to participate unless a grade or a score was directly tied to their participation. Adam reported:

> For the majority of students, obtaining marks is learning. If they know by doing a particular thing/activity their percentile will improve, they are "motivated" to do it. Anything else that doesn't help them score marks is of no consequence to them at all.

Adam noticed that the students appear to be extrinsically motivated. By attaching grades to their participation, this could be a solution to having students be more engaged in an online setting. However, Adam also commented on the importance of working towards motivating students by other means, such as intrinsic motivational factors:

> In my opinion, the students' sense of responsibility and their true involvement in the process of learning emanates from their concept of education and learning. We need to enrich our students' concept of education and make them understand that learning actually begins beyond their sense of scoring marks. They should not be complacent with or be blinded by marks.

Brian, Kenny and Charlie also made supporting comments on students' motivation in regard to not being highly motivated unless a grade was attached to the task or activity. Brian noted, "The students are not motivated to learn. Most of them are extrinsically motivated to learn in order to pass or get good grades." Charlie specifically commented on students' intrinsic motivational factors, "...one single point keeps its prominence at the top all the time and it is students' intrinsic motivation." He went on to note, "...classroom participation grades can be a real extrinsic motivational factor. I believe classroom participation grades are a vital point to motivate students in online settings. It will help teachers to engage students." By preparing and training teachers to use both extrinsic and intrinsic motivational strategies in their online classrooms, this could help to resolve immediate participation and engagement issues with students, and work towards building long-term motivational skills in the students' education.

The teachers also noted the importance of creating materials and lessons that are both relevant and interesting to students. Brian noted that he, "...strived to make course material relevant to the students' writing exam and CBT needs." If students do not find the material relatable, helpful, or useful, they might not see the importance of participating or completing such activities. By helping make the connections for students to see the importance of what they are doing, this may motivate them to be more fully engaged and active in the online classroom.

By using Activity Theory to analyze the first theme under the category of "tools", it appears quite clearly from all of the teachers that students were more motivated to participate when a grade was assigned or attached to a task or assignment. To motivate students extrinsically through the use of grades, students could be more motivated to participate when they know their grade will be directly affected. As one of the teachers pointed out the importance of moving towards more intrinsic motivational factors in the future, this is an area to take into consideration for future studies and assessment involving other forms of motivation.

4.2 Enhancing Teacher/Student Relationships

The importance of the relationships teachers have with their students simply cannot be overlooked. Take a moment to reflect and think back on the teachers you had who were supportive, friendly, knowledgeable, and open to having discussions with their students? Now take a moment to reflect if you've ever experienced a teacher who was not like this? Brian specifically devoted time at the end of the online lessons to address any needs, concerns, or questions that the students had. He also made sure to provide students with personalized feedback after assignments and quizzes, as well as remembered to actively praise students for their work. He tried to take a personal interest in the students' lives outside of the classroom, especially during these challenging times in the world due to the worldwide pandemic of Covid-19. Brian summed up the ways he worked towards enhancing and creating positive teacher/student relationships in the following quote:

> ...teacher/students relationship is important as students feel a sense of belonging. This can be achieved if teachers can take care of students' emotional and social needs, treat them equally, avoid deception, develop one-to-one relationships, and be polite and positive.

By examining teacher/student relationships through the conceptual framework of Activity Theory under the category of "community", we can see the importance of creating and fostering teacher/student relationships in an online classroom. Many teachers would likely agree and have also probably worked towards establishing positive and open relationships with their students in their physical classrooms. However, it is even more critical to remember to take the extra time to do so in the online classroom. With all of the changes and adjustments both teachers and students have gone through with the rapid shift from in-person lessons to an online setting, taking the extra time to establish open and communicative relationships with students has the potential to be very beneficial for both students and teachers. It is interesting to note that only one teacher involved in this study mentioned taking the time to specifically develop these relationships. In future assessments, it would be worth noting if teachers could make time to get to know their students more personally and to incorporate this into the curriculum. Do better teacher/student relationships ultimately affect the outcome of student participation and grades?

4.3 Participation Grade

All of the teachers surveyed for this study were in support of implementing a participation grade which would account for a substantial percentage of students' grades. Each teacher commented that their students did not seem to be highly motivated unless a grade or score was attached to the task or assignment. Often when the teachers assigned a task to the students without specifically mentioning that it would be graded, students usually didn't attempt it or complete it. Adam acknowledged that, "...participation is important and more important than that is the quality of participation." Brian, on the other hand, noted the importance of when and where to attach participation grades:

> ...explorations of knowledge through enquiry, experimentation, discussion, debate and problem-solving in class help students to form ideas and understandings which are useful to their ongoing learning and, on this basis, they can be linked to assessment where grades come into play. I think in our learning and teaching scenario attaching a grade to the discussion board or participation could work. This is true for those students who never bother to reply even when the teacher asks them repeatedly.

Charlie believes that participation grades could substantially shift the online teaching and learning environment in a positive direction for both students and teachers:

> I believe that classroom participation grades can augment the overall online learning paradigm. It will not only lift student's motivation and also help teachers to engage them in different classroom activities. I think the overall online teaching practices can be augmented by introducing the classroom participation grades.

David used his own approach when it came to participation in his online classroom by randomly nominating students during the lesson and marking their participation throughout the session. David was also in agreement with all the other teachers that, "...a substantial weightage in participation in the overall grade could enhance learner involvement and learning experience."

By also analyzing participation grades through Activity Theory under the category of "tools" we can see the importance of linking grades to participation. All of the teachers were in agreement that a higher percentage of students' grades needs to be tied to participation. If there are not any consequences for not participating, such as a grade reduction, students are not as likely to engage. If teachers are able to inform students that their participation will be graded and count towards their final grade, we are likely to see an increase in student engagement and participation. This

adjustment would need to be agreed upon by the department, and likely the institution, as to how much of an increase they would like to implement. As it currently stands, the participation grade is not high enough to encourage adequate student participation. A substantial increase in graded participation is likely needed in future studies to see whether this has a significant effect on student participation.

4.4 Teacher/Student Expectations

Both Adam and David expressed different perspectives on this topic when it came to teacher/student expectations. Adam expressed his concern with the system of evaluation. He noted, "Our mode of assessment is not the most reliable way of measuring the learner's knowledge and/or ability to communicate in speech and writing." He elaborated that he has accepted the mode of assessment as "...a product of administrative and logistical wisdom and many other unspoken requirements of the entire scheme of the ELT our service providers advocate." David, on the other hand, shared his concern that students seem to expect high or passing grades from teachers with little to no regard for their output or work. He expressed his concern for finding the difficult balance in his position to manage both student and teacher expectations placed upon him, "Frankly speaking, most of the students expect us to give them high grades disproportionate to their performance, which causes strain between the teacher and the students. This is a challenging balancing act."

By examining teacher/student expectations through the framework of Activity Theory and the category of "division of labor", we can see two very different perspectives reported by the teachers. One teacher is concerned with the system of evaluation, but has accepted that this must be the best way of assessment since it was provided by the administration. From the sound of it, it appears that maybe not enough valuable teacher input was taken into consideration when creating the system of evaluation. By creating an open and communicative dialog between teaching faculty and administrators, creating a more fair and democratic form of assessment might be able to be achieved.

The other teacher reported difficulties in regard to the expectations students have and that many of them simply expect higher grades than they are producing. One recommendation could be to show students examples of what different types of work looks like at different grades. For example, showing students what an "A" paper or participation looks like, what a "B" looks like, and so on.

By clearly defining and showing students what they will need to produce in order to achieve the grades they want, this could help reduce the difficulties teachers face when it comes to mismatched teacher/student expectations of grades.

4.5 Technical Difficulties and Time Constraints

Several of the teachers commented on the lengthy amount of time it took to adjust to the new process of teaching online. Other teachers commented on the technical challenges they feared and had to overcome while teaching online. Others mentioned the amount of time and effort they had to commit to adapting the materials and tasks for an online environment. While they all faced different challenges unique to their own experiences, they all agreed it wasn't an easy or quick process. Brian expressed the anxiety he felt specifically when it came to online assessment, "...the greatest fear for me was technology failure during assessment." Brian also noted the amount of extra time that was needed to provide ample feedback to students. He expressed, "Most of the time, I felt overwhelmed with the amount of reading this online assessment required."

