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Foreword

It is a matter of pride and privilege to present this edition (3.1) of volume 16 of TESOL International Journal. This actually comes at a time when the academic world is faced with serious challenges and uncertainties. It was around this time last year that humanity came face to face with the Coronavirus pandemic, a particularly difficult time for learners and teachers as they were forced to adopt a new educational mode: the virtual one. It would not be an exaggeration to say that we all encountered numerous pitfalls on the way, grappling as much with our concerns of the achievement of learning objectives as with our own and our learners' physical and mental well-being. Yet, perhaps it was one of the most fecund periods of research endeavors for most of us as our spirit of inquiry was fired by the changed educational paradigm. Collectively, the academic world contributed to the creation of a corpus of literature on practically every aspect of virtual learning, an area of marginal research till now. It was also an opportunity for us to evaluate earlier teaching practices, think of new approaches and pedagogies, and in the process, becoming more sensitized to our learners. All these are reflected in this erudite, prolific, and truly enlightening collection of research, a collection which can be a beacon light in the field for a long time to come. In this issue, given its varying range of articles, we have attempted a thematic classification. We do hope our readers appreciate this change.

The first part of this issue, viz, TEFL *and Technology*, comprises four articles. Interestingly, the role of multimodal approach in L2 revision is the subject of the first paper titled, *Saudi L2 learners' writing advancement via technology-based ambidextrous facets* by Ahmed Aromaih of Majmaah University, Saudi Arabia. Carried out in the nature of a detailed case study, this research establishes the efficacy of CBMCAs in noticing and self-revision. *Social network communication: Emojis and EFL learners' writing issues* is the following article by Jeehan Algaraady and Mohammad Mahyoob of Taiz University, Yemen and Taibah University, Saudi Arabia, respectively. The study explores the impact of using emojis in enhancing learners' writing skills in English. In an interesting finding, the study concludes that emojis are a rich source of semantics, but their excessive use poses a threat to imparting standard English language skills to the EFL learners. The third paper in this issue is titled *EFL learners' motivation and achievement: A study in the use of technology enabled EIP at Madrasah Tsanawiyah* by Syafnan, Mahyudin Ritonga, Eni Sumanti Nasution, Fitriani Surayya Lubis,

from Indonesia. The paper takes a novel approach by evaluating the efficacy of EIP (English for Islamic Purposes) in interaction with technology as a factor in learner motivation and achievement. Such studies are significant at times when the language learning scenario is concerned with rich language experiences for the learners while, at the same time, maintaining their cultural roots. *Teachers' perceptions of challenges in online teaching: A survey across universities in KSA*, by Abdulhameed Abdulhadi Alhuwaydi, is the fourth article in this issue. In a finding, which has large-scale relevance in our times, the study found that university teachers are moderately adjusted to the online instruction and assessment with the use of technology being perceived as a smaller challenge. It also establishes that for virtual learning to succeed, greater learner involvement in selection of assessment methods is most necessary.

The four articles that make the second part of the issue centre around EFL teaching and learning. Thus, the fifth article studies one of the more immediate problems that virtual education brought to the fore in the past year: The problem of communication gap between teachers and University learners. This paper is titled *Towards highlighting the importance of oral questioning in teaching and learning EFL at Qassim University, Saudi Arabia.* The authors are Mohamed AbdAlla AbdAlgane Mohammed and Abdulghani Eissa Tour Mohammed. The study concludes that a large part of the communication gap can be bridged with effective oral questioning by the teachers. In an interesting study titled Undergraduate EFL writing: A study across curriculums, Hani Albelihi of Qassim University, Saudi Arabia, assesses the effects of writing strategies use on EFL learners' apprehensions and writing achievement. He came to the conclusion that the students who used effective writing strategies greatly improved their language efficiency. The researcher does also call upon other scholars to delve into the ties between foreign language anxiety, writing success, and writing strategies. Native-speakerism, a phenomenon especially associated with English as L2 settings is the focus of the next paper, *The language teacher and native-speakerism in Saudi English medium schools: Pride or prejudice?* by Muneer Hezam Alqahtani of King Faisal University, Saudi Arabia. This study keenly and uniquely investigates the prevalence of Native-speakerism in the recruitment practices of English-medium schools in Saudi Arabia. The eternal debate of native versus non-native language teachers of English can sometimes be more a matter of perception (and wrong ones at that) than quality and as part of the pristine academia, teachers need to be most conscious against such prejudices. The eighth paper is *Learner-centred pedagogical strategies in public schools: An evaluative study in KSA* by Sultan Abdulaziz Albedaiwi. Among others, the study found that the most popular strategy in Saudi EFL

classrooms under study was discussion while brainstorming was the least favored. This is a path-breaking finding as many of the earlier studies came to the contrary conclusion. The study clearly reinforces the belief that the one-size-fits-all approach cannot work in the language classroom, and the onus for always evolving new pedagogies, lies with the teachers.

Textbooks are very essential components of education. They in any stream of study are the most concrete form of knowledge; given this importance, it is imperative to analyze them diligently. The closing paper in this great collection is titled *Intermediate EFL textbooks and communication standards: An analysis of course content* by Abdulkareem Saji Alharbi of Majmaah University. This is a unique case study of English books currently in use in an EFL milieu, which examines the books against communication standards desirable in EFL materials.

The challenges in language teaching are both difficult and interesting, particularly at this online time. The saving grace is that so many of us are working on them with enthusiasm, tenacity and dedication to develop new methods of analysis and teaching to provide novel solutions to our institutions and learners. This issue is a very good step in that direction. Happy reading, then!

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Saudi L2 learners' Writing Advancement via Technology-based Ambidextrous Facets

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Bio-profile:

Dr. Ahmed Ali Aromaih, an Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics, College of Sciences & Humanities in Alghat, and Deputy Rector of Majmaah University for Postgraduate Studies & Scientific Research, Saudi Arabia, is an academician with many talents and interests. He began his teaching career early in his academic journey as a Demonstrator in Imam Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University immediately after completing his BA in English. He followed this with a Master's degree in Theoretical Linguistics from Michigan State University, USA, in 1999, and PhD from Kansas State University in 2004. With an excellent track record throughout these learning phases, he was offered the position of Assistant Professor in the Department of English Language and Translation at Qassim University, KSA, the same year. Here he held important positions as Head of the Department, and Dean, Graduate Studies. His outstanding performance in these posts led to his appointment as full-time advisor to the International Cooperation Department of the Ministry of Higher Education in 2009. The following year, it was time for him to move again, this time as Dean of Admission & Registration at Majmaah University with additional charge as Supervisor of the Preparatory Year Deanship. In 2014, he became the Deputy Rector of Majmaah University for Academic Affairs; thereafter he was appointed as Deputy Rector of Postgraduate Studies and Scientific Research at this university since 2019. Between 2014 and 2019, he also contributed his expertise in many capacities at Majmaah University: Executive Committee for Institutional Accreditation, General Committees for Program Accreditation, Committee for the Implementation of Afaq's Plan Indicators, Plans & Study System Committee, Admission Committee and the Parallel Education Programs Committee, as well as being a valuable member of the main committee of the Plan at Majmaah University. Apart from being a member in various academic and research bodies, such as councils of Majmaah University Council in Scientific Council, and Graduate Studies Council, the American Society of Linguists (since 2001) and the Saudi Linguistic Society (since 2002), he has been actively enriching his

knowledge with attendance at national and international conferences of repute.. Nor one to be found lacking in any academic pursuit, Dr. Aromaih has a keen interest and expertise in electronic course management systems and in programs of multimedia production and text programs like Front Page, Dream Weaver, Photoshop, the knowledge of which he efficiently uses in planning, designing and supervising E-learning and distance education programs. His research interests include lexicon comprehension, vocabulary-learning strategies, CALL and CALT.

Abstract

This article analyzes how CBMCAs can promote the noticing and self-revision of second language writers as they are responsible for creating the academic content in terms of essays and in doing so, become well versed with learning the writing aspect of a second language. The study also empirically sets out to prove that unification of different modes of learning may assist learners in the revisions pertaining to content and language use during the composition of academic essays. In addition to the use of CBMCAs, the study has also employed a composite process i.e., noticing- multimodality-multidimensional-revision model which may act as a catalyst for the discipline of second language research giving rise to the contributing factors responsible for effective and prolific self-revision. The study also proves that the noticing hypothesis can be employed in the metalinguistic aspects of language and macro-level features of writing as well. The investigation so done in this endeavour is also to show the adequacy of non-linguistic modes to promote learner's ability to convey implied meanings ie. meaning beyond written content. The researcher has also emphasized writing as a conversational event embodying objective for different modes which may lead learners to create multimodal texts and stylish linguistic elements of academic writing. This detailed case study with implanted data was carried out in an undergraduate English writing classroom at Majmaah University, KSA. The results so obtained are likely to provide for the factual evidence about the use of CBMCAs for assisting second language writers in making their writing more effective and worth noticing.

Keywords: *Linguistic, Multimodal, Language, Investigation, Revision.*

INTRODUCTION

Ambidextrous Facades in education, as a theory, has developed right through the advent of writing. The notion of ambidextrous facets has been discussed since the fourth century BC, as classical rhetoricians referred to it with their stress on voice, gesture, and style in public

speaking. Nevertheless, the term was not described with significance until the twentieth century. In the course of this time, a rapid rise in technology introduced many new methods of presentation. Ever since, multimodality has become a norm in the twenty-first century, employing various network-based modes such as literature, art, advertising and social media. The mono-modality, or singular mode (which used to describe the organization of text on a page) has been superseded with more intricate and coherent layouts. Alves, Castro,., & Olive, (2008) indicates in his work Multimodality and Genre, "Nowadays… text is just one strand in a complex presentational form that seamlessly incorporates visual aspect 'around,' and sometimes even instead of, the text itself." Multimodality thus, has rapidly become "the normal state of human communication."

LITERATURE REVIEW

In a significant finding, Freyn (2017) concluded that a multimodal approach in teaching poetry leads to better learner engagement and helps them develop a deeper appreciation for the genre. "Multimodal Composing in Classrooms", by Miller and McVee (2012) supports the idea of story broad as a task and advocates that there is multimodality in it because it involves induction of audio-visual clips, sketches of the images from a movie, together with analyzing the scene in written language. The noticing hypothesis was employed in this study on the presumption that taking initiatives to review one's output in order to make it more comprehensible can happen not merely in speaking but in writing as well (Gass, Mackey, & Ross-Feldman, 2005). This hypothesis, specifically, helped to explain how computer-based multimodal composing activities (CBMCAs) stimulated internal revision and allowed leaners to identify problems with language and organization of their educational papers. Acar, Geluso, & Shiki (2011), who are the architects of *Theories and Practices of Multimodal Education*, declared that the print material is just one form of communication and that with an increase in cyber and online education, there is a need for another method of communication ranging from electronic text to electronic books. Kessler and Bikowski (2010) discussed alphabetic writing and compared its composition to music, art, and other manifestations of creativity. Their study had a cognitive approach that discussed how writers contemplated and formulated their writing activity. Some of the researchers have explicated the position of language in multimodality "as an attempt to side-line language" (Hampel, 2009, p. 2). All semiotic modes have a unique expression, and the collaboration of different modes presents an interpretation of meaning in a given context of interaction (Collentine, 2009). Authors often conceive their work through non-alphabetic means, via music, kinesthetic feelings, and visual imagery. This notion was indicated in the

popular study of (Keating, 2008), three styles of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning helped to elaborate the modes in which students were best able to acquire, discover, and understand the meaning. Abraham (2008), explores the connection between multimodality and critical media literacy. By examining two multimodal groups of English-language learners, the study describes as to how multimodality assists a critical aspect when dealing with media texts, as well as on the manners in which learners organize multiple semiotic reserves to showcase their research of the politics of delineation and the resulting outcomes. The research findings display that learners were able to determine the power relations among characters besides how specific characters are deprecated in the media texts they observed by paying heed to the multiple modes which devise the text's representation. Another conceptual perspective employed in the current investigation is the multi-dimensional revision model, which focuses on revision in a computer-based writing and incorporates ideas from the conventional, recurrent, and cognitive design of revision. The multi-dimensional revision model sees revision in terms of identification and orientation (Van, 2008). Internal revision may involve all the cognitive changes that happen before a writer starts to compose a draft (pre-textual revision). External revision involves noticeable changes during inscription. Revision, in this model, is a both a mental as well as physically noticeable activity. Based on these perceptions, revision, can be interpreted as the continuing mental and physical amendments to a text, amendments that may be error-stimulated or non-error-stimulated. The past research have led to a revival of expressionism which is referred to as an artistic style where the artist strives to portray not detached reality but rather the personal emotions and reactions that objects and events evoke within a person. Expressionism encourages writers to find their voice outside of language by placing it in a visual, oral, spatial, or temporal medium. (Hirvela, 1999). Nevertheless, contrary to sidelining language, multimodality aims to foreground how language and other modes collaborate and sustain one another in communication (Chun & Plass, 1997).

METHODOLOGY:

This detailed case study with implanted data was carried out in an undergraduate English writing classroom at Majmaah University with a class of 30 students in the first semester (16 weeks). The class was dissimilar to the regular English language classes at the university because of its special emphasis on multimodal composition. All tasks in the class involved the amalgamation of written and ocular modes, alongside vocal presentations and listening tasks aimed to promote learners' revision. The class met for 90 minutes, twice a week. Besides the

regular class meeting hours, four special student-teacher meetings were conducted across the 16 weeks.

Data were collected through surveys, learners' revision history (content-level and surface-level), online posters, contemplation, listening tasks, recall interviews, ultimate written drafts, and grades on those drafts. While both qualitative and quantitative data from all students were considered to establish frequency and kind of revision, only the data gathered from 8 important students were utilized for extensive analysis. Three types of software, namely, google Docs, TTS (a free open software Text TO Speech), and CANVA (free open software to create virtual posters) were used for computer-based ambidextrous facets composing activities (CBMCA). Google Docs allows its users to generate, store, and share their documents online. This software can be employed for online communication in real-time or non-synchronously. It can also register a revision history for each document which provides important data for comprehending how learners' drafts evolved while composition. TTS, on the other hand, allows playback of written text as spoken words. This software allows its users to manage the speed of the spoken text, stop the playback, or pause the speech and amend any flaws they discover in the written text. CANVA - an online multimedia site - allows users to generate and share communal posters by incorporating different modes (written text, visuals (still images), audio, and video).