Kenny explained that it felt "bizarre" when he first began teaching online, "I felt as if I was talking to a machine. It took some time to overcome this bizarre feeling and be myself during these online classes. He commented on some of the technical issues students encountered during the process as well, "The most difficult thing is to truly engage the whole class, which is often not the case in a face-to-face interaction. Learners have multiple excuses such as, bad Internet, broken microphones, etc." He also commented on the amount of time it took to prepare materials from an in-person classroom to an online environment, "It takes a lot of time to adopt a question from the book for online settings. It consumes too much time. It is particularly pertinent for multi-stage activities. In the same line, Charlie shared some of the difficulties he encountered specifically when teaching and assessing listening activities:

> ...listening skill was a bit problematic. Principally, it is because of the Internet and technical problems at the students' side. A few students lost their attention or had a technical glitch during listening, and they interrupted during the feedback stage. As a result, the rest of the students lost the track.

Analyzing these problems through Activity Theory and the category of "requirements", many teachers reported on the different difficulties they encountered when it came to teaching online. Many teachers reported on the extra amount of time it took to prepare for their lessons, adapt

materials to an online environment, as well as the extra time it took to provide adequate feedback to students. Technical difficulties were also reported by teachers in terms of students not having the proper tools to study and learn online, as well as internet connection issues. In order for teachers and students to be successful in an online environment, it is vital that they have all the appropriate tools to learn and be successful, not to mention having a stable and reliable internet connection. Putting in place protocols of what to do during different emergency situations, such as poor internet connections, or students not having the required tools to participate, could help alleviate some of the stress felt by teachers. Compiling a "minimum requirement" list of resources for both students and teachers can help everyone to be able to perform to the best of their abilities. As for the amount of time it takes to adapt to new areas and provide adequate feedback, maybe the department or institution could initially allow for a certain amount of time dedicated to this as teachers transition into their positions of teaching online.

4.6 Teacher Training

Both teachers Brian and Charlie shared their concerns about implementing appropriate teacher training sessions in order to effectively teach students online. Brian discussed the idea of teachers being able to share and teach each other effective tools and strategies they use online. The idea is that colleagues can share what works well for them and their students in the online classrooms. He also noted the importance to, "...create confidence among our teachers that they have the right methods, criteria and opportunity to reliably assess the respective knowledge, skills, or dispositions." Charlie was in agreement with Brian that teachers must be accurately and effectively trained to teach online:

> "The whole process of learning and facilitation can be negatively affected, if the teacher has not been trained suitably. Knowing technology is not enough as an online competent teacher; one has to utilize all technological tools appropriately and effectively. Teachers' technology efficacy is fundamental for the creation of an effective online classroom setting."

Analyzing teacher training through Activity theory and the category of "teachers as subjects" of this study, it is absolutely critical that teachers be trained and capable of performing the necessary functions of their job. Two of the teachers reported how teaching and learning is negatively affected when teachers have not been adequately trained to teach their classes online. It is simply

not enough to assume that teachers will figure it out, or that teaching online can simply be conducted the same way teachers taught in the classroom. Specifically, designed workshops and practice sessions should be developed and implemented for all teaching faculty to be prepared and confident in using all the online teaching resources available to them. Workshops should be held where teachers can share with each other what type of activities and tools are working well for them, as well as brainstorming, discussing, and implementing new tools and techniques in their online classrooms. In the current situation, it sounds as if teachers are barely treading water and have been presented with a "learn as you go" attitude. This simply must not be overlooked in future studies moving forward with online teaching.

4.7 Rubric Guided Assessment and Concept Checking Questions

While most of the teachers references, they used the provided rubric as a guide for assessing their students, other teachers revealed the importance of using concept checking questions as a form of assessment as well. Charlie specifically mentioned his use of this during his assessment process, "Instruction check and concept check questions are much easier and effective to measure learners' understanding." He also mentioned that, "There was not any provision to record student participation. However, I assess their class performance through monitoring and concept checking questions. It helped me to address these points in the upcoming sessions." He also went on to elaborate on the challenges he faced when monitoring students during breakout sessions, "It is very difficult to monitor during different interaction patterns. During 'breakout', when I move from one group to another group learners either go quiet or switch over to something else."

Analyzing this theme through Activity Theory with a focus on "goals" revealed that teachers assessed their students using a rubric provided to them by the department. One teacher supplemented his assessment through the use of concept and instruction checking questions in order to tell if the students understood and were prepared to participate. A rubric should be developed for teachers to use in order to keep track of students' participation during the lessons as well. Establishing clear guidelines and expectations of what students should be doing during "breakout" sessions and what is expected of them should be communicated to students and teachers.

4.8 Long, Boring Sessions

Brian and Charlie both cautioned against the burnout both teachers and students face when engaging in classes in an online environment. Brian suggested maximizing time spent together online in engaging ways and that students should prepare for their sessions ahead of time:

> Students can't be kept online in front of their computer screen for hours; therefore, some shorter micro lessons are advised. Students can watch the videos on their own and then the time with the teacher in class can be spent in doing interactive, creative and problem-solving task.

Kenny addressed the strengths and weaknesses of attending these long sessions. For some students it may be too long and unenjoyable, while for others they appear to enjoy the extended screen time:

> Attending these long virtual classes can be boring, so sometimes students may lose attention. They hardly have any opportunity to move around, which is not the case in a physical classroom. Although attending long virtual classes can be boring, many learners enjoy working on computers and using technology. I think online learning experience may not be really beneficial for kinesthetic learners.

Finally, the analysis of this theme through Activity Theory under the category of "community" is clear that both teachers and students are easily exhausted by long hours spent sitting in front of their computers. Students should be prepared to interact as much as possible during the lessons in order to maximize communicative and interactive learning. Time spent together should not simply be used for things that students can do to prepare for their lessons outside of class. Brainstorming sessions among faculty and department heads should be held in order to make online classes as interactive as possible. The amount of time students are required to attend classes should also be taken into consideration along with the length and amount of breaks. Incorporating some physical movements and activities throughout could help to re-energize students and engage them to the topic at hand. Incorporating online applications and tools that help to stimulate and engage learners should also be considered as potential tools to help break up long lessons spent studying online.
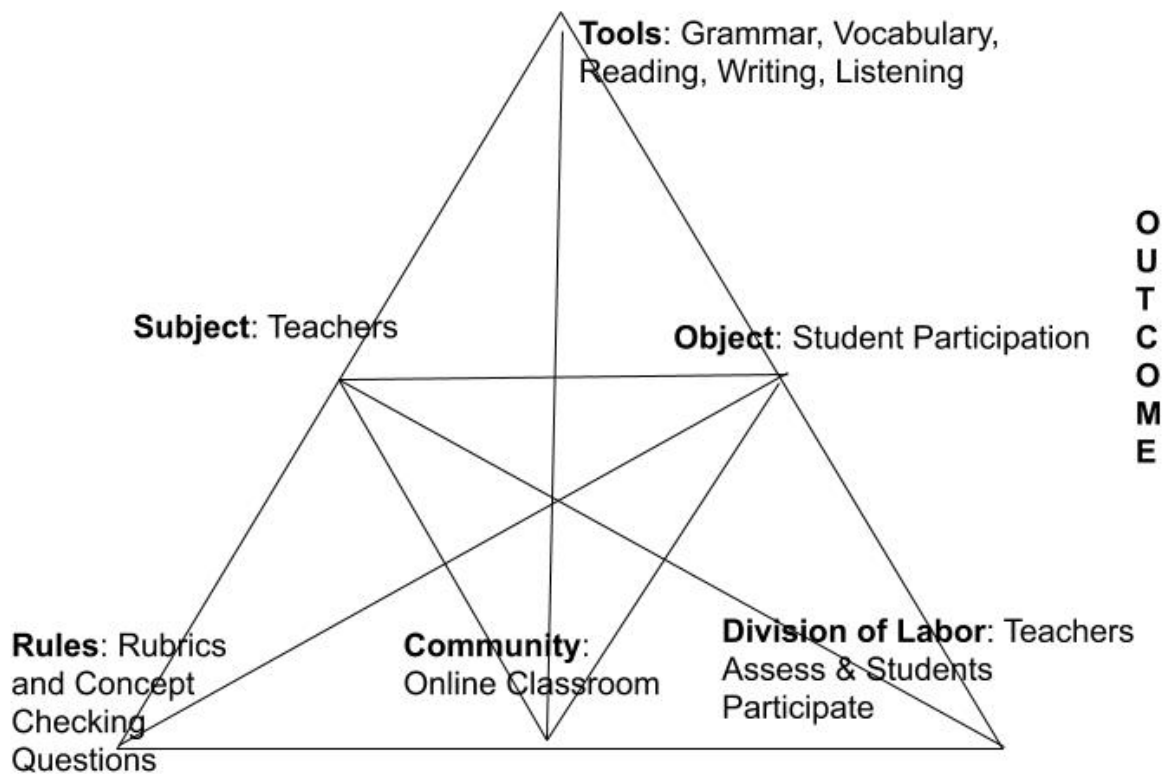
Fig. 3. Activity Theory adapted from Engeström (2001)

5. Discussion of Themes

After analyzing the different themes that emerged through the use of Activity Theory, three themes presented themselves as highly critical areas to investigate further in future research: Grades as a Motivational Stick & Participation Grades, Teacher Training, and Teacher/Student Expectations. It is important to realize that all of the elements under consideration have an effect on all of the other elements. When one element is affected, how does it affect other areas, and ultimately, how does it affect the outcome?
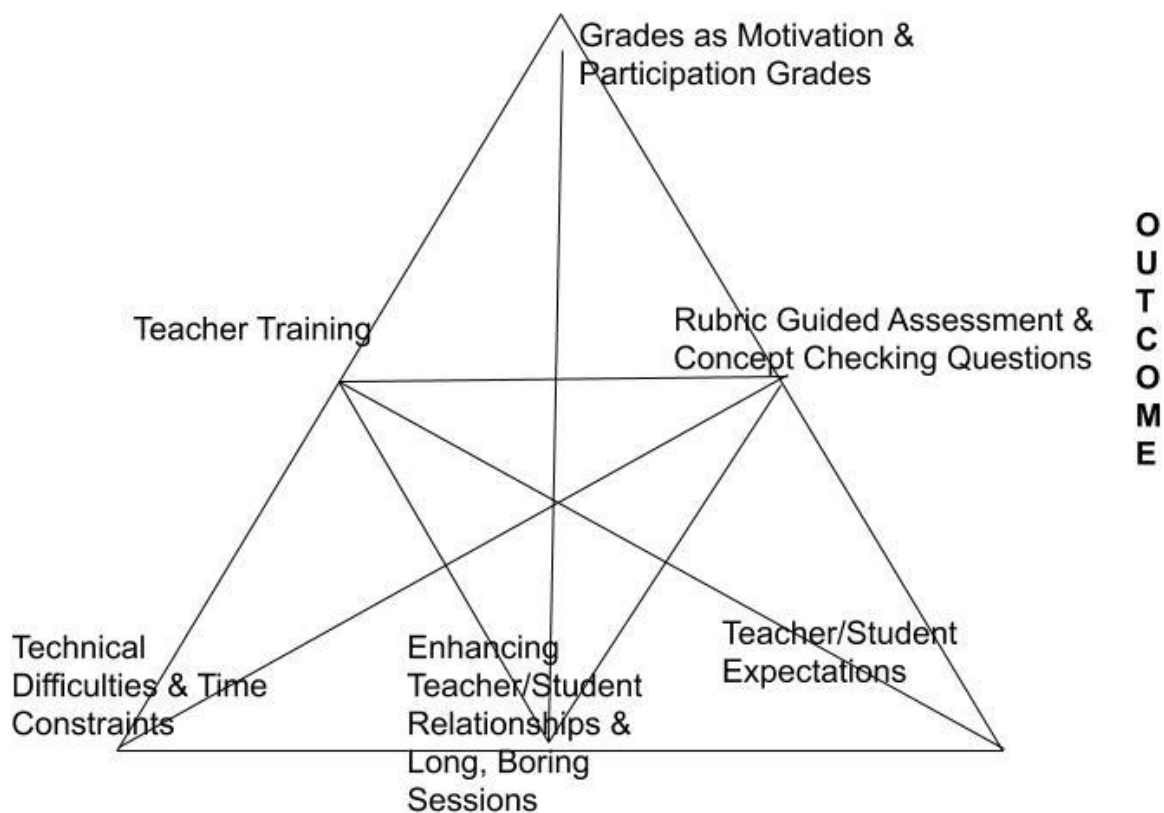
Fig. 4. Activity Theory adapted from Engeström (2001) with themes from the data.

First of all, by using grades as a form of motivation and attaching a highly weighted percentage to students' grades, how will this affect the outcome? It is worth noting and investigating if changing and enacting clear rules for students and teachers in their online classrooms is enough to encourage students to be more engaged and to participate more than they used to.

Secondly, establishing and holding teacher training sessions must not be overlooked. This element surely has one of the greatest opportunities for success or failure in an online teaching environment. If teachers do not feel comfortable, supported, and trained to perform at their best, how can we expect students to perform at their best as well? This quickly raises another question about whether students feel supported and trained to perform online as well. Therefore, training and support must be continuously offered and available to all teachers. This element has the ability to severely affect all of the other elements in regard to Activity Theory, and thus, must be carefully discussed and reevaluated within the department and institution.

Thirdly, within the element of Division of Labor (Teacher/Student Expectations), two distinct areas here need to be reevaluated and discussed in order to see how they can influence greater positive outcomes. Regarding teachers, they should be consulted and asked to provide input on ways they see grading and rubrics being used more fairly to assess students in an online setting. Teachers are directly involved in the process and their input should be listened to and considered for making improvements to rubrics and grading policies. As for student expectations, by clearly defining and providing examples to students of what is expected of them to earn a particular grade, this should help reduce differences in teacher/student expectations of grading. The department needs to help teachers educate students on what is expected of them in order to lessen the burden that has fallen directly on the teachers. By implementing department-wide standards of what is expected of students, teachers will have resources available for them when it comes to a difference of perspective of students and their grades.

Finally, the other elements of this study should also carefully be investigated to see how they can affect better and greater outcomes with future adjustments. By simply altering one aspect, it has the potential to affect all other areas as well. Small changes could result in very positive outcomes for everyone involved.

6. Conclusion: Activity Theory and Online Interaction Assessment

The utilization of Activity Theory to make adjustments and changes in educational settings has the potential for greater outcomes for everyone involved. Activity Theory takes into consideration all the elements which are at play in a given context from the tools, subjects, and objects, to the rules, community, and division of labor. All of these elements have the potential to greatly affect the outcome of a particular situation.

To address the first research question regarding difficulties and challenges EFL teachers encounter when engaging and assessing students in an online classroom, all of the teachers reported the trouble they had in engaging students to participate. By addressing the concern and establishing a higher participation grade for students, teachers will hopefully see a shift in students' behaviors towards participating. By altering this element of the triangle in Activity Theory, it is likely that this will result in a positive outcome as students should want to participate more when it has the potential to positively or negatively affect their grade.

To address the second research question about what strategies EFL teachers use to engage students in an online classroom, it was reported that teachers use a variety of strategies. Some teachers chose to build rapport and closer relationships with their students, while others tried to adapt materials that were more personalized and of interest to their students. It was noted that students were more likely to engage with material online when they knew it was going to be graded or assessed. Ensuring students are aware that their participation is required for all tasks and assignments should increase student participation as they appear to be extrinsically motivated. The strategies used to engage students have the potential to affect better outcomes for students and teachers as they are all interconnected with the elements within Activity Theory. By adjusting or modifying one element within the triangle, it has the possibility to affect change and result in better and greater outcomes.

Finally, to address how teachers assess students in an online classroom, most teachers reported only using the pre-established rubrics provided to them. One teacher took the initiative to create his own rubric and also used concept checking questions to assess whether students were following along and actively engaged. One of the teachers commented that he wasn't sure the way students were being assessed was the best possible way, and this should lead to more discussion and dialog among teaching faculty and administration. By actively taking into consideration the different elements involved in grading and assessment, the potential for more democratic and fairer outcomes is possible.

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Krashen's Monitor Model Revisited with Some Linguistic Evidence for the Homogeneity Hypothesis

Mohammad Awad Al-Dawoody Abdulaal

Department of English, College of Science and Humanities Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Port Said University, Egypt

Bio-profiles:

Mohammad Awad Al-Dawoody Abdulaal is lecturer of linguistics at the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, Port Said University, Egypt. In 2019, he was appointed as an assistant professor of linguistics at Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, College of Science and Humanities. His flagship publications include "A Shift from a Monoglossic to a Heteroglossic View: A Metalinguistic Stego- Translanguaging Lens Approach", " A Cross-linguistic Analysis of Formulaic Language and Meta-discourse in Linguistics Research Articles by Natives and Arabs: Modeling Saudis and Egyptians" and "A Diagnostic Chomskian View to Arabic Asymmetry".