PARTICIPANTS:

Out of the 30 students of undergraduate English writing course who participated in this study, there were 26 Saudis, 3 Kuwaitis, and 1 Syrian national. 20 of the learners had taken the IELTS exam and their scores ranged from 5 to 6, whereas 10 had taken TOEFL IBT and got scores between 65 and 85. Because of their IELTS, TOEFL, and EPT (English placement test) scores, the students were considered advanced-low writers. Students were divided into three cohorts based on how they employed poster activities during the composing process across the semester. Cohort A employed the poster activity for both kinds of revisions i.e. pre-writing revision and point-of-writing revision. Cohort B employed it mostly for point-of-writing revision, whereas Cohort C employed it largely for pre-writing revision. The distribution of the class into cohorts was in accordance with the embedded case study method, where within a single study. Nine chief focal participants, three from each cohort, were chosen for in-depth analysis. These students were given the subsequent anonyms: Nasir, Ali, and Ahmed represented cohort A; Mohammad, Jamal, and Yazeed represented cohort B; and Rayan, Fahad, and Ziyad represented cohort C. These participants were picked because their application of the poster activity was indicative of other students in their corresponding cohorts.

PROCEDURE:

After signing a formal consent, participants accomplished a pre-survey which was analyzed to decide about students' training- a vital step for the accomplishment of any CALL activity. Three learner training sessions- 50 minutes each- were conducted in the language lab. The first training session aimed at introducing the participants to Google Docs; the second training session aimed at helping the learners generate online posters employing CANVA; and the third training session concentrated on training the learners on TTS. Apart from these three training sessions, special training was also provided to the learners on an amalgamation of various forms of texts in academic writing. The learners employed Microsoft Word to train themselves for providing captions for visual texts. They also got themselves familiarized with the convention of establishing that visual texts are apt for their target public, located where the audience can easily find them and are quoted in the written text.

DATA COLLECTION:

Data collection began in the second week when the learners began Assignment 1, where they were required to write a descriptive essay about their best friends and how they impacted their lives. This assignment was accomplished in Google Docs employing only the written mode and was regarded as the baseline data. For assignments 2, 3, and 4, the learner employed Computer-based Multi-model Composing Activities (CBMCAs). In Assignment 2, the participants wrote a 600-word essay discussing a topic of their own choice. In Assignment 3, the learners selected a place on the university campus, examined it, and completed a 650-word essay spotlighting the significance of that place for the community on campus. In Assignment 4, the learners were required to select one issue that influenced the people at the university and write a 650-word persuasive essay on that issue.

The participants were required to stick to six steps in accomplishing CBMCAs as follows:

- *Make your text*
- *Create your poster*
- *Write your reflection*
- *Make your revisions*
- *Listen to your essay using Tts*
- *Integrate your visuals into the final draft*

The participants during the last step were asked to integrate visuals into their written drafts and recorded answers to subsequent queries such as: why did you select this visual text? What message is contained in this visual? What is the additional information provided in this visual which is not available in the written text? How can the message in this visual assist me to elaborate on the ideas presented in the written text? Table (1) below explains the stages employed in CBMCAs.

The learners were guided to contemplate how CBMCAs assisted them to identify issues with their work and start content-level as well as surface-level revisions. The contemplation concentrated on assisting learners to recognize linguistic and stylistic choices they preferred in designing the online-posters as well as how these choices assisted them to identify issues that required focus in their written drafts. The guide (as shown in Appendix A) included 16 questions which were distributed into content, language and style, and structure. The questions included in content sections were meant to assist learners to reflect on their theses, audiences, purposes, details, and messages incorporated in syntactic modes (visual, audio, and video) which were not previously conveyed in the written draft. The learners also deliberated on how the messages and concepts in their posters assisted them develop their written draft. The final 5 questions concentrated on the coordination of ideas and substances in the poster, and how the organization helped arrange ideas in the essay. Catering this sort of guidance for learners during their contemplation was important, as, left unguided, learners who lacked essential cognitive skills could concentrate on too many affairs in their contemplation, which could ultimately make data analysis very hard.

The researcher met up with each learner on four different times for stimulated recall besides guiding them to contemplate their poster activities. Each session lasted roughly 45 minutes. Overall, there were 3,660 minutes (61 hours) of interviews with the students. In the course of stimulated recall, the learners were asked to look at their posters and the texts they wrote directly after creating the poster and were urged to remark on how they arranged or even adapted their ideas regarding the theme as they created the poster. The learners were shown their final multimodal drafts and were requested to comment on decisions they took during incorporating the visuals and how they promoted the revision. Since the investigator was also the teacher of the class, certain measures were taken to guarantee credibility and authenticity of the results. The measures included making learners aware that taking part in the study was voluntary and had no effect on their final grades, requesting other experienced raters to grade learners' work according to a rubric, evaluating inter-rater reliability, encoding data with another coder, and evaluating inter-coder reliability.

Table 1. *Matrix for Computer-based Multi-facet Composing Activities:*

ACTIVITIES	RATIONAL	SIGNIGIC FACETS	TECH-PATH
Step 1: MAKE YOUR TEXT	ESSAY DRAFTING	WRITTEN TEXT	GOOGLE DOC
Step 2: CREATE YOUR POSTER	REVISION OF CONTENT	TEXTING STILL AND MOVING IMAGES	CANVA
Step 3: WRITE YOUR REFLECTION	NEW IDEAS AND FILL IN GAPS	WRITTEN TEXT	GOOGLE DOC
Step 4: MAKE YOUR REVISIONS	IDEAS ADVANCEMENT	WRITTEN TEXT	GOOGLE DOC
Step 5: LISTEN TO YOUR ESSAY USING TTS	ESSAY ORGANIZATIONAL AND DETECT GRAMMATICAL ERRORS	TEXTING & SPEECH	TTS
Step 6: INTEGRATE YOUR VISUALS INTO FINAL DRAFT	PRODUCE MULTIFACETS TEXTING	STILL IMAGES	GOOGLE DOC

Data collection and data analysis occurred concurrently. This allowed learner to check and provide the students the chance to discuss and explain the interpretation and provide new or extra perspectives on how they employed CBMCAs to promote revisions. Data concerning leaners' surveys, written texts, online-posters, audio-recording of listening tasks, contemplation, and stimulated recalls were downloaded and recorded. Five codes from the multi-dimensional model of revision (Yoon., 2016) were adapted. Textual amendments were regarded as the visible behaviors of noticing (Yang, 2012) and were coded as content- or surface-level revisions, substitutions, additions, deletions, and error-stimulated or non-error-stimulated revisions.

Inferences regarding noticing during the listening task were based on visible amendments and the notes the learners made for themselves that were caught in screen recordings. Inferences regarding the impact of CBMCAs upon the revision process were formulated based on a comparison of the averages (*t*-test) of learners' overall revisions in every assignment, and the averages of specific types of revision learners made. The learners' final drafts, which were multimodal texts containing written texts as well as still images, were graded by three ESL instructors utilizing a rubric stemmed from inter-semiotic complementarity. This method of

evaluating multimodal texts concentrated on how the combination of different modes depicts new meanings. It employs the notion of sense relation to evaluate multimodal texts at two different levels suggested by The New London Group (1995).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

The study needed to apprehend the extent to which CBMCAs-prompted revisions might promote ESL writers' capabilities to notice hiccups in their written texts and enhance the standard of their writings. The research findings demonstrate that CBMCAs promoted internal revision and assisted learners find explicit information, linguistic items, and structure that they employed to review their drafts. The activities assisted learners notice issues with aesthetic and linguistic elements of their drafts, develop content and coordination of ideas, and improve language and voice to converse thoughts they were striving to convey employing only the written mode. Furthermore, there was a notable connection between aggregate frequency of revision and the quality of text.

The students found that integrating multiple modes provided them with a chance to use their English and present language in such a way that they felt easier than just articulating themselves via writing. Nasir reported the following during the interview (stimulated recall): "I like that I want to compose with help of poster because only writing makes me lazy because when I try to write I think and check grammar which is difficult." Hundred percent (100%) of the learners mentioned that expressing their ideas in the poster assisted them convey themselves more efficiently and generate concepts for their essays. The exit surveys indicated that 86% of the learners acknowledged that creating posters was useful for their writing, while 14% of learners indicated disagreement. Eighty percent (80%) of students agreed that the poster activity assisted them to notice elements that required revision in their texts whereas 20% said that it did not help their noticing. Furthermore, 80% of learners reported they made considerable changes and corrections based on their use of their posters while 20% indicated they would not consider the poster activity independently. The table 2 below represents learners' perception regarding the poster activity.

Table 2. *Students' Perception of the Poster Activity* **:**

Statement	Responses (N = 30)			
	1	2	3	4
Strongly PERCEPTION		Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Q. I FIND POSTERS WERE HELPFUL FOR ME.	11 (36%)	19 (64%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Q. I MADE CONSIDERABLE CHANGES AND CORRECTIONS BASED ON USING POSTERS & I WILL KEEP USING SUCH POSTERS.	9 (30%)	15 (50%)	6 (20%)	0 (0%)
Q. I FIND POSTERS USEFUL IN CHANGING CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION.	10 (33%)	16 (53%)	3 (10%)	1 (04%)

DEVELOPING LANGUAGE AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:

Inter-semiotic examination of the written drafts of the learners and the poster in cohort A and B indicates that same views were repeated literally or presented in similar ways across the two documents. For example, Ahmed adhered to the organizational framework of the poster in expressing the ideas in the written text. As observed in Table 3, he discussed the struggling economy, aspects that came up form the problem, impact of the calamity on common people and stressed to prompt measures to be taken to solve the problems. Some of the possible reasons for the struggling economy that he mentioned alongside the solutions he presented in his final draft were adopted from the video in his poster.

Reflections provided by three focal learners (see Table 4) reveal that the poster activity assisted them to recognize explicit information, words, phrases, as well as organizational framework that they employed the revise their written draft. The learners in cohorts A and B, who employed the poster activity for point-of-writing revisions, claimed that the activity assisted

them notice gaps and revise. Nevertheless, the learners in cohort C, who employed it just for a pre-writing task, reported the poster activity as less useful.

These questions and statements were extremely helpful in the study to elicit data about how participants perceive posters: What is or are (questions):

1. *The main idea of the poster?*
2. *The idea that is in the poster but not in the draft?*
3. *The one idea in the poster that helps you build up your ideas in the text?*
4. *Your idea behind arranging your poster words?*
5. *The idea in the poster that contradicts your main idea?*
6. *Helpful enough for you in the poster that assisted your written draft?*

Statements:

1. *I find posters helpful to me.*
2. *I made considerable changes and corrections based on using posters.*
3. *I find posters useful in changing content and organization.*

Table 3. *Students' Guided Reflections for the First CBMCA:*

Questions	Ahmad	Riyan	Jamal
The main idea of the poster? Highways in		Holy places	travel as
		In Saudi	leisure
Saudi			
The idea that is in the Highways as		Holy places	travel for
poster but not in the draft? security forces		According to cities	other than leisure
The one idea in the poster that helps highways are		importance of	importance of
you build up your ideas in the text? only for travel	Holy Places	travel	not
Your idea behind arranging according to enrich		according to	as means to
your poster words? culture		Anciency	purpose

| The idea in the poster that highways as contradicts your main idea? high speed driving | Holy Places as Sources of income for the economy | travel as a way to kill time |
| Helpful enough for you in the poster highways as not that assisted your written draft only roads but a future empower | Holy places as a means to strengthen social ties | travel as a channel for learning |

Moreover, Ahmed's comment during the interview shows that creating a poster provided him with an occasion to perform a two-way revision: "Well, the poster and the text are like helping each other. Sometimes good ideas come to my mind while making the poster and I also write them on the paper. Sometimes I try to add something to make my statement better and after I finish writing I also add something to the poster as well. Therefore, it is like two-way revision."

Nasir's views regarding the poster activity were like that of Ahmed and other learners in Cohorts A and B. He claimed that the poster activity assisted him develop his essays more efficiently: "My essay followed the points mentioned in the poster. I discussed each point in separate paragraphs, and the thesis of my article was the main idea of the poster." Jamal also pointed out: "It helped me to organize my main points and it is simpler for me to get help from pictures, videos, and points." Inter-semiotic examination of his last draft and the poster (Table 4) indicated that the two versions had the same theoretical meanings.

Table 4. *Inter-signific analysis of Jamal's Poster and Written Drafts:*

Visual in poster	description	meaning and linguistic representation	intersignifics
highways cities	bridges	High ways in SA are Becoming big and helpful	highways are new and connected
economics urban is civil		Easy connections made Big cities Economy is booming Employment is high Social problems are low	bring more comfort and prosperity more planning needed
more prosper life means more other hard work		Good news for Saudis	more planning is Needed Same idea for Walks of life

During the recall interviews, Jamal also reported that the poster assisted him to overpower writer's block when he employed it as a pre-writing activity:

> **The Researcher:** *Well, the main reason for asking you to do the poster and add visuals to your essay is to assist you to observe some gaps in your writing that require improvement. Do you believe that is occurring?*
>
> **Jamal:** *well sometimes I feel that I don't have anything in my mind to write but when I make poster and I see the pictures and videos then I begin getting some ideas about what I have to write. I can say that visual help a great deal in my writing.*

The learners in cohort C, contrary to the experiences of students in cohorts A and B, did not notice the poster activity assisting them in revisions. Yazeed (one of the learners from cohort C) reported the following: "Honestly, I don't feel that the poster can be helpful for me to create the ideas". He also indicated that his disinterest in the poster activity was due to the fact that he does not prefer learning through visuals and that his issues are with grammar and not with stylistic features:

> **The Researcher:** *Hi Yazeed. Could you please tell me something regarding the poster?*
>
> **Yazeed:** *It's just spoils my time because I like to write an essay by words and not by posters. So I feel I will waste time. Yeah, it's not very useful. It may be because that I am not a visual learner. I face many problems for my grammar therefore I concentrate on grammar only.*

Overall, the participants appeared to have profited from the poster in revising their drafts. Nevertheless, other contingent aspects including participants' learning styles appeared to impact their understanding and utilization of the poster activity for revision.

LISTENING, NOTICING, AND REVISION:

The research findings suggest that the listening activity, like the poster activity, helped learners notice gaps with stylistic and linguistic elements of their academic essays. Learners also pointed out that it assisted them to see their essays form the reader's viewpoint and to "hear", "see", and "feel" what required to be revised. In the exit-survey, all 30 students were asked to express their extent of agreement or disagreement regarding the remark '*Listening to my essay being read aloud assisted me to notice problems in my text that required revision*'. Eighty-five percent (85%) of the learners affirmed that the listening task enhanced their noticing whereas 15% reported that it was not useful for noticing.

Further examination of the screen recordings as well as the recall interviews with the nine focal learners showed that all of them, excluding Yazeed, considered the listening task helpful for noticing. Ahmed, during the interview, showed that the task assisted him to recognize what

"sounded creepy" in his script. "I think it is very helpful. By using this activity, I can check for ideas, structure, and grammar. Therefore, I think it is useful as it can tell me if my essay is creepy or not". Riyan also reported that listening to his essay aloud assisted him to notice issues that required revision: "I listened to my essay using TTS and felt that my essay is not good at some places. At some places main idea is missing, therefore I understood that I need to improve it". The visual story of Riyan's listening activity confirms his remarks (see Table4). Ahmad also pointed out that contrary to the poster activity, he perceived the listening task as useful for revision as well as learning English. Especially, he reported the structure, expression, and sentence organization of his essays as aspects that required revision. His remarks, as noticed in picture narrative in Table7, further demonstrate that listening to his essay aloud assisted him look at his essay from a reader's perspective and understand their needs more efficiently: "readers will not understand what I want to say".

The following remarks summarize Riyan's general views regarding the listening activity at the end of the study period.

> *In my point of view, one of the issue for non-native English users to write essays is to ensure that they look like how the native speakers write so I feel that TTS is very good, it can help to solve the problem as students can listen to the way native speakers read our essay, so it feels that it is written by a native speaker.*

Generally, the listening activity gave a chance to learners to notice some grammatical difficulties and other stylistic and linguistic issues. However, TTS's free version was less useful for noticing grammatical issues, particularly in the case where learners had low proficiency levels in English grammar. There were numerous grammar mistakes in learners' essays that they did not notice.

This result reflects Garrison's (2009) statement that training learners to listen to their written work might have a positive effect on revision. Most of the students found the listening activity helpful for noticing errors. In addition to that, they also regarded the activity as one of the most constructive manners of knowing how a written work might sound from the perspective of a reader. Furthermore, learners described finding the listening activity less demanding and more enjoyable than reading the texts by themselves. Learners reported that they accomplished this activity when they felt exhausted or disinterested in writing. Overall, the results established those of prior research that incorporating listening task into the writing has the potential to enhance learners' desire to write (DiEdwardo, 2005; Wijaya, 2006; Garrison, 2009).

INTEGRATION OF VISUALS IN WRITTEN TEXT AND NOTICING:

The examination of the exit survey and recall interviews gave intuition for reaching conclusions regarding learners' views on linking written text with visual text besides how that promoted noticing and revision. All thirty learners reported that integrating visuals into their written work made them evaluate their subject matter and structure. Moreover, 94% stated they would carry on with exploring how the combination of written and visual texts can help them commune with their readers. Although Riyan had earlier stated that he was not predominantly a visual learner, he reported in the final interview that he considered the integration of visuals into his written texts as his favorite activity. He also reported that visuals assisted him in discovering language and sound that was missing while he composed his drafts employing only the written text:

> *I believe that if readers cannot understand what I want to convey in my written text, I try to search some visuals for readers. Some points are difficult to explain in writing and therefore I need to use pictures into the text. Therefore I selected those pictures. When I read the text I can't understand it, so I use pictures.*

Riyan's reflection establishes the previous observation that incorporating visual images can assist learners infer meanings at many levels (Salbego et al., 2015). One potential basis for the obvious contradiction in Riyan's viewpoint regarding the visual activity could be the extent of work that the visual activities involved. Making a poster required more time and creativity as compared to finding visuals to add into the formerly composed texts.

Overall, learners' interviews uphold findings in earlier research that second language writers consider it hard to express their emotions adequately employing the target language as "different languages have distinct emotion vocabularies and ways of expressing emotions" (Pavlenko & Driagina, 2007, p. 91). Learners remarks that CBMCAs assist them listen, feel and observe their written texts from a reader's perspective indicate the efficacy of the combination of different modes to assist learners to enhance linguistic and stylistic competence in the second language. This is in consonance with previous research studies that employing different modes might promote the advancement of second language learner's proficiency (Leki et al., 2008; Lemke, 2009).

Learners' survey responses and interviews also point to the advantage in impending second language writing as design procedure (Kern, 2000; Hyland, 2009). Some learners reported that, in some assignments, they created posters before they started their written drafts. They achieved some understanding of second language writing as an "ensemble" where a writer does

not ~~for~~ always have to begin with a written version. Rather, learners can start their composition in any way and later integrate other modes during the process to create a written work as an informative event. This kind of approach for second language writing challenges our conventional view on what learner's initial draft should be like. It recommends a review of what teachers need as first drafts. For example, learners can record their ideas and submit an audio text as their initial draft instead of preparing written draft.

CBMCA, REVISION, AND TEXT QUALITY:

Assignment 1 was utilized as baseline data therefore learners did not utilize any CBMCAs. They employed CBMCAs in other two assignments. The second assignment (Assignment 2) was the first one considered for data analysis as it comprised of a step after training for learners to get accustomed to CBMCAs. Overall, the results demonstrate that learners performed more revisions when they employed CBMCAs. Statistics of the means and standard deviations regarding learners' total revisions are as follows: Assignment no.1 $M = 183.4, SD = 131.4$; Assignment no. 3 $M = 407.1, SD = 107.9$; and Assignment no. 2 $M = 335, SD = 117.8$. The findings of a paired t-$test$ examination revealed a notable dissimilarity in the overall revisions that learners made across Assignment no.1 and Assignment no. 3 ($t = -3.744, p < .002$) as well as across Assignment no.1 and Assignment no. 3 ($t = -4.539, p < .001$). To calculate the extent of the differences across the several revision accounts, the effect size was computed employing correlation coefficient(r). Correlation between Assignment no 1 and Assignment no.2 was –0.71 whereas that among Assignment no. 1 and Assignment no. 3 was -0.89. The illustrative data of the revision account (see Table 5) reveals that, in contrast to what has been described in earlier researches (Silva, 1993; Suzuki, 2008), learners in this investigation made additional content-level revisions as compared to text-level revisions.

Table 5. *statistics of participants' revision type*

Revision Type

	Text-level		Content-level		Error Revision		Non-error-Revision		
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	N
Assignment 1	32.5	32.7	66.2	34.1	11.8	19.7	72.9	44.9	15

| Assignment 2 | 35.5 | 17.6 | 125 | 41.2 | 13.5 | 17.2 | 161 | 41.8 | 15 |
| Assignment 3 | 44.2 | 17.1 | 168 | 35.2 | 7.9 | 8.8 | 187 | 46.8 | 15 |

The incongruity between the current results and those of earlier investigations could be ascribed to dissimilarities in the manner revision was examined in this investigation and how earlier investigations analyzed revision. Contrary to earlier research studies (Gaskill, 1987; Garrison, 2009), this investigation recognized revision not only as the improvement across drafts but also as the evidence of every modification that the essay underwent an evolution record from the start of the initial draft to the stage of submission for final grading. Also, some investigations that have examined the history of learners' revision, like Hall (1990) and Chambers (2011) have concentrated on timed essays (normally 90 minutes). Essays in the current study, unlike in the previous studies, were take-home tasks where learners had four weeks to accomplish one essay. This might have assisted them to concentrate more on content-level revisions.

Besides learners making additional content-level revisions, the results demonstrate two different findings concerning the total number of revisions and quality of text.The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (PPMCC) for learners' revision and grades in Assignment no. 3 ($r = 0.183$) revealed no notable correlation among total number of revisions and quality of text. However, a significant correlation ($r = 0.014$) was observed in Assignment no. 3. Interviews conducted at the end of Assignment 3 revealed that most of the learners employed the poster for pre-writing tasks to develop ideas for the task they had to write about. Majority of them reported that they reviewed their ideas while assembling the poster, so they did not need to revise much when they started writing. This factor could have affected the number of revisions they made at the point-of-writing. This agrees with earlier inconsistent findings on the connection between a number of revisions and overall quality of text in second language revision (Yagelski; 1995; Reynolds & Bonk, 1996; Stevenson et al., 2006) and verifies Sengupta's (2000) statement that the relationship among revision and quality of text is problematic.

LIMITATIONS:

Despite significant findings, the current study has some flaws too. One, it did not record textual modifications-excluding inclusion of images- that learners made at the last stage when they employed Microsoft Word to organize their essays. Learners employed Microsoft Word for the

eventual revision as it was hard for them to employ Google Docs to organize images for effective unification. Two, the researcher was unable to control all the possible elements that might affect noticing. For instance, teacher's responses to learner's queries regarding their essays amid in-class tasks could have promoted their noticing of issues in their writing. Three, learners' remarks indicate that pre-writing revisions may have influenced point-of-writing revisions as well as the quality of text. However, the investigation did not examine the effect of pre-writing revisions over all the rest of the process of writing. Also, the software employed to integrate the listing task into the process of writing did not include grammar-check or spell-check features. This factor made grammar revision challenging for learners in this study. Employing software that permits grammar check may be more useful for low-level learners to observe grammar issues unless there is the requirement to contain the factors (as in the current investigation) that may affect learners' noticing.

CONCLUSION:

This study was conceived to analyze how CBMCAs might promote noticing and self-revision of second language writers as they created academic essays and learned language via writing. The results provide factual evidence regarding how CBMCAs might assist second-language writers notice stylistic and linguistic issues in their writing besides revision for productive communication. Unification of different modes assisted learners in making more revisions concerning content-level and concentrate on their language improvement as they composed academic essays. The employment of CBMCAs also revealed a positive impact on overall standard of text that learners created. Additionally, the employment of an integrated process, that includes noticing, multimodality, and the multi-dimensional revision model, presents support for the discipline of second-language research concerning how these three theses might contribute in helping resolve the issues second-language writers face with self-revision. The current study also adds to these theses by demonstrating how the noticing hypothesis could be employed not merely to spoken version of the language and syntactic facets of language but to the meta-linguistic aspects of language and macro-level features of writing like arrangement of ideas as well. Other theoretical and pedagogical implications of the research findings are analyzed below.

Results of this investigation underline the adequacy of non-linguistic modes to promote learners' ability to express implied meanings beyond written contents and to give access to details that might not be simply accessible via written material (MacKee, 2006). Employing multimodal composition in second-language classroom might assist learners to gain an

understanding of the target language while they compose academic essays. However, employing other modes to augment the written mode while conveying meaning necessitates careful and sensible integration. Computer-Based Multimodal Composing Activities (CBMCAs) are useful when they are incorporated into a course that employs a multimodal aspect to composition instead of when they are included on to conventional writing course. Such a course requires learners' focus to writing as a conversational event, embodies goals for different modes, demands learners to create multimodal texts, and stresses on stylistic and linguistic elements of academic writing. Designing a multimodal course for second-language writing demands a pedagogical switch from a prevailing emphasis on learning-to-write to writing to learn (Harklau, 2002; Manchón, 2011; Hanaoka & Izumi, 2012).

A future inquiry could explore how pre-writing revisions may affect point-of-writing revisions and the quality of text. Additionally, an investigation which concentrates on the questions that the teacher encounters in incorporating CBMCAs as procedural aid might add useful knowledge to the pedagogical suggestions of employing CBMCAs in second-language writing. Moreover, as the current investigation concentrated only on how advanced-low level ESL writers employed CBMCAs, further investigation on how these activities might promote noticing and revision in lower- and upper-intermediate-level ESL writers might produce results that will supplement those recorded here. This will assist second-language investigators strengthen our comprehension of how students with different competence levels profit from CBMCAs for revision when they write to learn a second language. Lastly, even though 16 weeks (one semester) duration is adequate time to cultivate some perception of how CBMCAs promote learners' communication, noticing, and self-revision via writing, investigation on the capabilities of CBMCAs for an extended period might produce results that will complement to what is reported in the current investigation.

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Social Network Communication: Emojis and EFL learners' Writing Issues

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Abstract

This study aims to find out the impacts of using emojis by EFL learners on their writing skills and highlight the learners' attitudes towards this new communication phenomenon. It discusses the different uses of emojis in social media apps, investigates the reasons for the rise of using emojis in everyday social interaction, and to which extent the occurrence of this pictographic script can substitute the written language. A qualitative and quantitative analysis has been applied in this investigation where a survey-based questionnaire was distributed among 143 EFL learners in Taibah University in Saudi Arabia. Descriptive statistics and ANOVA (analysis of variables) are used to analyze the obtained data. The results show that the p-value of the study variables is equal to one which is much bigger than alpha and there is no big difference between the variables' estimation in the participants' responses, i.e. the emojis' use

in texting affects the use of the language. Moreover, the findings display that the use of emojis and short forms (contractions and acronyms) in text messages form a real threat to the standard and non-standard languages. The outcomes of this study make it clear this new sort of communication may replace mainly languages where social media users found that emojis best represent their feelings and thoughts. This research concluded that the use of emojis has an important role in interpersonal communications, however, standard writing skills would be negatively affected using these newly emerged communication tools. The consequences of these impacts are aptly evidenced in the form of spelling, structural errors, and weakness of expressions in EFL learners' language learning.

Keywords: *EFL Learners, Emojis, Social Media Communication, Writing Issues*

Introduction

Communication is essential to overall social media users, as it is the fastest medium for interaction in media and social networks around the globe. Technology-mediated communication (TMC) is the process that is generated between communication and technological tools evolved and increasingly used through different times (López Get, 2011; Martínez-Lirola, 2012; Burholt & Windle, 2020). Modernization and globalization played a significant role in language alteration and communication growth. The rapid innovation in the technology and social mediatization evolution played the most important role in the appearance of a new sort of communication tools. As a result, emojis came into being and like emoticons, GIFs and other 'graphicons' (graphical icons, Herring & Dainas, 2017) are an asset to clarify the meaning of texts (Thompson & Filik, 2016) or to enhance meaning to it (Derks et al., 2007).

Emojis, also known as ideograms or smileys first introduced as "*picture" (e)* + "*characters" (emoji)* in Japanese mobile phones electronic messages, and Web pages around the turn of the 21stcentury (Lu, 2016). They are added to Unicode 6.0 in 2010, and swept to all languages, nations, and cultures, and changed the social and linguistic landscapes.

Interestingly, they are the only communication medium which can be understood by all users from different languages with different social and cultural background and could enable people to connect and engage more concisely with one another demographic groups (Danesi, 2016). Moreover, emoji as any communicative device does not always display what is going on inside but often reflects the cultural aspect of the users. They instantly send and deliver the users' emotions and say more than words, thus messages need not be typed long. The emoji "Face with Tears of Joy 😂 " was even nominated as the "Oxford Dictionaries word of 2015"

because it best represents the feelings, the ethos, and the concerns of the world in that year (Lu, 2016). As emojis are widely spread in the social field, all these novel forms of communication have their existence in the educational world and, especially, in higher education (Veytia-Bucheli, 2020). As digital communication help learners of English to improve their language skills, conversely, the new sort of social media communication has a negative impact on improving the standard language writing and second language learning because of employing slang language and emojis in social communication among learners. The interest in this study is on highlighting the potential reasons behind the appearance and the usage of emojis by EFL learners in their writings and their effect on language (spelling and writing).