Abstract

In this paper, the researcher aims at investigating and revisiting the impact of Krashen's input hypothesis on L2 output. Based on Krashen's theories, the researcher proposes the homogeneity hypothesis as an extension to the input hypothesis. Homogeneity hypothesis states that the linguistic input given to L2 learners should be not only comprehensible but also homogeneous. It also should meet the learners' current rather than next level. Homogeneous input can lead to a well-organized L2 mental lexicon that speeds up the processes of L2 production, acquisition, and perception. Thus, this study attempts to answer the following question: "How homogeneous is the English linguistic repertoire adopted by some EFL learners given a higher level of English than their own?" viz., is the linguistic repertoire of an (i + 1) EFL learners a homogenous American, a homogeneous British, or a hybrid accent? To answer this question and to test the effect of an (i+1) linguistic input ignoring homogeneity, the researcher examines the linguistic input of a sample comprising ninety-two university students who had received a higher heterogeneous level of English during their high school stage before they attended Port Said University. The study concluded that the English accent

acquired by the EFL learners was neither British nor American; it was a deformed form of English, which hindered the students' listening and speaking skills from being naturally developed.

Keywords: *homogeneity hypothesis, monitor model, second language acquisition, mental lexicon, American accent, British accent*

1. Introduction

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) theories are of three principal types: linguistic, psychological, and sociocultural (Gass & Selinker, 2008). Krashen's monitor model is an innate linguistic theory. Notwithstanding the acclaim Krashen has received for his monitor model, Brown (2000) regarded it as one of the most dialectical theoretical perspectives in SLA in the twentieth century. Despite the acrid criticism which the input hypothesis has received, Krashen (1985) regarded the monitor model as the substantial part of an overall theory of second language acquisition that comprises five basic hypotheses. On account of the excessive controversies over this hypothesis, it especially interests the author who endeavors to test its empirical perspectives in this paper. This study first gives a critical review of Krashen's monitor model within the framework of SLA research and then reviews the weaknesses noticed in the input hypothesis. Eventually, it shows how the homogeneity hypothesis, proposed by the author, can solve the problems caused by the monitor model in general and the input hypothesis in particular in the field of SLA research.

2. Theoretical Background
2.1 Krashen's Monitor Model

Second Language Acquisition (SLA) investigates how learners devise a new language system. Thus, SLA is the study of what the learner manages and fails to achieve in the second language. SLA scope is wider enough to include the study of why most learners of a second language do not accomplish the same level of efficiency in a second language as they do in their mother tongue. SLA also examines why only some learners achieve native-like proficiency in over one language (Gass & Selinker, 2008). Krashen's hypotheses try to investigate these scopes.

Krashen's theory is of five key hypotheses about second language acquisition: (1) the acquisition-learning distinction, (2) the natural order hypothesis, (3) the monitor hypothesis, (4) the input hypothesis, and (5) the affective filter hypothesis (Krashen, 1981b; Zafar, 2011).

Acquisition-learning distinction states that acquisition, unlike learning, is an unconscious process; the learner is not savvy about the language rules. The acquisition process is, therefore, an informal way to develop competence in a language. Further, the process of acquisition depends on spontaneity, and the learner has no time to apply any kind of conscious linguistic mechanisms (Krashen, 1981b). Several research studies show that formal learning settings are best for those who want to master a second language, while other reviews contend that informal environments are predominant (Krashen, 1981a; Zafar, 2011).

Krashen's natural order hypothesis states that second language learners acquire structural items in a predictable order irrespective of the presentation order (Abukhattala, 2012). Therefore, second language students tend to acquire particular grammatical structures earlier than others. For example, the [-ed] morpheme indicating the past simple tense is acquired earlier than the third–person singular [-s] morpheme, that is why there are some intermediate and advanced students who make mistakes with third-person singular of the simple present tense. (Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Xiao, 2014)

As for the monitor hypothesis, Krashen (1981a&b) argued that the language which one subconsciously acquires is responsible for our fluency, whereas the language that one consciously learns acts as an editor. Such a conscious editor is sometimes termed the monitor. Liu (2015) argued that learners differently use their own monitors with degrees of success. The learners who excessively employ their monitors are concerned with correctness and, consequently, achieve no language fluency. To put it differently, monitor hypothesis states that what the student learns is available only as a monitor for purposes of editing or making changes in what has already been produced (Troike & Barto, 2017).

Krashen (1985) argues that one progresses along a natural order by comprehending input comprising structures at our next learning level, structures that are a bit beyond our recent level of proficiency. To put it differently, the input hypothesis shows how language acquirers develop their competence over a time period. It states that the learners acquire language when they understand a linguistic input containing structures a little beyond where they are now. The possibility of this

understanding is due to using the context of the language they hear or read and their knowledge of the world (Higgs, 1985; Thomas, 1995)

Krashen (1985) points out that the affective filter is a cerebral block that curbs the acquirers from using the comprehensible input they receive from language acquisition. The affective filter hypothesis proclaims that motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety all affect language acquisition (Du, 2009).

Robinson (2013) recapitulates Krashen's monitor model with a single claim that learners acquire the target languages only if they obtain comprehensible linguistic input and if the affective filters are sufficiently low to permit the input. When the affective filter is low and the learner receives suitable comprehensible language input, the acquisition process is inevitable. That is to say, no obstacles can prevent the linguistic input if the affective filter dies down, and thus it will be unavoidable. On the contrary, when the affective filter is high, the learners may grasp what they hear and read. However, the input will not reach the Language Acquisition Device (LAD), a metaphor used by Chomsky to refer to the language faculty of children, and this metaphor is extended to adult second language learners (Troike & Barto, 2017).

2.2 A Critique of Krashen's Model

Gregg (1984), McLaughlin (1987), and White (1987), in addition to many second language researchers and theorists such as Brown (2000) and Liu (2015), harshly criticized Krashen's monitor model on a number of grounds. They have seen that Krasken's hypotheses lack explanatory power and empirical evidence. The controversies over the monitor model are summed up in the following points:

1.   Brown (2000) and McLaughlin (1987) believe that Krashen's theory is full of oversimplifications and overstatements. For example, Krashen (1985) contends that his natural order hypothesis is the first to provide second language teaching methodologies with a theoretical base. McLaughlin (1987) and Brown (2000), in addition to many researchers in the field, such as Lightbown and Spada (2006), reject Krashen's broad sweeping claim.

2. Liu (2015), McLaughlin (1987), and Lightbown and Spada (2006) point out that one of the weaknesses that Krashen's theory suffers from is that it is not supported by empirical research. The absence of empirical evidence is a criticism leveled at all of Krashen's five hypotheses. Krashen only argues that certain phenomena can be viewed from the perspective of his theory.

3.   McLaughlin (1987) doubts the validity of the monitor Model as a theoretical framework explaining processes involved in second language acquisition. He points out that Krashen's theory has failed at the level of definitional precision and explanatory power. This view is supported earlier by Gregg (1984) who asserts that this theory is not coherent, and it even would be inappropriate to apply the word 'theory' to it.

2.3 Input Hypothesis versus Homogeneity Hypothesis

2.3.1 Deficiencies in Input Hypothesis

Krashen (1985) assumes that the comprehensible linguistic input can procure language acquisition. Learners naturally move from i, their current level, to $i+1$, their next level, by comprehending a linguistic input containing $i+1$ (Liu, 2015). According to Krashen (1985), input hypothesis comprises two premises: first, speech engenders, rather than being taught, as a consequence of acquisition through comprehensible input; second, grammar is spontaneously acquired if the learner receives sufficient comprehensible input. The criticism directed to the input hypothesis can be outlined in the following points:

1. Liu (2015) and McLaughlin (1987) contend that Krashen never sets a precise definition for the concept comprehensible input. Thus, the testability of the hypothesis is rather impossible.

2.   Liu (2015) asserts that Krashen's equation $i+1$ is not given an exact definition. Even Krashen himself is not consistent with its description. He first points out that i refers to the learner's recent level of competence, and $i+1$ signifies the learner's next level along the natural order (Krashen, 1985). Nevertheless, Krashen then limits this type of competence to grammar alone and interprets $i+1$ as structures at our next stage. On account of this inconsistency, White (1987) harshly criticizes Krashen for failing to give syntactic illustrations.

Because Krashen failed to clearly define $i+1$ formulation, Lightbown and Spada (2006) endeavor to set a broad interpretation, in which i stands for the level of language already acquired and $i+1$ is a metaphor comprising words, grammatical forms, aspects of pronunciation, which constitute a step beyond the current level.