In this spirit, Symbolic Interactionism Theory (SIT) named by Herbert Blumer in 1969 states the theoretical framework of this research study. SIT proposed that symbols meanings are derived from social interaction and it attempted to explain how people attach various meanings to words and symbols to represent their ideas, views, and emotions. On a methodological plane, the authors applied a survey-based questionnaire to collect the data and used ANOVA and descriptive statistics to analyze the obtained data.

The current study attempts to grasp the uses and functions of emojis in social networks among EFL learners, and the consequent effect of the novel communication tool emergence on standard language writing. İt is noted that using different new sources of communications (emojis, emoticons, stickers, slang languages, etc.) by EFL learners negatively affect second language writing skill because the learners moved towards these communication sources and did not follow standard language writing rules and strategies. The rest of the paper is organized as the following, Section 2 provides research questions, section 3 throws light on the existing work and approaches as the Literature Review. Section 3 describes the Proposed Methodology including the research population and sample and data collection instruments, Section 4 deals with the results, depicting the results visualization, section 5 provides the discussion of the study, and finally, it is summed up the study with future scope and recommendation.

Related Work

Presence of Emojis in Tertiary Education Communication

This work has focused on the use of emojis in the communication context among university students, including the use of emojis instead of language (Parts of speech) and the expressing feelings more than the language in Social networks. Many pieces of research predating this work. Over recent years, emojis have grown to be a hot topic for study, with the volume of papers increasing gradually from 2015 and peaking at 2017-2019 (Bai et al., 2019). Most

research utilized empirical studies and concentrating on the different characteristics, attributes, and functions of emojis in communication; the use of emojis in the context of platforms diversity, cultures, and individuals; and the application of emojis in research. There are many contributions with diverse research approaches related to university students' use of emojis in spelling and text messaging (Gómez Camacho, & Gómez del Castillo, 2015) and the general use of WhatsApp by higher education students (Mahyoob, 2020 & Gómez del Castillo, 2017). Other research in this area, Dunlap et al. (2016) focused on introducing emoticons as learning tools to improve online teaching and learning among members in a community of practice.

Veytia-Bucheli et al. (2020) identified the frequency of emojis use through WhatsApp amongst Mexican graduate students and highlighted the advantages and disadvantages of their use. Their investigation confirmed the augmented use of emojis in conversations among fellow students. Giraldo et al. (2018) examined grammar and writing with the use of technological tools. Cantamutto and Vela (2019) investigated and analyzed WhatsApp interactions integrating emojis amongst students from Argentina and Spain. Prieto-Terrones and Sanz-Martin (2019) explored the acceptance of writing through WhatsApp, where it is known and accepted by users. They stressed the simplicity it has for rapid communication.

Rodríguez-Morales and Rodríguez-Salazar (2016) studied the young people's communicative practices and the handling of written language using symbols, emojis, and emoticons when using mobile technologies and their different applications. Algharabali and Taqi (2018) conducted data qualitative and quantitative analysis to examine the reasons and methods of the use of emojis among college students in academic-related settings. They highlight the significant role of emojis in the discussion of college-related topics and how they can introduce a safe environment for students to vent their views and criticisms in an authority-free setting. investigated the use of emojis in business and education, and examines how a sound instructional design approach to the development of emojis could support learning through shared visual elements in contemporary social/educational media environments.

Presence of Emojis in Social Media Communication

Cramer et al. (2016) explored the motivation for the use of emojis, their intended meaning, and functions in mobile messaging in the United States. They discussed the social and linguistic functions of emojis and denoting their complexity. According to their findings utilizing emojis can add extra emotional or social meaning to communication and boost the attractiveness of the message. Gibson (2018) proposed and highlighted the superiority of conversational analysis

(CA) over semiotic approaches. They utilized conversational analysis (CA) instead of semiotic approaches to explore the communicative function of the 'face-covering hand' emoji and its relation to the other textual actions in face-to-face communication that affect text talk production. According to study analysis, this emoji functioned as a laughter token. There are some limitations of adopting CA in their work, the inadequate and unrealistic communicative context as they concentrating on only one emoji neglecting other emojis and their senses. Moreover, they ignore the cultural nuances between English and Chinses in their data translations and thus intermix between two different cultural assumptions and sequence properties. Cultural differences play a significant role in the use and interpretation of emojis; and some particular uses of emojis are related to the cultural background (Park et al., 2014). Finnish, Indian, and Pakistani users utilize some emojis concerning their cultural context (Sadiq et al., 2019). Pavalanathan and Eisenstein (2015) studied how emojis compete with emoticons to communicate paralinguistic content. They hypothesized that individuals who adopt emojis tend to use fewer emoticons. In their work, they utilized the causal inference approach to test their hypothesis and to know whether the use of emoticons in Twitter texts can be replaced with emojis as predefined pictographic characters. According to their results, those who adopt emojis in their texts tend to reduce their usage of emoticons rather than those who do not adopt them. Al Rashdi (2018) studied the potential forms and functions of 121 emojis as used by Omani men and women in messages exchanged on WhatsApp. The study showed that adopting emojis serve many communicative functions rather than users' emotions and females tend to use emojis more than males. Women showed an obvious tendency to use emojis with stronger emotional meanings, while men tend to use emojis with weaker emotional meanings but friendlier (Derks et al., 2008a). Herring and Dainas (2018) examined the genders (352 females, 121 males, 50 "others") differences in interpreting emojis pragmatic functions in their local discourse contexts based on the taxonomy of functions proposed by Herring and Dainas (2017). According to their study, gender did not affect appreciably the emojis' function interpretation in Facebook platform messages, and transfer from one platform to another is not necessary. Riordan (2017b) examined whether emojis of objects are also like emojis of faces to convey effect. The study stated that emojis of objects communicate positive affect, especially joy. Draw on the implication of this work, using emojis and stickers helps maintain and enhance social relations. Zhou et al. (2017) explored the proliferation of adoption and appropriation of both emojis and stickers used in mobile communication (WeChat) in Southern China. In this qualitative study and based on the cultural context, they interviewed and observed 30 participants investigate emojis use by rural and urban Chinese. Drawing on findings, emojis

and stickers add desirable meaning to communication. Different social network platforms users tend to utilize emojis more commonly and positively on the Twitter platform than on Facebook (Hall & Pennington, 2013).

Research Methodology

Research Population and Sample

Students from the department of English and Translation in the Faculty of Science and Arts–Alula, Madinah, Taibah University were utilized to identify and display the impact of using emojis on language in different social media applications. In this study, a convenience sample of 144 respondents has been obtained: 60 male and 83 female students both aged between 18 and 29 (mean= 23.8).

Data Collection Instruments

In this study, the authors utilized a survey-based questionnaire to explore the purpose of using emojis and their impact on language spelling and writing by EFL learners. The questionnaire contains two sections. Section one obtained demographic information about the students. Section two elicited information regarding the use of emojis in social media communication. The items in this questionnaire composed of different types of questions, the first question was about the frequency of which social media applications students use in their communication. The second question was about the preferred language used in communication either mother tongue or English language; and standard or dialect. The third question investigated the spelling and writing style (emojis or language, full form of the words, or short forms and abbreviations). The fourth question was about the frequency of which social media applications students use emojis more in their communication. The fifth question was about the purpose and the context of using emojis in communication measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly agree to 5 strongly disagree. The final question was about the parts of speech that could be substituted by emojis among the students.

Results

The main purpose of this paper is to investigate the use and functions of emojis by EFL learners in social media and their impact on English language writing skills. This section represents the descriptive statistics of the core findings of this study derived from the methods utilized to collect and analyze the obtained data.

Emojis, Mother Tongue, and English Language use

The first research question of this study was about the learners' preferable medium of texting in social media communication. In the first part of this question, the options given to the participants were about using Arabic standard language, Arabic dialect, and English language in social communication texting. As displayed in table one below, 53% of male participants prefer to use their mother tongue in chatting and texting, while 3 % prefer to use English. And, 47% of male participants prefer to use both their mother tongue and English language in texting. In contrast, 38% of female participants tend to utilize their mother tongue, 6% prefer to use English, and 56% showed preference to use both their mother tongue and English in their social interaction. Table one below displays the first question responses by both male and female participants.

Table 1.

The preferable medium of texting in social media communication.

Item No.	Males N= 60 %		Females N=83 No. %	
Language choices				
Mother tongue	36	53%	31	38%
English	3	3 %	5	6%
Both	21	47%	47	56%
Total	60	100%	83	100%
Types of Texting				
Language	13	22%	12	14%
Emojis	2	2%	11	13%
Both	45	76%	60	72%
Total	60	100%	83	100%
Typos				
Yes	13	22%	11	27%
No	14	24%	12	18%
Sometimes	23	54%	60	55%
Total	60	100%	83	100%

The second part of this question was about using language and emojis in social media. As noted in table one above, in male responses, 22% use language (mother tongue, dialect, and English) in their chatting, 2% of them tend to use emojis rather than language, and 76.3% utilize both language and emojis during their interaction in virtual communication. Similarly, in the case of female participants, 14% use language in texting, 13% use emojis, and 72% make use of both language and emojis when communicating in social media networks.

The third part of this question was about participants' typos handling. Table one above depicts the participants' responses, 22% of male participants are not caring about spotting

spelling mistakes, while 24% of them are paying attention to write correctly. Simultaneously, 54% of male participants are sometimes avoid spelling mistakes in their messaging. İn comparison, 27% of female participants use language in their communication without caring about their spelling or spotting writing mistakes, while, 18% use language correctly, and 55% sometimes avoid typos.

Commonly used emojis, contractions, and acronyms in social texting

Most frequent used Emojis

The second research question was about the most frequently used emojis, contractions, and acronyms. Figure one displays the top used emojis by the participants in their interaction on various social media platforms. İt is noted that "Face with Tears of Joy 😂 " was the most used emoji by both males and females learners, while, the emoji of the " red heart ❤️ " is used more by females rather than male learners. For the other four emojis (😍, 😟, 😭 , 👍), it is shown that females tend to employ them more in their instant messaging.
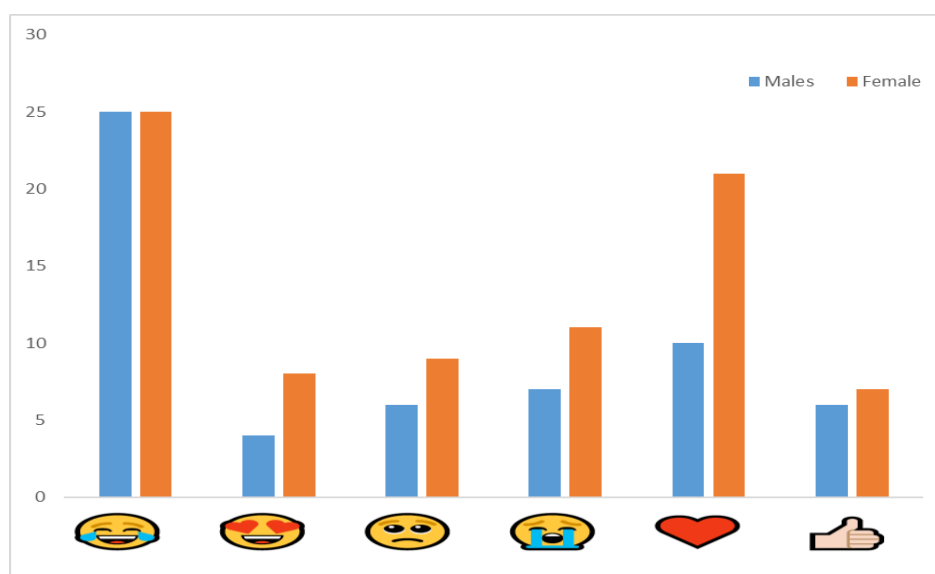
FIGURE 1. *The most used emojis among male and female participants*

Commonly used contractions and acronyms

Table two below displays the common abbreviations and acronyms used by learners' in their social texting. In some cases, learners replace common words, phrases, and sentences with contractions or groups of letters (acronyms) and numbers in their instant messaging because these forms help them compress their texting. İn deed, learners formed their meanings by using

these short forms because they are more accustomed to using texting and chatting in various digital apps.

Table 2.

Common short forms used by learners in social texting

Short-form	Full form	Shot Form	Full-Form
U, u	You	Ngl	not gonna lie
Thx	Thanks	2morro	tomorrow
Ty	thank you	Idk	I don't know
r u comin	Are you coming	NP	no problem
GM	Good Morning	LOL	laughing out loud
rlly	really	PLS	Please
ASAP	As soon as possible	AFAIK	As far as I know
BTW	By the way	BRB	Br right back
M2	Me too	bc	Because
TBH	To be honest	ppl	People
hay	How are you	4	for

Male and Female Frequent Used Social Media Platforms

The third research question is about the percentage of the social media platforms use. According to the participants' responses, 92 % of the male participant always use WhatsApp, the second used social media application is Snap-chat with 69% percentage, the third one is Instagram with 68% percentage, and the final used platform is Twitter with a score of 54%. Most of the male Participants don't use the Facebook platform, the score of Facebook use is 5% and 39% of the participants never use Facebook Apps. Figure two below shows the scores of the male students use in different social communication networks.
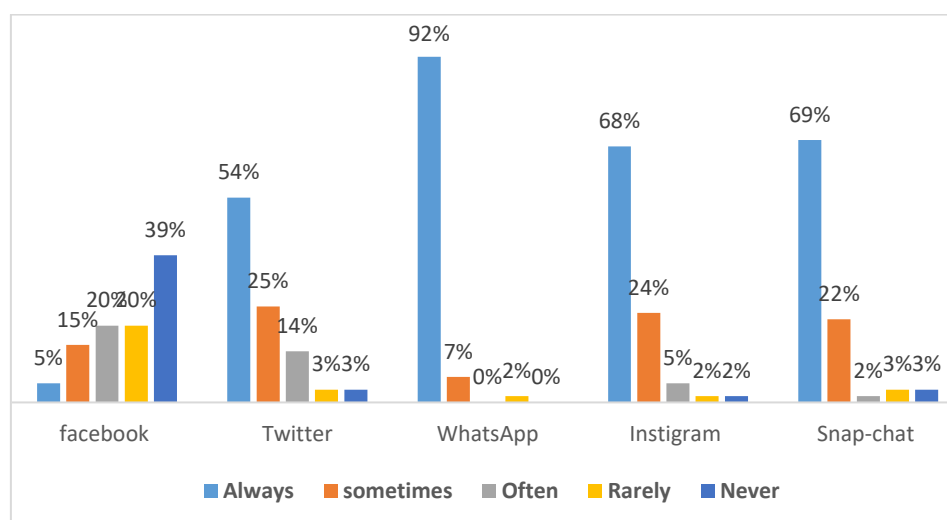
Fıgure 2. The Percentage of using different social networks by male participants.