3.   Like the formulation $i+1$, the concept of comprehensible input lacks clear definition. The word 'comprehensible' is again defined in two different ways. When setting about to lay down the substantial two premises for language acquisition, Krashen (1982) contends that the first condition is comprehensibility or comprehension-based input comprising $i+1$. In this

explanation, two different concepts (i.e. comprehensibility and comprehension) are placed side by side, with the former dealing with a process and the latter with the result of the action (Liu, 2015).

4.   The vagueness of the input hypothesis is clearly shown in how to determine the next level (i.e. *i+1*) along the natural order. McLaughlin (1987) points out that Krashen's concept of natural order is actually a non-existent theory of acquisition concatenations. Consequently, it is impossible for the input hypothesis to pinpoint what specific structure the learners should acquire first and what next along the natural order (Liu, 2015).

5.   Gregg (1984) and Liu (2015) contend that what is occult in the input hypothesis is the acquisition process; evidently, more needs to be known about the transition from mere comprehension to successful acquisition. It seems that Krashen only lays down the condition for the move, but does not proffer a mechanism for moving along any given flow of progress (Gregg, 1984).

Krashen's premise that the linguistic input can be comprehensible via simplification is one of the infirmities attached to comprehensible input. Krashen cites caretaker speech as an example of comprehensible input, a notion totally rejected by Gregg (1984) and White (1987), since caretaker speech is directed at children who acquire their L1 rather than L2, and simplified in a way for the sake of communication.

2.3.2 Homogeneity Hypothesis

The researcher argues that the learning input which the learner receives should not be above his/her level (i.e. *i+1*) as Krashen suggests. Rather, the learning input should be of a homogeneous nature. Learners facilely retrieve identical learning input. For example, lexical entries carrying the past morpheme '-ed' are retrieved more quickly than those conjugated irregularly. That is, the homogenous input is retrieved more quickly than heterogeneous one.

Not only lexical retrieval but also lexical storage and acquisition are influenced by the homogeneity hypothesis. The learners can facilely acquire and store homogeneous data. For instance, a list of homogeneous monosyllabic words beginning with the sound /r/ followed by the sound /æ/ , such as 'rat', 'rap', 'rack', 'rash', and 'ram' are more easily acquired and mentally stored than a list of heterogeneous monosyllabic words, such as 'fat', 'shake', 'monk', 'shy', and 'voice'. The homogeneity rate among the latter list is lower than that existing among the

former one. The latter has only a single common feature, being a list of monosyllabic words, unlike the former group which has three common features: (a) beginning with the /r/ sound, (b) having an inter-consonantal / æ /, and (c) finally being a monosyllabic list of words. The higher the homogeneity rate is, the faster the processes of the retrieval, acquisition and mental storage are.

Homogeneity hypothesis explains why some instructors tend to transform the difficult parts in their subjects into verse lines. It is due to the fact that poetry processes heterogeneous words and phrases so as to create a homogeneous sound system appealing to the listener. This homogeneity is achieved via intruding some poetic devices such as consonance, assonance, and alliteration. Thus, learners can easily retrieve homogeneous data faster than heterogeneous ones.

Unlike Krashen's concepts of acquisition and learning, the homogeneity hypothesis argues that homogeneous data are acquired subconsciously and rapidly, whereas heterogeneous learning input is learned consciously and slowly. This argument explains why children, during acquiring their native language, begin to produce monosyllabic words before disyllabic ones. With a quick survey of a two-year child's language stock (e.g. pa, ma, po, etc.), we can easily notice the high rate of homogeneity.

Homogeneity hypothesis totally opposes Krashen's natural order hypothesis which argues that L2 learners acquire only structural items in a predictable order regardless of the presentation order. Natural order, within the framework of the homogeneity hypothesis, means that L2 learners acquire first all homogeneous linguistic data before acquiring heterogeneous ones. To put it differently, all homogeneous language items, not only structural ones, are acquired in an early stage. For instance, L2 learners, given the list of vocabulary items in (1a) below, will acquire it before those given the second vocabulary list in (1b). It is attributed to the fact that the homogeneity rate among the first group is higher than that existing among the second. The first-word list comprises a group of words with only American English spelling, but the second-word list juxtaposes British and American spellings.

(1)

   a. color, behavior, savior, senior, and honor

   b. colour, behavior, saviour, senior, and honour

Homogeneity hypothesis accepts Krashen's notion that the language which one subconsciously acquires is responsible for fluency, whereas the language that one consciously

acquires performs as an editor. But homogeneity hypothesis adds that language fluency emerges immediately after heterogeneous, rather than homogeneous learning components, are fully perceived by the L2 learner. For example, fluency will be noticed after the L2 learner acquires the word list in (2a) below rather than the word list in (2b)

(2)

  a. may / meɪ /, say/ seɪ /, lay / leɪ /, hey/ heɪ /

  b. say / meɪ /, site /saɪ /, boil /bɔɪl /, down /daʊn/

    To empirically test the effect of the implementation of input hypothesis and the impact of disregarding the homogeneity hypothesis, the researcher examines the linguistic repertoire adopted by a group of ninety-two high school learners, who were given courses above their own then level as a process of curriculum development adopted by the Ministry of Education in Egypt in the past six years.

3. Research problem

    This study attempts to answer the following question: How homogeneous is the English linguistic repertoire adopted by some learners given a higher level of English than their own? In other words, is the linguistic repertoire of the sample under investigation a homogenous American, a homogeneous British, or a hybrid accent?

4. Research questions

    The research problem explained above raises the following questions:

1. How homogeneous is the $i + 1$ spelling system taught to the sample under investigation?

2. How homogeneous is the $i + 1$ pronunciation system taught to the sample under investigation?

3. In what way is the learners' writing system homogeneous?

4. To which variety of English do the grammatical rules adopted by the sample belong?

5. Methodology

In order to collect data, a questionnaire was given to a sample of ninety-two students, who have recently joined the Faculty of Arts at Port Said University. All the learners have the same age and have received English courses higher in level than their then one. The questionnaire is composed of four components: (a) spelling, (b) vocabulary, (c) syntax, and (d) pronunciation. At the spelling

level, the students were given twelve items, each with two different forms, and each form belongs to a particular variety of English. The students were asked to check the form they employ on writing, and to check 'both' if they use the two forms interchangeably in their writings (See table 1). The researcher surveyed Pernecker (2010) to collect English words with different spellings in American and British accents.

At the vocabulary level, the students were given eight British lexical items with their American counterparts, then they were asked to pick up the form they employ in writing or speech (See table 2). These eight vocabulary items are collected from Schlüter and Schlter (2009).

At the syntactic level, the students were given three British syntactic structures with their American counterparts. They, then, were asked to pick up the form they repeatedly employ in writing or speech. They were asked to check 'both' if they use the two forms. (See table 3). With the help of Zhang and Jiang (2009), the researcher collected some syntactic structures that differ in British and American English.

At the pronunciation level, the subjects were given eight words, and they were asked to pick up the pronunciation they utilize in their speech. Since the students do not have a clue about phonemes, the researcher loudly pronounced the two forms for the students (See table 4). Smotrova (2015) was consulted to collect some words with different pronunciation in American and British.

Table (1) Spelling Level

1st Spelling Form	2nd Spelling Form	Both
Aeroplane	Airplane	
Ageing	Aging	
Analyse	Analyze	
Behaviour	Behavior	
Centre	Center	
Connexion	Connection	
Defence	Defense	
Disc	Disk	
Favour	Favor	
Install	Install	
Judgement	Judgment	
Kilogramme	Kilogram	

Table (2) Vocabulary Level

1st Vocabulary Form	2nd Vocabulary Form	Both
Go on holiday	Go on vacation	
Flat	Apartment	
Autumn	Fall	
Garden	Yard	
Primary school	Elementary school	
Secondary school	High school	
Mobile phone	Cell phone	
Lift	Elevator	

Table (3) Syntactic Level

1st Syntactic Form	2nd Syntactic Form	Both
The team are playing tonight.	The team is playing tonight.	
I shall go home.	I will go home.	
I learnt English.	I learned English.	