The score of the female participants' use of social media networks is displayed in figure three below. It is noticed that Snap-chat scores 78% as the highest platform for female participants who always use it, the second platform is WhatsApp with a score of 77%, next is Instagram with a ratio of 70% and the final used App is Twitter with the percentage of 52%. The percentage of female students who never use the Facebook app is 55%. Figure two below displays the percentage of social media platform use.
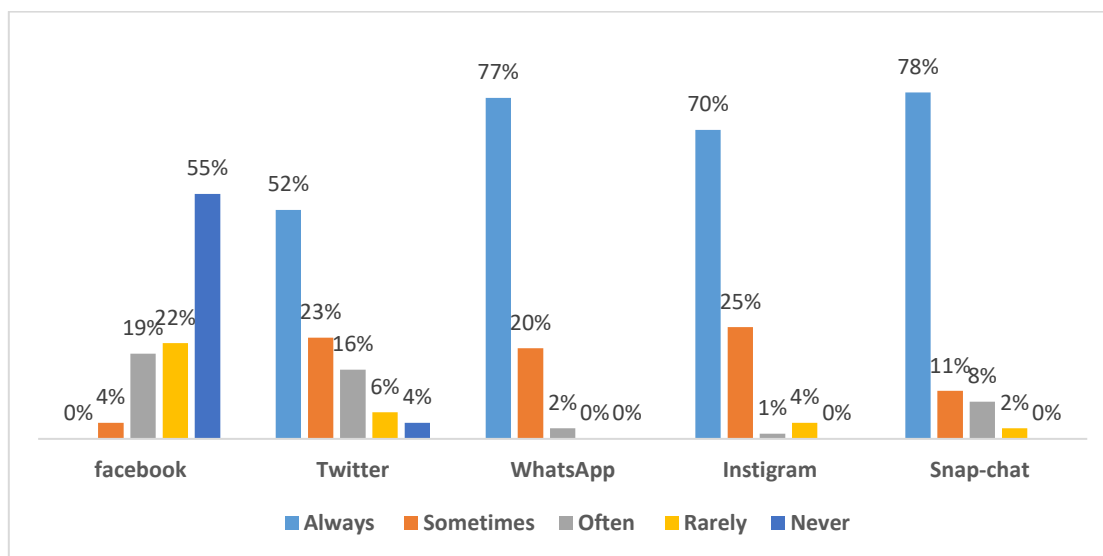
FIGURE 3.*The Percentage of using different social networks by female participants.*

Using Emojis in Social media Platforms

The fourth research question is about which social network applications do the male and female participants use emojis more for communication. Figure four shows the scores of using emojis in the social network. Both male and female participants use emojis more on the WhatsApp platform with a score of 81% in female cases and 71% in male cases. And the least use of emojis in social media scores in Facebook with the percentage of 9% in males' use and 6% in females.
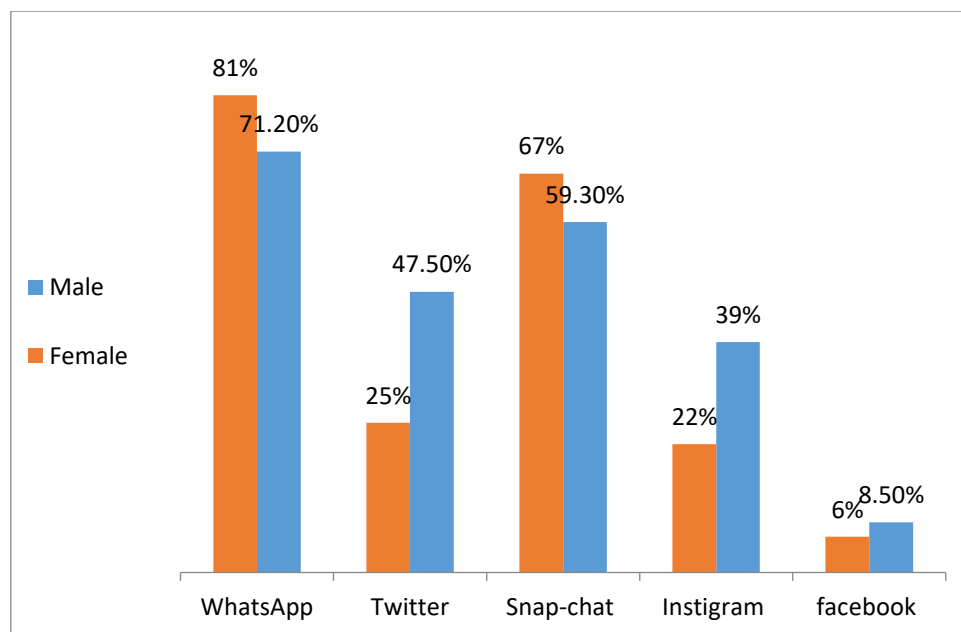
Figure 4.*The Percentage of Using Emojis in a social network by male and female participants.*

Reasons for Using Emojis in Social Media

The fifth research question is about the reasons for using emojis on social media platforms. Both EFL male and female learners prefer to use emojis instead of writing for several reasons that are related to social, contextual, emotional, and specific purposes. Table three displays the means' and the variances' value in male participants' responses. It is noted that there is no significant difference between these variables and the means value are the same. There is no big difference in the variance score.

Table 3.
Summary of the reasons behind using emojis by male participants.

SUMMARY		Males	N=60
Items	*Count*	*Mean*	*Variance*
Using emojis in some social context is preferable	5	0.2	0.026487
Emojis can touch our feeling more than language	5	0.2	0.013847
Using emojis instead of language in communication is effective	5	0.2	0.012267
Understanding Emojis is easier during communication	5	0.2	0.023758
Using emojis for specific purposes in communication	5	0.2	0.068141

Table four below shows the analysis of variables. The p-value of the variables is equal
to one which means there is no big difference between the variables' estimation. It is
much bigger than alpha. The sum of the squares between the variables is 3.33 and the
sum of the errors of the square within the variables is 0.659. The degree of freedom
between the variable is 5 and the degree of freedom within the variables is 24. The
mean square of the variables is 6.66 and the means of the error is 0.027. The F statistics
score is 2.43.

Table 4.
Analysis of Variables for the reasons of using emojis in texting by male learners.

		Males			N=60	
Source of Variation	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*P-value*	*F crit*
Between Groups	3.33	5	6.66	2.43	1	2.620654
Within Groups	0.659236	24	0.027468			
Total	0.659236	29				

For female participants, the mean value is the same in all the variables of the reasons
for using emojis in social media communication. For variances value, it is shown that
the variable of emotion and effectiveness of emojis in communication scored the least
value where the female participants support the use of emojis for emotional feelings
and their effective use in communications as shown in table five below.

Table 5.
Summary of the reasons behind using emojis by female participants.

SUMMARY		Females	N=83
Items	*Count*	*Mean*	*Variance*
Using emojis in some social context is preferable	5	0.2	0.042067
Emojis can touch our feeling more than language	5	0.2	0.018914
Using emojis instead of language in communication is effective	5	0.2	0.015793
Understanding Emojis is easier during communication	5	0.2	0.036769
Using emojis for specific purposes in communication	5	0.2	0.047583

The sum of the squares between the variables is 2.22 and the sum of the errors of the
square within the variables is 0.887. The degree of freedom between the variables is

5 and the degree of freedom within the variables is 24. The mean square of the variables is 3.17 and the means of the error is 0.027. The F statistics score is 1.14. the P-value is equal to one which is more than alpha .05, so, female learners are using emojis in all the above situations and they are supporting that. Table six below displays the analysis of these variables.

Table 6.
Analysis of Variables for the reasons of using emojis in texting by female learners.

			Females	N=83		
Source of Variation	*SS*	*df*	*MS*	*F*	*P-value*	*F crit*
Between Groups	2.22	5	3.17	1.14	1	2.312741
Within Groups	0.887734	24	0.027742			
Total	0.887734	29				

Both groups do not like to use language at these levels of communication and they prefer emojis.   Emojis are more expressive than the written language with a high score in both learners' responses. All participants are supporting the touchable function of emojis where the language cannot function in the same way.

Emojis effects on Language Constructs (Parts of Speech)

The final question is about the effects of emojis on different language categories during social interaction. Learners are using emojis instead of lexical categories such as verbs, adjectives, and nouns. Figure five below depicts the score of the word-class substitution; the highest substituted utterances are verbs that have been substituted with emojis by EFL learners with the percentage of 75% in male participants and 53% in female participants. Using emojis instead of Adjectives scores 51% in males and 56% in females and the least substituted parts of speech are nouns with a score of 23.70% in male learners and 13% in female learners.
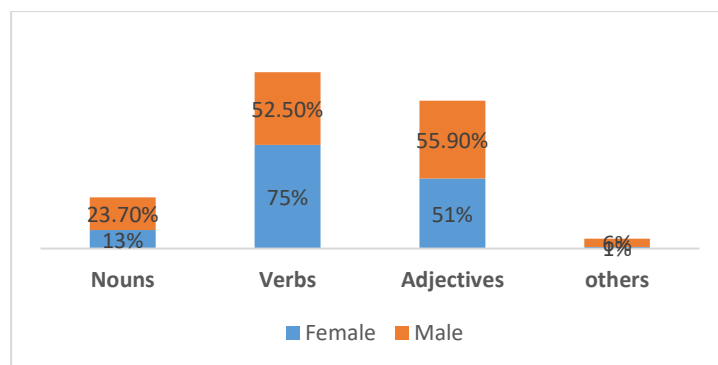
Figure 5. *Using emojis instead of the Parts of speech*

Discussion

This study aims to explore the impact of using emojis in social media communication on EFL learners writing skills. The study investigates the percentage of using the English language and Arabic in social media texting and chatting. The results displayed that male participants use their mother tongue more than female participants in social communication. For using English during interacting, both participants use English with a very low score. For using emojis female participants use emojis more than male participant during social texting, this study is consistent with Al Rashdi (2018) and Derks et al. (2008a) who stated that females tend to use emojis more than males and in contrast to the study of Herring and Dainas (2017) that declared gender did not affect appreciably the emojis' function interpretation in Facebook platform messages. In the case of spelling and typos, female participants pay more attention to spelling errors than male participants. The results show that the dominant social platforms used by both participants are WhatsApp, Snap-chat, Instagram, and Twitter, in contrast, Facebook is rarely used by both participants. It is noticed that both participants use emojis on most social media platforms; female participants use emojis more than male in WhatsApp and Snap-chat, whereas male participants use emojis more than female in Twitter and Instagram. For the reasons of using emojis in social media, the results reveal that emojis have rich semantics because the participants use emojis more to facilitate the communication as they convey, express views, ideas, and emotions more vividly. This view coincides with that of Lu et al. (2016) who stressed the rich semantic and cultural aspects of emojis in social media.

The p-value of these variables is equal to one which means there is no big difference between the variables' estimation. It is much bigger than alpha in the result of both male and female participants. It seems reasonable to assume that the emojis' use in social media affects the use of the language. There is a tendency among learners to use emojis instead of language. The result of the function of emojis in social media indicates that emojis can express meaning

and feelings quickly and in better understanding as Prieto-Terrones and Sanz-Martin (2019) stressed the simplicity emojis have for rapid communication. For the linguistics forms, Learners and social network users tend to connect between the linguistic forms and their meanings naturally so that they move to use emojis more than the language in social communication. The verbs, adjectives, and nouns are more violated in social media texting and learners are moving towards more symbolic and pictographic use in social communication networks.

Conclusion

This study is set out to critically examine the ways and contexts in which EFL learners are using emojis in social media communications. The study explored the impact of emojis on language constructs and writing. The observed difference between the two groups of males and females learners is not very significant and both groups are using emojis and dialects without awareness of the importance of improving their English language writing skills through texting and chatting on social media platforms. Learners preferred to use emojis, contractions, and acronyms in their social interaction because they feel that using these mediums in their social chatting can compress and convey the message better and faster than written language. The most striking results to emerge from the data is that the standard and the second language writing are in danger because of emojis and short forms (contractions and acronyms). Likewise, there is no real attention to the threat and challenges that confront standard languages because of employing the new sorts of social communications (emojis, emoticons, slang languages, etc.) in social media texting and chatting. This work has opened up several questions that need further investigation in the impacts of these new sorts of communication on all language skills and how to orient the use of social media to improve language skills.

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EFL Learners' Motivation and Achievement: A Study in the Use of Technology-enabled EIP at Madrasah Tsanawiyah

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Abstract

This study aimed to determine the correlation between interactive multimedia for English for Islamic Purposes (EIP) in Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTsN) Padang Bolak and students' willingness to learn; and their impact on improving learner motivation and learning achievement. A quantitative approach was used with regression analysis of data to determine the effect of using learning technology (variable X1) and a willingness to learn (variable X2) on learning achievement (variable Y). This study involved 33 students who answered the questionnaire. The results showed that there was a significant influence of the use of technology enabled EIP on learning achievement as well as the students' willingness to learn. In other words, this study concluded that the application of learning technology at MTsN Padang Bolak on students' willingness to learn and student achievement was positive for various reasons, but mainly because students in these times are greatly rooted in technology and their motivation to learn is positively impacted by its integration in the learning process. The implementation of this study is expected to make a new contribution to education at MTsN Padang Bolak.

Keywords: *EIP, Learning achievement, Learning technology, Willingness to learn, Motivation*

Introduction

With English ruling the roost as the preferred international language of communication, many need-based, specialised sub-fields have developed under the blanket of EFL or English

as a Foreign Language. This is logical in a knowledge society that is fast moving towards unification of diversities, and English as a medium is an ideal language for this. EIP is a developing field of English for Specific Purposes and there is no formal corpus consisting of relevant language input. However, its basic premise is to enable readers of the Holy Qur'an across cultures to be able to access usable translated versions of it. This serves a dual function: Strengthening of the learners' language base across Qur'anic Arabic and standard English; two, enabling modern readers of the Qur'an to appreciate it through the prism of a new language and ethos. Educational technology is a medium in learning and is used to facilitate the learning process efficiently and effectively (Sharma, 2018; Bhakta & Dutta, 2016). It facilitates students' understanding of the material presented and increases the development of science and technology (Al-hariri & Al-hattami, 2017). The learning process is the most basic activity in the educational process. The achievement of educational goals depends on how the learning process is designed and whether or not it is conducted professionally. Any learning activity involves teachers and students, while the role of teachers cannot be overstated, the role of technology as a facilitator in the learning process is growing (Sudarsana, et al., 2019). Moreover, it makes is a popular choice as a supplementary support to understand the material presented. With the expanding realm of science and technology which is spilling into practically all fields of knowledge (Martinez, 2018), teachers too, have assumed the function of facilitators, playing an important role in the education process.
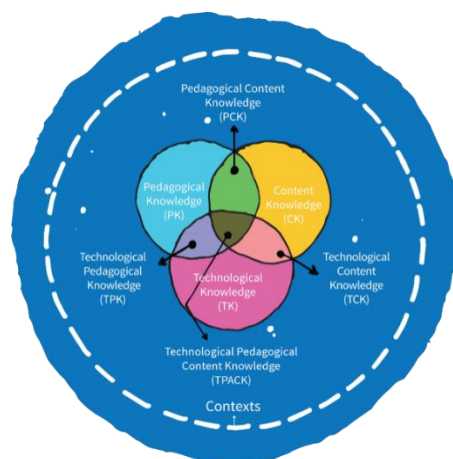

Figure 1: Integration of knowledge technology on pedagogical content (Jamshidifarsani, Garbaya, Lim, Blazevic, & Ritchie, 2019)

As shown in Figure 1, technology and knowledge work together to develop good learning environment in the pedagogical context (Jamshidifarsani et al., 2019). Learning, using technology based on knowledge increases students' willingness to learn. Meanwhile, learning

using technology based on pedagogic knowledge also increases student achievement. Therefore, the use of learning technology contributes more to student willingness to learn as well as learning achievement if it is used optimally and on target. Teachers play a major role in the success of teaching and learning. A wise teacher is aware of the students' weaknesses whether it be related to the lesson at hand or difficulties with curricular materials. At the same time, no teaching situation in today's world has remained untouched by technology given the fact that no other medium engages or relates the learners as technology-based aids. Therefore, teachers at MTsN Padang Bolak use media in education, such as in Fiqh and Alquran Hadith material.

Students often fail to follow the learning process because they easily get bored in learning. A teacher's explanation may sometimes be difficult to understand, or does not focus on the problems presented, and does not use media in the learning process, which then become challenges in teaching-learning. These conditions lead to learners' demotivation, poor or no engagement and difficulty in relating to the teacher or the taught content. Therefore, learning objectives cannot be achieved. Besides, a teacher who does not use media in the learning process is a factor in reducing student presence toward the learning process. On the contrary, a teacher who uses media in the learning process will increase student motivation, thus making it easier to achieve effective teaching goals. We understand the crucial role that motivation plays in learning as a mandatory condition to achieve teaching goals.

The onus to provide a wholesome learning experience to the students lies with the teacher. Whatever the teacher imparts must be based on learner needs and be perceived as such by them. The teacher must not only give the scientific material to students but must also be conscious of the philosophy of the subject taught and the process of education. The presence of these trigger motivation in the process of interaction with students. Learning technology improves the quality of critical thinking (Gökçearslan, Solmaz, & Coşkun, 2019). In addition, EIP education teachers must be able to take advantage of educational technology as a source of learning, giving students new experiences in learning Islamic education through English.

In the present study, we investigate the following problems:

1) Is there a significant influence between the use of learning technology and the willingness to learn EIP at MTsN Padang Bolak?

2) Is there a significant influence between the use of learning technology and student achievement at MTsN Padang Bolak?

3) Is there a significant influence between the use of learning technology and the motivation to learn at MTsN Padang Bolak on learning achievement?

This study aimed to determine the use of learning technology in Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTsN) Padang Bolak and the willingness to learn in improving student learning, as well as the significant effect of the use of learning technology enabled EIP on learning achievement.

Literature Review

Learning technologies

Technology has made the life of human race comfortable like never before, assisting them in all spheres of life much like a daily need. In fact, technology and the very existence of human race have a deep relationship with each other. Learning is an effort by teachers to students in the application of scientific knowledge about learning and learning conditions (Sudarsana, et al., 2019). It is useful to increase effectiveness and efficiency in teaching and training. Learning technology tools (e.g., laptops, posters, tape recorders, and slides) which can assist in achieving learning goals have become essentials to support the learning process.

Learning technology has a crucial role to play in the design, development, utilization, management, and evaluation of the learning process (Drozdova, 2007; Ritonga et al., 2020; Sadler et al., 2013; Alkamel & Chouthaiwale, 2020). Technology is related to the description of tools (Warner, Bell, & Odom, 2018). Learning technology plays an important role in solving educational and learning problems by (1) combining various approaches such as economics, management, psychology, and engineering; (2) solving learning problems in humans simultaneously, by studying all conditions and their interrelationships; (3) using technology as a process and product to solve learning problems; and (4) realizing the emergence of a multiplicity or synergy effect (Stosic, 2015; Thieman, 2008; Shastri, 2020).

Students' willingness to learn

Willingness is a desire in every human being in the sense of developing all his/her talents and abilities to increase standards, whether in life, education, or occupation. Empirical research mostly conducted in secondary schools shows that willingness to learn helps in predicting task scores (Blazar & Kraft, 2017). Willingness can also be interpreted as desire to achieve something (Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011), Willingness comes from the impulses that lead to achieving goals (Yasmadri et al., 2020). Therefore, to distinguish one from the other, impulses need to look at the characteristics possessed by the symptoms. Willingness is a conscious internal impulse, based on considerations of thought and feeling, as well as the achievement of specific goals related to the needs of his/her personal life.

Learning achievement

A student's learning achievement is reached after carrying out learning activities. It is an assessment result of the learning activities that reflect the results achieved by each student in a certain period (Vermunt & Donche, 2017; Jamoom & Al-Omrani, 2021). Moreover, it is a student who achieves the goals set in each field of study (Riswanto & Aryani, 2017; Ritonga et al., 2021). In this case, students have the ability in a particular field, and this ability is determined by an evaluation form (Febriana, 2017; Husna et al., 2020). Learning is not an independent activity. The learning teaching process, environmental input, and instrumental are all equal factors in education.

METHODS

Place and time of research

This study was conducted at MTsN Padang Bolak, Gunung Tua, Padang Bolak District, Padang Lawas Utara Regency, from June to August 2018.

Study design

A quantitative research method was used in this study. This method also used the multiple regression model to analyze the relationship between several independent variables (X) and a dependent variable ($\hat{Y}$). The model for multiple regression analysis was as follows:

$$\hat{Y} = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + \cdots + b_nX_n + \varepsilon \qquad (1)$$
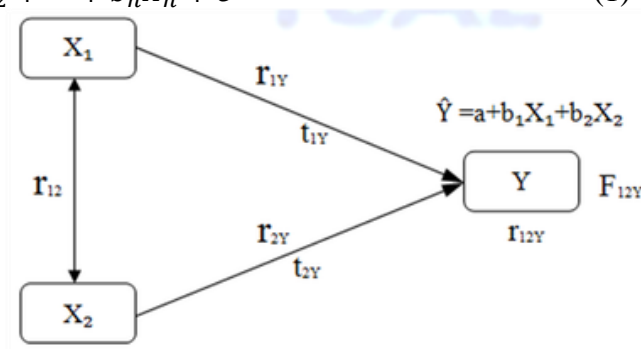
Figure 2
Research variable

Sampling

Proportionate random sampling was used in this study. A total of 226 students were included in this study, coming from classes VII 1, VII 2, VII 3, VIII 1, VIII 2, and VIII 3 at MTsN Padang Bolak.

Data collection and analysis techniques

A questionnaire was used to measure students' willingness to learn. The instrument validity was used to determine data validity. The Pearson product-moment formula was used to measure the correlation value for each test item. A p-value < 0.05 was considered as different significantly. The Pearson product-moment was 0.003. Therefore, the instrument can be used in this research.

Data reliability is also performed to produce a consistent score. A p-value < 0.05 indicated that the instrument was reliable. In the present study, the reliability test was 0.02. Therefore, the instrument was reliable and can be used in this research. The data were analyzed using several techniques, including (a) the data normality test, (b) linearity of data, (c) multicollinearity test of data, (d) correlation test of final data, and (e) multiple correlation test of final data. Table 1 presents the interpretation of achievement level.

Table 1: Interpretation of achievement level

Score	Interpretation
81%–100%	Very good
61%–80%	Good
41%–60%	Moderate
21%–40%	Bad
0%–20%	Very bad

Results

The data description of research was used to understand research results and two research variables, namely, the use of learning technology (variable X1) and students' willingness to learn (X2) and learning achievement (Y) at MTsN Padang Bolak. Table 2 presents a statistical summary of learning technology variables.

Table 2: Statistical summary of learning technology variables

Statistics	Score
Highest score	68
Lowest score	47
Mean	55.91
Median	55.00
Mode	51
Standard deviation	5.589
Range	21
Interval	4

The highest and the lowest scores were 68 and 47, respectively. The median, mode, and mean were 55.00, 51, and 55.91, respectively. The standard deviation was 5.589. The data distribution was conducted by grouping the variable scores, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Frequency distribution of variable scores on the use of learning technology

Interval	Frequency	Percentage
47–50	5	15.15%
51–54	10	30.30%
55–58	10	30.30%
59–62	4	12.12%
63–66	1	3.03%
67–70	3	9.1%
I = 4	N = 33	100%

Learning technology (X1 variable) obtained a score between 47 and 50 with 5 students (15.15%), between 51 and 54 with 10 students (30.30%), between 55 and 58 with 10 students (30.30%), between 59 and 62 with 4 students (12.12%), between 63 and 66 with 1 student (3.03%), and between 67 and 70 with 3 students (9.1%). Figure 3 shows the frequency of learning technology at MTsN Padang Bolak.
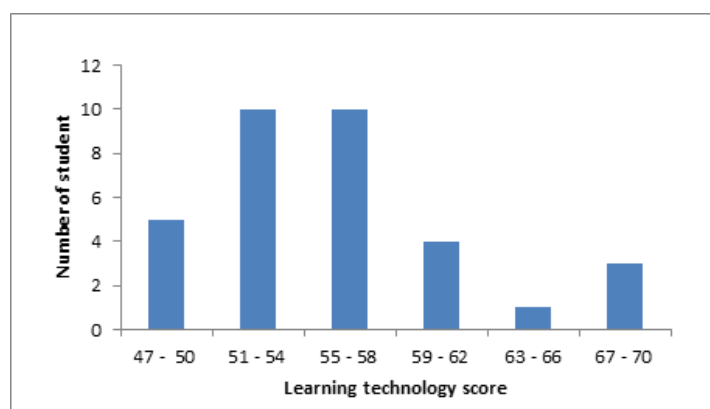
Figure 3: Histogram for the use of learning technology.

The assessment criteria were classified as 'very good' for the use of learning technology. It was indicated by 82.2% at MTsN Padang Bolak use learning technology.

Students' willingness to learn

The score of the student's willingness to learn was obtained from the respondent's answers. Thirty-three students were involved in this study. Table 4 presents the statistical summary of students' willingness to learn.

The highest and lowest scores of students' willingness to learn were 80 and 56, respectively. The median value, mode, mean value, and standard deviation were 63, 63, 64.91, and 6.436, respectively. The data distribution was carried out by the group score of student's willingness to learn at MTsN Padang Bolak by determining the number of classes, as shown in Figure 4.

Table 4: Statistical summary of students' willingness to learn

Statistics	Score
Highest score	80
Lowest score	56
Mean	64.91
Median	63.00
Mode	63
Standard deviation	6.436
Range	24
Interval	4

The students' willingness to learn (X2 variable) was between 56 and 59 as reported by 8 students (24%), between 60 and 63 as reported by 7 students (21%), between 64 and 67 as reported by 9 students (28%), between 68 and 71 as reported by 4 students (12%), between 72 and 75 as reported by 1 student (3%), and between 76 and 80 as reported by 4 students (12%) (Figure 4). Students' willingness to learn at MTsN Padang Bolak was measured through the level of achievement since achievement is a good measure of willingness and readiness of learners. The assessment criteria for student learning willingness were reached at 80.98%, demonstrating that students' willingness to learn at MTsN Padang Bolak can be classified as 'very good'.
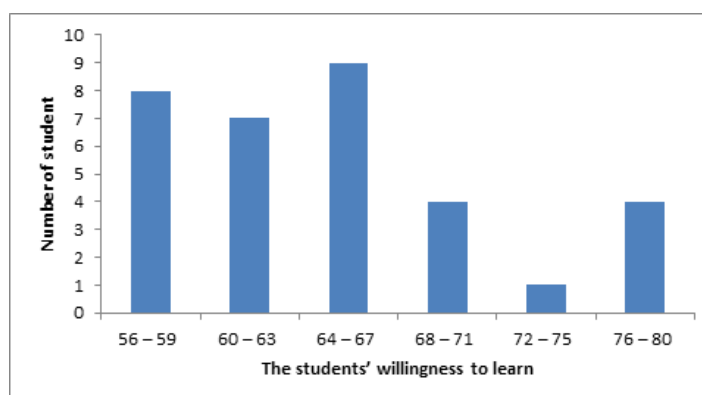
Figure 4: Histogram of student willingness.

Learning achievement

Table 5 presents the score of the student's willingness to learn.

Table 5: Statistical summary of learning achievement variables

Statistics	Score
Highest score	81
Lowest score	58
Mean	66.76
Median	65
Mode	65
Standard deviation	6.052
Range	23
Interval	4

The highest and lowest scores of learning achievement were 81 and 58, respectively. The median value was 65.00, and the mode was 65 by 6 classes with an interval of 4. The data distribution was conducted by the group score of the learning achievement variable at MTsN Padang Bolak by the number of classes, as shown in table 6.

Table 6: Frequency distribution of learning achievement

Interval	Frequency	Percentage
58–61	8	24.24%
62–65	9	27.27%
66–69	8	24.24%
70–73	3	9.09%
74–77	2	6.06%
78–81	3	9.09%
I = 4	N = 33	100%

Learning achievement (Y variable) obtained scores between 58 and 61 with 8 students (24.24%), between 62 and 65 with 9 students (27.27%), between 66 and 69 with 8 students (24.24%), between 70and 73 with 3 students (9.09%), between 74 and 77 by 2 students (6.06%), and between 78 and 81 with 3 students (9.09%). The assessment criteria for learning achievement were reached at 84.31%, demonstrating that the learning achievement at MTsN Padang Bolak can be classified as 'very good'.

Normality test

The normality test was conducted using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test and followed by SPSS series 21. A p-value > 0.05 was categorized as normally distributed data, while p-value < 0.05 was categorized as not customarily distributed data.

Table 7: Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test[a]

	Kolmogorov–Smirnov[a]		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Learning technologies	.122	33	.200[*]
Willingness to learn	.130	33	.171
Learning achievement	.129	33	.175

The learning technology was significant. It was indicated by a p-value of $0.200 > 0.05$, the willingness to learn of $0.171 > 0.05$, and learning achievement of $0.175 > 0.05$.