Table (4) Pronunciation Level

Items	1st Pronunciation Form	2nd Pronunciation Form	Other forms
Past	/p æst/	/pɑ:st/	
Teacher	/ ¹t:tʃər/	/ 't:tʃə/	
Hard	/h ɑ:rd/	/h ɑ: d/	
Class	/klæs/	/klɑ:s/	
Can't	/kænt/	/kɑ:nt/	
Soap	/soʊp/	/səʊp/	
Low	/loʊ/	/ləʊ/	
So	/soʊ/	/səʊ/	

6. Results
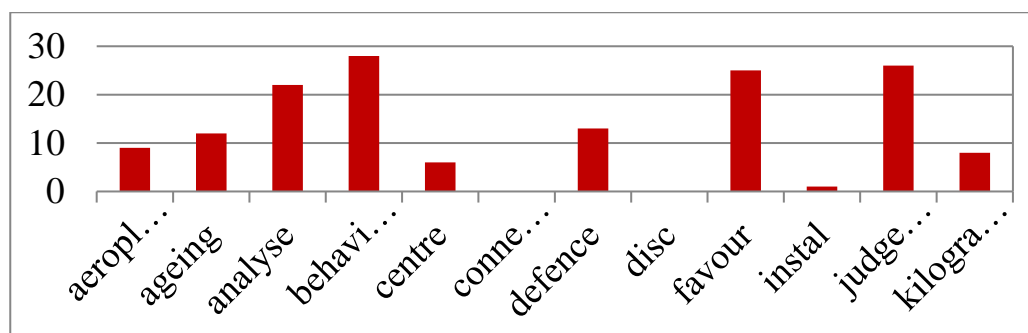
Fig (1) the frequencies of subjects' British spelling responses

[1]   The chart above shows the subjects' choices of British spelling responses (i.e. aeroplane, ageing, analyse, behaviour, centre, connexion, defence, disc, faviour, instal, judgement, and kilogramme). The percentage of each response is calculated and finally, the average of all percentages is computed via dividing the sum of percentages by their numbers. The average rate of the percentages of the British spelling responses is 42%.
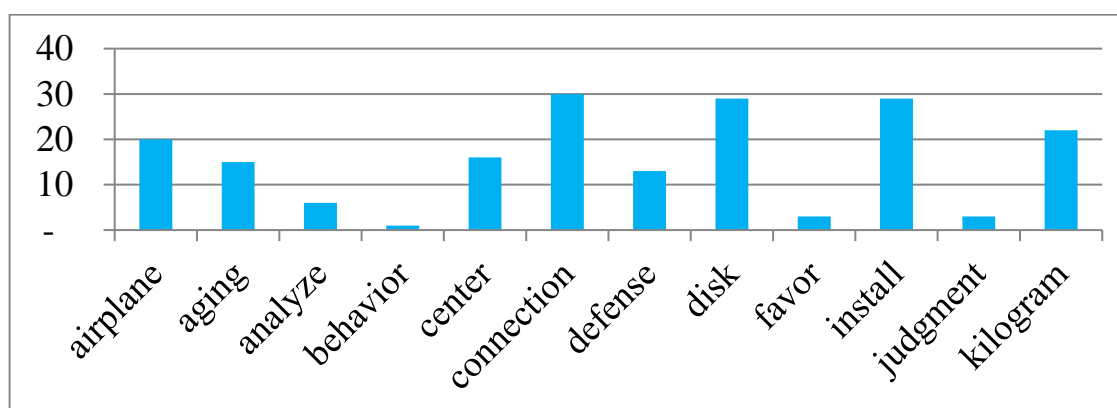

Fig (2) the frequencies of subjects' American spelling responses

[2]   The column chart in fig (2) displays the learners' choices of American spelling responses (i.e. airplane, aging, analyze, behavior, center, connection, defense, disk, favor, install, judgment, and kilogram). The percentage of each response is calculated and finally, the average of all percentages is computed via dividing the sum of percentages by their numbers. The average rate of the percentages of the American spelling responses is 52%.
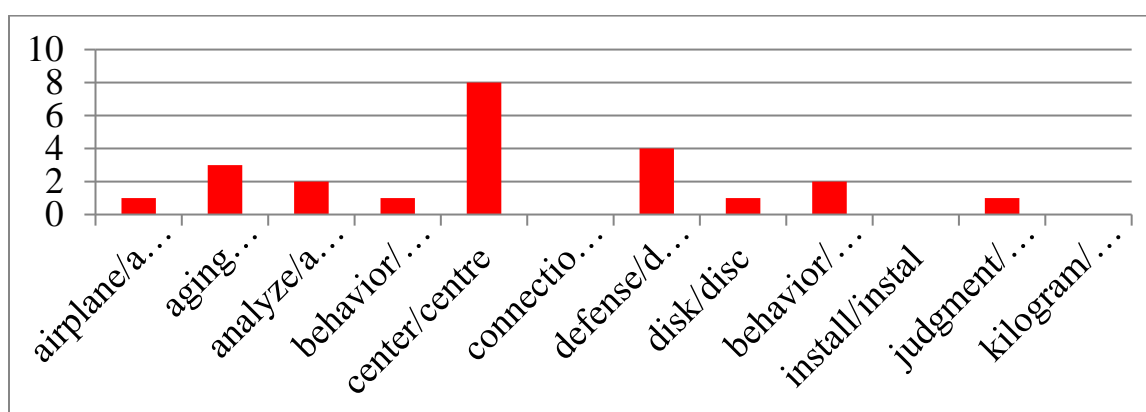
Fig (3) the frequencies of subjects' binary spelling responses

[3]   The chart in fig (3) demonstrates the subjects' binary usage of American and British spelling responses   (i.e.   airplane/aeroplane,   aging/ageing,   analyze/analyse,   behavior/behaviour,

center/centre, connection/connexion, defence/defense, disk/disc, favor/faviour, install/instal, judgment/judgement, and kilogram/kilogramme). The percentage of each binary response is calculated and finally, the average of all percentages is computed via dividing the sum of percentages by their numbers. The average rate of the percentages of the binary usage of American and British spelling responses is 6%.
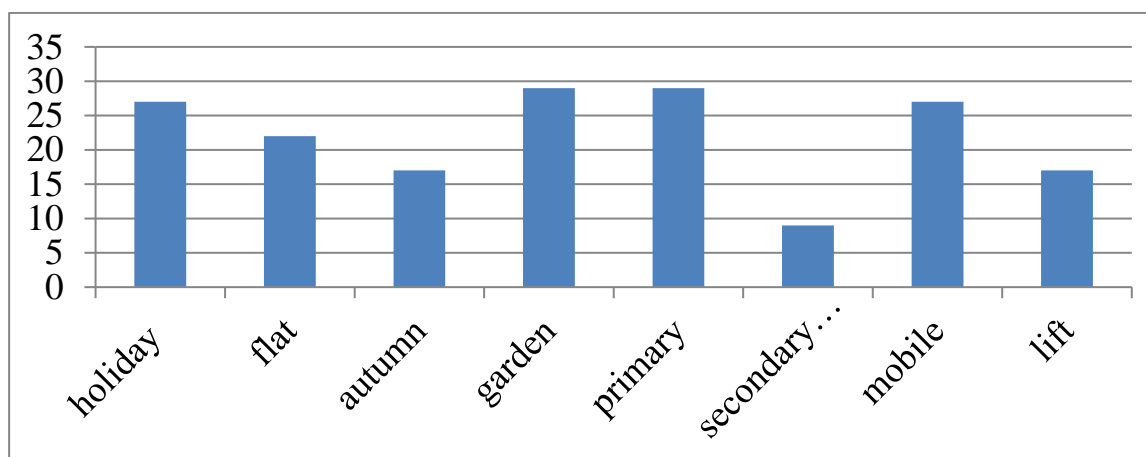

Fig (4) the frequencies of the participants' British vocabulary responses

[4]   The column chart in fig (4) above exhibits the study sample's British vocabulary responses (i.e. holiday, flat, autumn, garden, primary school, secondary school, mobile, and lift). The percentage of each British vocabulary response is calculated and finally, the average of all percentages is computed via dividing the sum of percentages by their numbers. The average rate of the percentages of the British vocabulary responses is 74%.
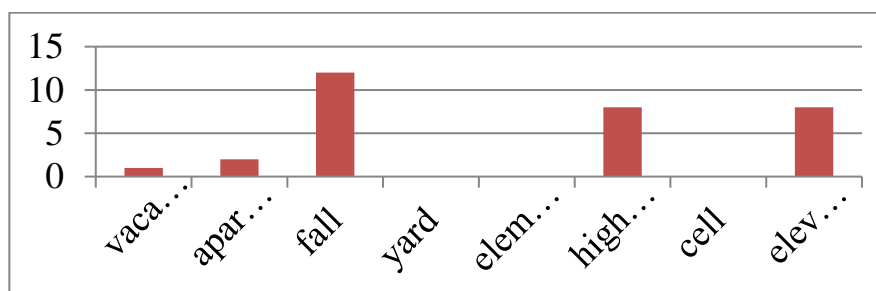
Fig (5) the frequencies of the participants' American vocabulary responses