Linearity test

The linearity test was conducted after the data was known to be normally distributed. Had the data not been normally distributed, it was not necessary to perform the linearity test. This test was conducted to determine the linear relationship between X1, X2, and Y. The linearity test was used as a prerequisite before testing the hypothesis using the product-moment correlation test. Table 8 presents the result of the linearity test.

Table 8: Result of the linearity test

Variable	Significant	Alpha	Description
X_1 and Y	0.02	0.05	Linear
X_2 and Y	0.00	0.05	Linear

The significant value for the linearity of the learning technology variable (X1) with the learning achievement of Islamic religious education (Y) was 0.02. There was a linear relationship between learning technology (X1) and learning achievement in Islamic religious education (Y). Moreover, the willingness to learn (X2) and learning achievement (Y) had a linear relationship as well.

Multiple correlation test

Multiple correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between two or more independent variables and the dependent variable simultaneously. This coefficient shows the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. Table 9 presents the results of multiple correlation test.

Table 9: Results of the multiple correlation test

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1171.322	2	585.661	23798.583	.000[a]
	Residual	.738	30	.025		
	Total	1172.061	32			

a. Predictors: (constant), willingness_study, technology_learning

b. Dependent variable: achievement_learning

The Sig. F value was 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the hypothesis was accepted. It revealed that learning technology and motivation variables had a significant effect on the learning achievement of Islamic religious education. Table 10 presents the value of the regression value coefficient.

Table 10: Coefficient table of regression value

Model		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.532	.359		7.056	.000
	X1	.006	.005	.006	1.256	.02
	X2	.986	.005	.998	211.816	.000

a. Dependent variable: Y

The relationship can be obtained using the formula Y = Y=a + b1X1 + b2X2 + b3X3 + … + bnXn. The value was obtained from the value of SPSS Y = 2.532 + 0.061X1 + 0.986X2.

Discussion

The use of learning technology enabled EIP at MTsN Padang Bolak has a significant effect on students' willingness to learn. The significance is established by a value smaller than 0.05. The use of technology can improve student achievement as well as the teaching and learning process (Alammary, 2012). Information and communication technology play an important role in the teaching and learning process. The use of EIP with technology integration can increase students' willingness to learn because they have more opportunities to learn more enthusiastically. It is following the increased use of electronics as a teaching method

(Ratheeswari, 2018). Mobile and electronic learning have shifted learning from traditional classrooms to virtual spaces (Basak, Wotto, & Belanger, 2018).

Although mobile devices, computers, and interactive technology are prevalent and easily accessible, teachers still lack necessary skills and knowledge about how to integrate these technologies into the curriculum (Sabzian, Gilakjani, & Sodouri, 2013). Technology tools are used by students to find learning topics, solve problems, and provide solutions to problems in the learning process (Bara & Xhomara, 2020; Ghavifekr & Rosdy, 2015; Ritonga et al. 2016). It makes the acquisition of knowledge more accessible and engages students in the application of technological tools. Technology tools also support the student by providing opportunities of learning independently (Yang & Baldwin, 2020). Learning technology and the willingness to learn can improve student achievement as they increase student motivation to think critically and easily understand through the virtual mode at a place and time of their choice. Therefore, students become more creative to find new learning on the desired material and affect student achievement.

From the results of the current study, it is concluded that the use of learning technology enabled EIP in MTsN Padang Bolak has a significant influence on the willingness to learn students. Based on the data, the analysis shows that the use of technology and EIP in the given environment has a significant influence on the students' willingness to learn in MTsN Padang Bolak. This has been derived from the results of simple regression by using SPSS obtained that the significant value is less than 0.05 where 0.000<0.005. It is adequately apparent that the use of technology can improve student achievement because students are more motivated in engaging in learning because it helps improve the global teaching and learning process, a finding which is in accordance with other notable studies, most conspicuously that conducted by Ratheeswari (2018) which concluded that information and communication technology has an important role to help improve teaching and learning process.

Judging from the results it has been found that the application of technology with EIP can increase the willingness of students to learn, because students have a wider opportunity in expressing their ability as they are comfortable with the use of technology, these findings are in accordance with the results of Serdyukov (2017) who found that technological advances have resulted in improving students' ability to maximize the use of technology as a media in learning(Serdyukov, 2017). In addition, Susanti et al (2020) concluded that learning media such as power point presentations, in addition to providing encouragement and motivation to students, also make it easier for teachers to provide immediate feedback using learning technology. Somewhat before this study, Ritonga et al (2016) have also hinted that teachers

foster innovative attitudes, especially in using technology-based media because students in the digital era are more interested in learning using this media.

The current study has also revealed that the use of effective learning technology has a central role in improving learning outcomes, the same findings were also presented by Lillejord et al. (2018) with the conclusion that educational technology has a great impact on maximizing learning outcomes. The difference observed between the two studies is that whereas the latter did an analysis on higher education, the results of this study were at the level of Madrasah Tsanawiyyah which is equivalent of junior high school. This difference in education level can be used as justification for differences in findings. The results of Garcia-Martinez's et al.'s (2019) study also supported the findings of this study, in which in the conclusion arrived at was that learning with everything related to technology, such as methods, materials, strategies can bring about a change in the learning outcomes.

In accordance with the findings of the study and its relevance to the conclusions of the researchers, it can be said that the willingness of learners in following religious learning in MTs Negeri can be improved by utilizing learning technology. In line with that, learning outcomes can also be improved by using learning technology, this statement is based on the results of research that show the effectiveness of learning media on increasing the willingness of learners and also learning achievements.

Conclusion

The potential of educational technology is immense, but there may be some pitfalls on the way. The quality of instruction is paramount and institutions must be wary of allowing educational standards to fall. Teachers must be made efficient in the use of technology-specific to their curriculum. The application of learning technology in EIP education at MTsN Padang Bolak on students' willingness to learn and student achievement has proven to be positive. In addition to heightened engagement, it ensures that students focus on modules that they have not read earlier, thus saving learning time. Effective ethnological content is also highly interactive, utilizing the power of technology to process student responses, providing specific feedback, and modifying instructional paths based on student performance. While developing high-quality courses may be expensive for the institution, the rewards in terms of promotion of Islamic thought will actually outweigh the costs involved. The results of this study are expected to make a novel contribution to education, EIP, and technology integrated learning at MTsN Padang Bolak.

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Teachers' Perceptions of Challenges in Online Teaching: A Survey Across Universities in KSA

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Abstract

Given the sudden transition to online education since March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers and students all over the world have been facing many challenges with little preparation. This study explored the challenges that English as a foreign language (EFL) university teachers have faced in Saudi Arabia in relation to gender and academic status. A self-developed questionnaire was administered to a sample of 121 EFL faculty members at universities in Saudi Arabia in the first semester of the 2020-2021 academic year. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS. Teachers rated their challenges online as "medium" in terms of instruction, assessment, and students, while the use of technology represented a smaller challenge. There were significant differences between teacher perceptions based on gender and academic status but no interaction between respondents' perceptions and these two factors taken together. Based on the findings, the study offers recommendations for practice and future research.

Keywords: *University teachers, English as a foreign language (EFL), teaching online, challenges, perceptions*

Introduction

MOOCs or Massive Open Online Courses have been a part of the Saudi education sector for a few years since the launch of the first Arabic language MOOC named Rwaq in 2013. This was one giant leap for education as higher education was made accessible to anyone having an internet connection, when the country did not boast of universities in the remote regions. Rwaq offered appealing, interface on almost all possible courses including medicine and engineering, reflecting its progressive philosophy for all citizens in the middle eastern region. The teachers engaged in Rwaq had long teaching experience as well as occupational expertise to bring the element of real-like teaching-learning. So far so good. It was a specialized platform with a pool of teacher swell trained to handle the challenges of online learning. However, the imposition of online learning across KSA, much like the rest of the world, to counter the spread of the pandemic, was a change none of the stakeholders were prepared for. The COVID-19 pandemic caused school closures around the world, forcing teachers and students alike to work from home through online learning platforms. We understand that online learning is a very different mode of education than the physical, on-campus design that teachers and learners were familiar with. It came with its own baggage: Technophobia, poor learner attendance, inefficient internet connections, poor access to computers were only some of the obstacles that the teachers especially needed to tackle. Teachers' responsibilities as online educators went manifold as they also needed to keep learner morale high in the strange times. KSA teacher education programs offer only basic training in technology integrated pedagogy, though once they do join the workforce, it is expected of them to Integrate ICT as much as possible in the traditional classroom. The challenge was not small by any measure. This suddenness of the shift in itself presented numerous challenges related to technology, materials development and execution, methods of teaching and learning, assessment of online learning, and students' attitudes and motivation. This study contributes to the understanding of online teaching by examining challenges for those teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) at Saudi universities and proposes possible solutions for going forward.

Online Education

The Internet and digital technology have been demonstrated as invaluable tools in fostering EFL proficiency that could compensate for shortcomings in traditional classrooms by offering more exposure to the language, practice, and authentic learning resources (Alberth, 2013). Electronic learning allows learners to go beyond the confines of the traditional classroom,

textbooks, classmates, and teachers to reach a global learning community that is available anytime and anywhere, is more affordable, offers a friendly user experience, and can be more engaging and enjoyable (Alfallaj, 2020; Elashhab, 2020). Despite these benefits, teachers are still concerned about technology integration due to students paying less attention, challenges in the process of assessment, and inappropriate use of the Internet (Alzubi, 2019). The recent shift to online education because of the COVID-19 pandemic uncovered many weaknesses in online learning, requiring changes to traditional teacher and student roles. The teacher must become more of a guide or facilitator of knowledge, while students search more actively for knowledge using online resources.

Perceptions of Online EFL Instruction

COVID-19 caught many EFL teachers unprepared for electronic learning, and they subsequently faced many obstacles to using online platforms, applying appropriate methods, and assessing student performance. Mseleku (2020) reviewed the recent literature on challenges and opportunities of electronic learning during the pandemic. Most teachers and students' challenges were due to insufficient time with and knowledge of information technology, poor Internet service, inconvenient physical space, mental problems, lack of essential needs, and lack of teaching and learning resources.

The pandemic brought about a wave of new research on EFL teachers' perceptions of online education. Gulnaz et al. (2020), for example, found that Saudi university EFL teachers and learners were satisfied with onsite and online learning modes. However, they raised some concerns about being socially isolated and bored while working online, wasting time on social networks, and the lack of real-time feedback from teachers in online activities. Mulyadi (2018) reported how interactive multimedia was used in a language education platform to improve Indonesian EFL student teachers' pedagogical competence. Nevertheless, poor Internet and insufficient time and facilities were major barriers. In the same context, Nugroho and Mutiaraningrum (2020) showed that EFL teachers who used digital learning to teach English valued the teaching process and were aware of inductive, interesting, and interactive approaches. However, they lacked appropriate practice due to insufficient training, resources, and experience using platforms.

In Iran, Khatoony and Nezhadmehr (2020) suggested teachers could deal with new teaching platforms and stressed the importance of decreasing the distance between teachers and students. However, teachers lacked appropriate materials, and students were less motivated and did not

pay attention. Other challenges for online EFL learning were insufficient funding and support. In Önalan and Kurt's (2020) study, Turkish EFL teachers reported positive attitudes toward technology integration, were highly confident about using computers for teaching, and had a supportive school climate to use technology. However, insufficient instructional encouragement, technical support, and facilities from stakeholders impeded integration. Similarly, Muslem et al. (2018) suggested Indonesian school teachers found technology useful in teaching EFL but faced several barriers, including limited time and tools, poor internet, and lack of technology training.

In China, Gao and Zhang (2020) found that EFL university teachers faced similar challenges early on in the transition to online teaching, stemming from insufficient information about teaching platforms, specific skills, network conditions, and classroom management. Participants reported overcoming these challenges by understanding students' learning needs, online teaching practices, and the necessity to integrate teaching methods into an online mode. In Todd's (2020) study in Thailand, university EFL teachers experienced three major problems: grading assignments, communicating, and finding stimulating activities to assess student understanding. The participants valued some practical advantages of teaching online (e.g., its availability anytime, anywhere) but had difficulty achieving EFL objectives and assessing student reactions.

Building on previous studies, this study examined university EFL teachers' perceptions of the challenges they faced in online teaching regarding use of technology, instruction, assessment, and students. These challenges were associated with two variables: gender and academic status.

Research Questions
The study answered the following research questions:
1. What are the challenges that university EFL teachers in Saudi Arabia perceive in in online teaching mode?
2. How does gender play into the EFL teachers' challenges in teaching online and is this difference significant?
3. What is the role of teachers' academic status as a factor in perceived challenges while teaching online?
4. Do EFL teachers' perceptions of challenges in online teaching differ significantly based on the interaction of gender and academic status taken together?

Method

Using an exploratory research design, this study surveyed EFL teachers' perceptions of challenges to teaching online amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sampling

The study targeted all faculty members who taught EFL at public universities ($N = 30$) in Saudi Arabia. Convenient sampling was applied to choose a representative sample of 121 teachers (85 male, 36 female) at 11 universities from all regions of the country: Jouf University and Hail University in the north; Qassim University, King Saud University, Al-Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, and Majmaah University in the center; Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University in the east; King Abdulaziz University and Taibah University in the west; and Najran University and King Khalid University in the south. Faculty members were reached through acquaintances of the researcher. In this manner, universities from all regions of the country were included in this study. EFL faculty members at Saudi universities come from different nationalities, such as Saudi, Jordanian, Sudanese, Egyptian, Pakistani, Indian, American, Algerian, and Yemeni.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data were collected through an online closed-item questionnaire developed by the researcher based on a review of the literature. It contained 42 items across four domains: use of technology (11 items), instruction (10), assessment (11), and students (10). The questionnaire also had a section for personal information, including name (optional), gender, and academic status. The questionnaire was set to collect responses that would answer the four research questions about perceptions of teaching university EFL classes online and in relation to a teacher's gender and academic status. Item responses were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 2 = *Disagree*, 3 = *Neutral*, 4 = *Agree*, 5 = *Strongly agree*). Some items were reversed to check respondents' understanding.

SPSS (Version 25) was used to analyze the data. Means and standard deviations were extracted to identify challenges. Additionally, a *t*-test was used to correlate teachers' responses to their reported gender and academic status. Finally, a two-way ANOVA was computed to determine any interactive effects of gender and academic status on responses.

Validity and Reliability

The questionnaire and research questions were sent for assessment to 10 professors in the field of computer-assisted language learning and EFL instruction. Comments and suggestions were considered, and items with an agreement of 90% and above were kept. The questionnaire was then piloted with 21 university EFL teachers who were later excluded from the main study. Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency was calculated, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Internal consistency of the questionnaire

Domain	Cronbach's Alpha
Use of technology	0.85
Instruction	0.87
Assessment	0.83
Students	0.89
Total	0.91

As shown in Table 1, the consistency coefficient for the domains ranged between 0.83 and 0.89, and the overall consistency coefficient for the instrument reached 0.91.