[5]   The chart in fig (5) above displays the students' American vocabulary responses (i.e. vacation, apartment, fall, yard, elementary school, high school, cell phone, and elevator). The average rate of the percentages of the American vocabulary responses is 13%.
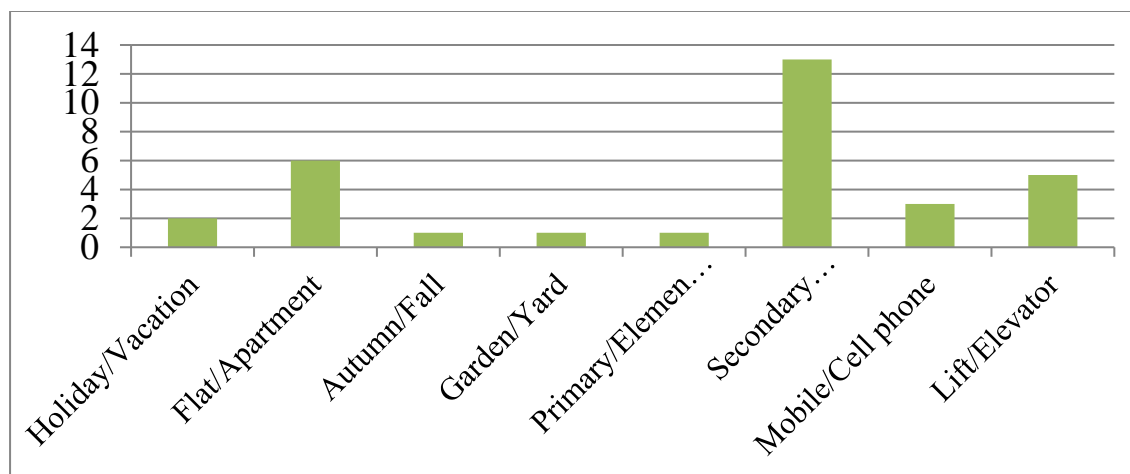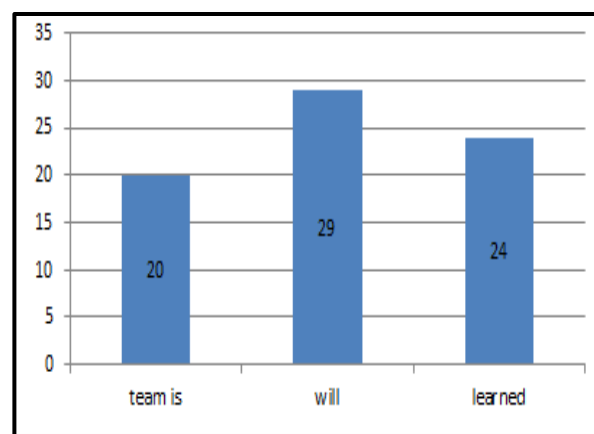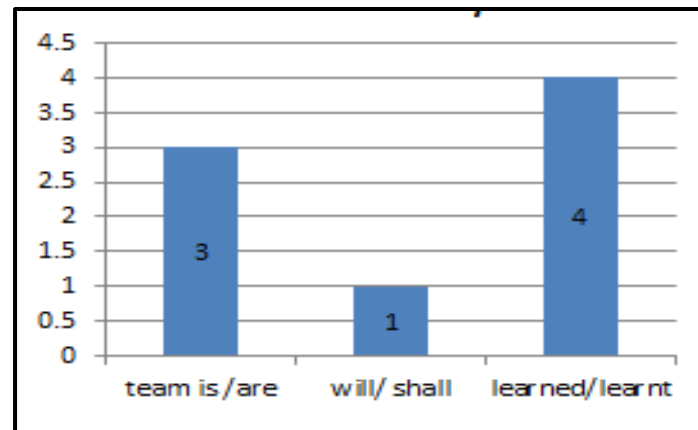
Fig (6) the frequencies of the subjects' binary vocabulary responses

[6]   The column chart in fig (6) above displays the students' binary vocabulary responses (i.e. holiday / vacation, apartment / flat, autumn / fall, garden / yard, primary school / elementary school, secondary school / high school, mobile / cell phone, and lift/ elevator). The percentage of each binary vocabulary response is calculated and finally, the average of all percentages is computed via dividing the sum of percentages by their numbers. The average rate of the percentages of the binary vocabulary responses is 13%.

[7]   The charts in figures (7, 8, & 9) below demonstrate the students' British, American, and binary syntactic responses (i.e. team are/is, shall/will, and learnt/learned).   The percentage of each syntactic response is calculated and finally, the average of all percentages is computed via dividing the sum of percentages by their numbers. The average rates of the percentages of the British, American and binary syntactic responses are 10%, 81%, and 9% respectively.
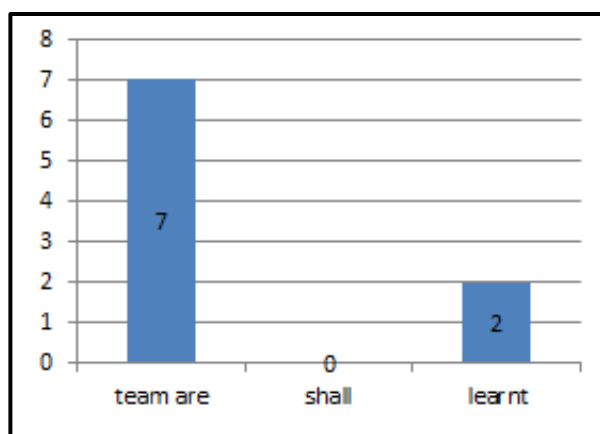
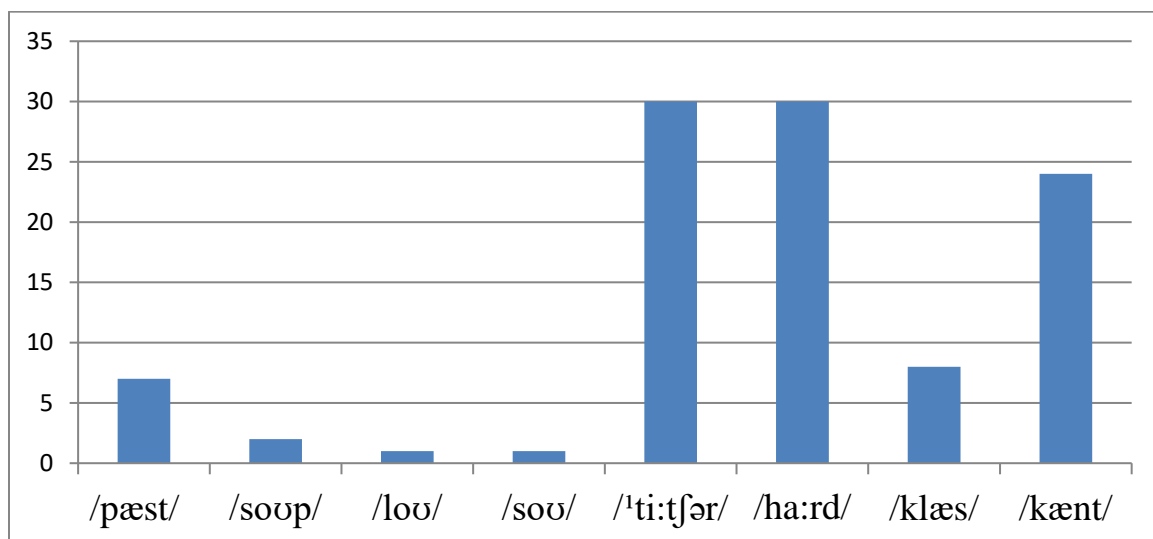*Fig (7)* the frequencies of the learners' British syntactic responses

Fig (8) the frequencies of the subjects' American syntactic responses

Fig (9) the frequencies of the subjects' binary
syntactic responses

[8]   The chart below (see fig.10) presents the learners' American pronunciation responses (i.e.
/pæst/, /soʊ/, /loʊ/, /soʊp/, /'ti:tʃər/, /ha:rd/, /klæs/, and /kænt/). The percentage of each American
pronunciation response is calculated and finally, the average of all percentages is computed via
dividing the sum of percentages by their numbers. The average rate of the percentages of the
American pronunciation responses is 43%.

Fig (10) the frequencies of the subjects' American pronunciation responses

[9]   The chart below (See fig.11) presents the learners' British pronunciation responses (i.e.
/pa:st/, /səʊ/, /ləʊ/, /səʊp/, /'ti:tʃə/, /ha: d/, /kla:s/, and /ka:nt/). The percentage of each British
pronunciation response is calculated and finally, the average of all percentages is computed via

dividing the sum of percentages by their numbers. The average rate of the percentages of the British pronunciation responses is 12%.
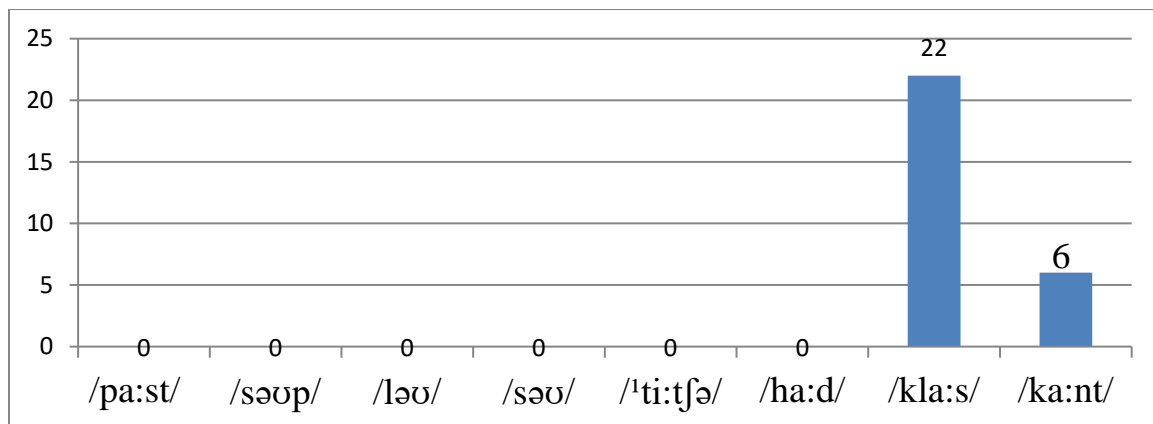
Fig (11) the frequencies of the subjects' British pronunciation responses

[10]   The chart below shows the learners' mispronunciation responses. Some learners, for instance, reported that they pronounce the word 'past' as /pʌst/; others declare that they pronounce the words 'so', 'low' and 'soap' as /sɔː/, /lɔː/ and /suːp/ respectively. The words 'teacher', 'hard', 'class' and 'can't' are reported correctly with null mispronunciations. The percentage of each mispronunciation response is calculated and finally, the average of all percentages is computed via dividing the sum of percentages by their numbers. The average rate of the percentages of the mispronunciation responses is 45%.
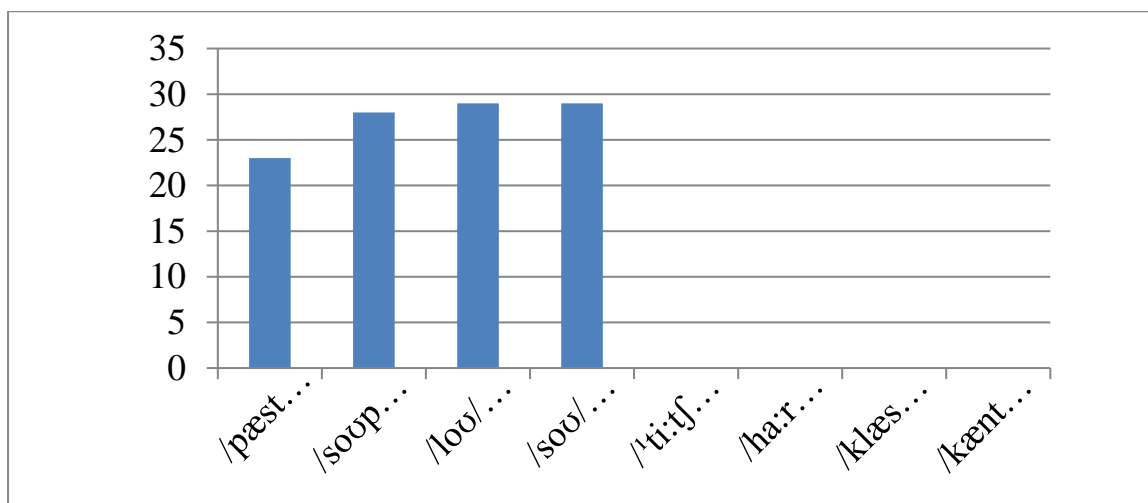
Fig (12) the frequencies of the subjects' mispronunciation responses

As exhibited in section (6), the results of applying an *i+1* learning system ignoring homogeneity can be epitomized in the table (5) below.

Table (5): A Summary of the Final Results

Language Level	British English	American English	Binary Responses
Spelling Level	42%	52%	6%
Vocabulary Level	74%	13%	13%
Syntactic Level	10%	81%	9%
Phonological Level	British English	American English	Mispronunciation
	12%	43%	45%

7. Discussion

It is quite clear that the implementation of an i+1 learning system without taking homogeneity into consideration has led to a deformed variety of English embraced by the subjects under investigation. On the one hand, it seems that the spelling and syntactic systems tend to be American English-based, whereas the vocabulary system is British English – based. On the other hand, the pronunciation system belongs to neither the British nor the American accent. Had the sample learners been exposed to a homogeneous rather than an *i+1* learning input, the results would have been totally different.

Homogeneity hypothesis does not accord with Chomsky's concept of the lexicon. Chomsky (2015) points out that the lexicon is a mere list of words on which syntax is operated. Chomsky's concept focuses on a single module, (i.e. the syntactic module) discarding semantic, pragmatic, and phonological modules, and ignoring the harmony and homogeneity existing inside and among these modules.

Homogeneity hypothesis is in accordance with the recent view of the mental lexicon, set forth by cognitive psycholinguists (e.g. Marcus, 1991; Henderson, 1985), neuropsychologists (e.g. Caramazza, 1997), and cognitive scientists (e.g. McClelland and Rumelhart, 1981; Marcus, 2001). According to these psychologists, neuropsychologists, and cognitive scientists, the mental lexicon is perceived as a highly organized mental dictionary which contains information about a word's pronunciation, meaning, and syntactic attributes (Jackendoff, 2002). The lexical entries are stored, activated, processed and retrieved by the speakers whenever they want.

The recent view of the mental lexicon highlights the homogeneous aspects of the mental lexicon. That is, verbs, for example, are lexically inserted in isolation of nouns, which in turn are lexically inserted in isolation of adjectives. Homogeneity hypothesis goes against the perpetual nature of the mental lexicon. Actually, the mental lexicon keeps developing, growing, and updating. Every day the learners acquire new words and insert them in their position in the mental lexicon. The newly inserted lexical items may replace outdated ones or may be inserted above or under old ones.

Dual – Coding theory, developed by Pavio in 1960s, supports the homogeneity hypothesis. As a theory of cognition, Dual – Coding theory argues that the formation of mental images helps in the learning process (Reed, 2012). The closely related images are stored in the same component inside one's memory. For example, all the images of the animals are stored in a single component. Heterogeneous images cannot be lexically inserted in the same component. The higher the homogeneity rate among the non-verbal information is, the faster the retrieval process is.

Homogeneity hypothesis is upheld by the essence of language production theories. According to Dell (1993), theories of speech production propose that utterances are formed via a mechanism that detaches linguistic content from linguistic structure. Linguistic content is encored from the mental lexicon and is then inserted into slots in linguistic structures or frames. Thus, homogeneity appears in the separation between the linguistic structure component and the content component. The slots, in which the linguistic content is to be inserted, are all of a syntactic nature, and the linguistic content is all of a semantic nature.

Homogeneity hypothesis is also enhanced by the speech production models proposed by Garrett (1975), Dell (1993), and Fromkin (1971). According to these speech production models, planning a sentence involves the construction of successive levels of representation. A semantic or conceptual representation is supposed to be constructed first, followed by two linguistic representations, one involving syntactic, and the other involving phonological information. Finally, the phonological representation is translated into a motor program to produce speech. Each level of representation has a high rate of homogeneity; a conceptual representation, for example, includes all semantic information required for a sentence production; no syntactic or phonological information, for instance, can be interfered.

8. Conclusion

Analyzing the linguistic repertoire adopted by a sample of students exposed to an i+1 learning process shows how heterogeneous the linguistic output the learners have acquired. The English accent acquired by the learners is neither British nor American; it is a deformed form of English, which hinders the students' listening and speaking skills from being naturally developed. Therefore, the author proposes the homogeneity hypothesis to solve the problems created by Krashen's input hypothesis and to set a theoretical base for any second language input given to L2 learners.

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