Results: The following section answers each of the research questions.

Research Question 1: What challenges do university EFL teachers report experiencing in online teaching in Saudi Arabia?

Means and standard deviations of EFL teachers' questionnaire responses were extracted to answer Research Question 1. The following scale was used to measure the degree of challenges: 1–1.80 = very low, >1.80–2.60 = low, >2.60–3.40 = medium, >3.40–4.20 = high, >4.20–5 = very high. Figure 1 shows the means of EFL teachers' responses to the questionnaire.
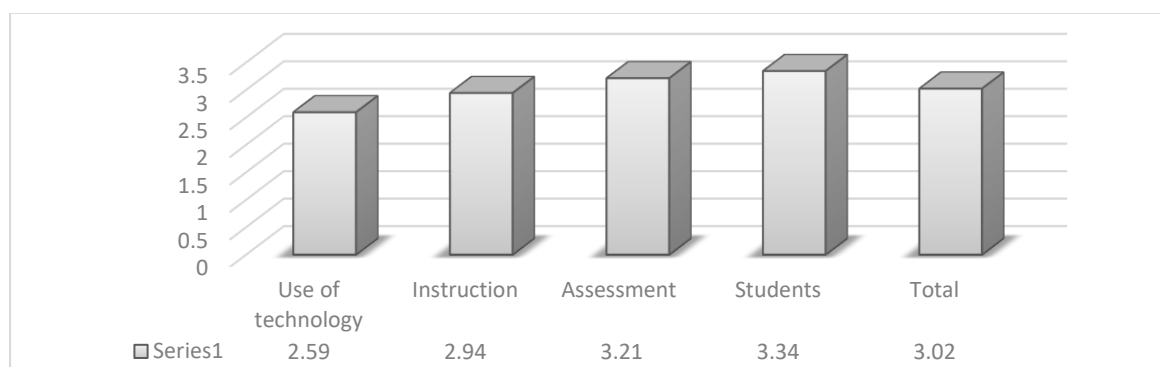
Figure 1. Challenges of online EFL instruction

As seen in Figure 1, the reported challenges to teaching EFL online were medium ($M = 3.02$). Challenges from a student perspective had the highest means ($M = 3.34$) followed by assessment ($M = 3.21$). Challenges from the use of technology had the lowest ($M = 2.59$). Table 2 shows EFL teachers' responses to perceived challenges to using technology for teaching online, which were rated as low overall ($M = 2.59$, $SD = .494$).

Table 2. Challenges with using technology in online EFL instruction

Item	M	SD	Level
Use of technology (overall)	2.59	.494	Low
Technology integration in EFL online teaching is costly in terms of resources, time, and effort.	3.13	1.218	Medium
Technology integration in EFL online teaching is ineffective due to lack of adequate teacher training.	2.80	1.054	Medium
I am efficient in using computers to teach EFL online.	1.76	.904	Very low
I can design EFL lessons with the help of computers to deliver online lectures.	1.79	.718	Very low
I have good Internet access and computers to teach EFL online from home or college.	1.82	.837	Low
Having a computer and Internet access to teach EFL online is expensive.	3.16	1.103	Medium
Students do not have reliable access to technology and the Internet to learn EFL online.	2.85	.989	Medium
Lack of training to use online teaching platforms would affect the EFL learning process.	3.95	.835	High
Poor Internet and compatibility of devices such as computers are barriers in EFL online teaching platforms.	4.02	.841	High
I can share screens, applications, and files, such as .pdf, .ppt, and .jpg, with my students during live online lectures.	1.53	.620	Very low
I can use various features of live lecturing, such as microphone, video, chat, whiteboard, groups, and polls.	1.65	.761	Very low

Table 2 shows that EFL teachers' highest-rated challenges in using technology were lack of training ($M = 3.95$, $SD = .835$) and poor internet and device compatibility ($M = 4.02$, $SD = .841$). The lowest-rated challenges were the ability to share screens, applications, and files ($M = 1.53$, $SD = .520$) and live lecturing features ($M = 1.65$, $SD = .761$). Table 3 shows that EFL teachers rated instructional challenges when teaching online as medium overall ($M = 2.94$, $SD = .567$).

Table 3. Challenges with online EFL instruction

Item	M	SD	Level
Instruction (overall)	2.94	.567	Medium
Technology integration in EFL online teaching limits my choices of instructional materials.	2.93	1.163	Medium
Technology integration in EFL online teaching requires extra time to plan learning activities.	3.75	.951	High

A direct teaching method is mainly used in EFL online teaching platforms.	3.34	.936	Medium
It is very difficult to work in groups or with peers with students in EFL online teaching platforms.	3.45	1.218	High
Students may fail to understand verbal instructions to learn lessons in EFL online teaching platforms.	3.17	.997	Medium
Lack of competence in technology makes it difficult for me to shift from traditional EFL teaching to online teaching.	2.60	1.152	Medium
Teaching EFL online makes it difficult to apply some teaching methods, such as grammar translation, communicative, or audio-lingual approaches.	3.02	1.129	Medium
EFL teachers' lack of experience on how to apply appropriate teaching methods in online teaching platforms is challenging.	3.59	.891	High
I can use technology and the Internet to deliver learning activities, such as through email, PowerPoint presentations, and the Internet.	1.64	.669	Very low
I can design technology-enhanced learning activities for my students.	1.91	.764	Low

As shown in Table 3, EFL teachers' highest-rated challenges in instruction were the extra time needed to plan activities with technology integration (M = 3.75, SD = .951), peer and group work (M = 3.45, SD = 1.218), and teachers' lack of experience applying appropriate methods (M = 3.59, SD = .891). However, teachers were able to use such technology as email and electronic presentations (M = 1.64, SD = .669) and could design technology-enhanced learning activities (M = 1.91, SD = .764). According to Table 4, teachers rated assessment challenges in online teaching as medium overall (M = 3.21, SD = .631).

Table 4. Challenges with assessment in online EFL instruction

Item	M	SD	Level
Assessment (overall)	3.21	.631	Medium
Technology integration in EFL online teaching increases students' academic achievement.	2.89	1.039	Medium
Technology integration in EFL online teaching does not reflect students' real academic achievement because of issues like cheating or impersonation.	3.79	1.072	High
Technology integration in EFL online teaching limits the ways used to assess students' performance.	3.62	1.074	High
Objective questions are more favored to assess students in EFL online learning platforms.	3.60	1.045	High
Subjective questions are less favored to assess students in EFL online learning platforms.	3.51	1.042	High
Following up on students' progress may be difficult in online teaching platforms.	3.48	1.170	High
It is very difficult to keep up with grading students' assignments and tests in EFL online teaching platforms.	2.74	1.180	Medium
Students' lack of competence in technology makes it harder to respond to assignments in EFL online teaching platforms.	3.51	.993	High
I can use various means of assessment, such as tests, quizzes, and assignments, to assess students in EFL online teaching platforms.	1.91	.775	Low

EFL online teaching platforms offer assessment tools better than tools in traditional EFL classrooms.	3.07	1.191	Medium

The highest-rated challenges in online assessment were observed in six areas: students' real academic achievement ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 1.072$); students' performance ($M = 3.62$, $SD = 1.074$); use of objective questions ($M = 3.60$, $SD = 1.045$); use of subjective questions ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 1.042$); following up on student progress ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 1.170$); and responding to assignments ($M = 3.51$, $SD = .993$). However, teachers reported being able to assess students using tests, quizzes, and assignments ($M = 1.91$, $SD = .775$). Table 5 shows that EFL teachers rated challenges in dealing with students online as medium overall ($M = 3.34$, $SD = .735$).

Table 5. Challenges with students in online EFL instruction

Item	M	SD	Level
Students (overall)	3.34	.735	Medium
Technology integration in EFL online teaching results in students neglecting important learning resources, such as hardcover books.	3.68	.933	High
Technology integration in EFL online teaching helps accommodate students' personal learning styles.	2.67	.898	Medium
Technology integration in EFL online teaching motivates students to get more involved in learning activities.	3.08	1.085	Medium
Technology integration in EFL online teaching promotes the development of students' interpersonal skills.	2.92	1.122	Medium
Technology integration in EFL online teaching increases the amount of stress and anxiety that students experience.	3.07	1.163	Medium
In online teaching platforms, students feel a strong sense of isolation that may decrease their desire to learn.	3.46	1.041	High
Students are less motivated to learn in EFL online teaching platforms due to lack of on-hand support and unhealthy learning environments, such as bedrooms or kitchens.	3.79	.968	High
Students are more passive observers in EFL online teaching platforms.	3.79	1.066	High
In EFL online teaching platforms, students cannot use their new knowledge to make connections with previous material or real-world examples.	3.09	1.125	Medium
In EFL online teaching platforms, work done asynchronously makes students feel disconnected from their teacher.	3.52	1.034	High
Students' physical absence decreases chances of collaboration in online teaching platforms.	3.67	1.068	High

According to Table 5, the highest-rated challenges when dealing with students online were observed in six areas: students not using hardcopy resources ($M = 3.68$, $SD = .933$); increased isolation ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 1.041$); lack of motivation due to lack of support and unhealthy learning environments ($M = 3.79$, $SD = .968$); passiveness ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 1.066$); disconnection ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 1.034$); and less collaboration ($M = 3.67$, $SD = 1.068$). However, teachers reported being able to accommodate students' personal learning styles online ($M = 2.67$, $SD = .898$).

Research Question 2: Do EFL teachers' challenges online differ significantly based on gender?

Inferential statistical tool, Levene's test was applied to check the equality of variances between 86 male respondents and 35 female respondents. It may be noted that Leven's test helps establish the homogeneity of the sample. This test was opted for because the sample came from diverse environments, and for the results to be considered generalizable, it was pertinent to ensure sample homogeneity. Table 6 shows that the variance between male and female respondents was equal overall (.203).

Table 6. Challenges with online EFL instruction according to gender

Domain	Gender	*N*	*M*	*SD*	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t*	*df*	Sig. (2-tailed)
					F	Sig.			
Use of technology	Male	86	2.53	.489	.001	.980	-1.927	119	.056
	Female	35	2.72	.487					
Instruction	Male	86	2.90	.595	2.541	.114	-1.174	119	.243
	Female	35	3.03	.489					
Assessment	Male	86	3.12	.621	.127	.723	-2.475	119	.015
	Female	35	3.43	.612					
Students	Male	86	3.22	.729	.899	.345	-2.769	119	.007
	Female	35	3.62	.681					
Total	Male	86	2.94	.523	1.642	.203	-2.533	119	.013
	Female	35	3.20	.471					

Table 6 displays gender differences in respondents' perspectives on the challenges of teaching EFL online. With significance set at the level of 0.05, overall, women perceived teaching EFL online as significantly more challenging than men (t(119) = -2.533, p = .013), and specifically in terms of assessment (t(119) = -2.475, p = .015) and students (t (119) = -2.769, p = .007).

Research Question 3: Do EFL teachers' challenges online differ significantly based on academic status?

Table 7 outlines how differently participants perceived challenges in teaching EFL online based on their academic status (lecturer vs. professor). It also shows that the variances in terms of respondents' academic status were equal (.040).

Table 7. Challenges with online EFL instruction according to academic status

Domain	Status	*N*	*M*	*SD*	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		*t*	*df*	Sig. (2-tailed)
					F	Sig.			

Use of technology	Lecturer	77	2.65	.477	.828	.365	1.854	119	.066
	Professor	44	2.48	.509					
Instruction	Lecturer	77	2.98	.558	.870	.353	1.061	119	.291
	Professor	44	2.87	.581					
Assessment	Lecturer	77	3.31	.565	1.553	.215	2.164	119	.032
	Professor	44	3.05	.711					
Students	Lecturer	77	3.45	.650	2.747	.100	2.169	119	.032
	Professor	44	3.15	.838					
Total	Lecturer	77	3.09	.459	4.292	.040	2.173	119	.033
	Professor	44	2.88	.593					

Table 7 shows significant differences at $p < 0.05$ between perceived challenges of teaching EFL online in terms of academic status, with lecturers reporting significantly higher challenges overall ($t(119) = 2.173$, $p = .033$) and in terms of assessment ($t(119) = 2.164$, $p = .032$) and students ($t(119) = 2.169$, $p = .032$).

Research Question 4: Do EFL teachers' challenges online differ significantly based on the interaction of gender and academic status together?

A two-way ANOVA was used to check for any interaction between one dependent variable (EFL teachers' challenges teaching online) and two independent variables (gender and academic status), with the results graphed in Figure 4. There were no significant differences between perceptions based on gender and academic status taken together.
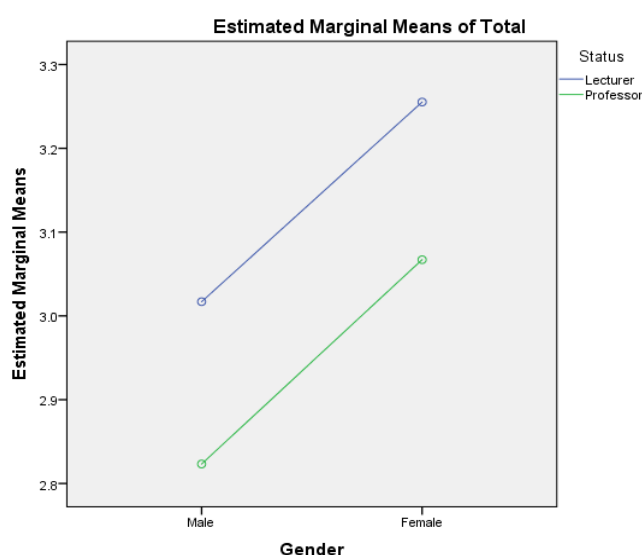

Figure 4. EFL online teaching challenges according to gender and academic status

Findings and Discussion

This study has resulted in a number of major findings. University teachers in Saudi Arabia reported medium-level challenges teaching EFL online in terms of instruction, assessment, and dealing with students, whereas the use of technology was considered a low-level challenge. EFL teachers' biggest challenges using technology were lack of training to use online teaching platforms and poor Internet and device compatibility. The study has already earlier stated that teacher education in KSA only touched peripherally on ICT integration in curriculum and pedagogy though the trend of in-service teacher training towards this objective is catching up in Saudi Arabia. Similarly, Mulyadi (2018) showed poor internet and insufficient time and facilities were barriers to education. Muslem et al. (2018) likewise reported limited time and tools, poor Internet, and lack of technology training as barriers for technology integration in EFL. In the same vein, Gao and Zhang (2020) revealed that lack of information about online teaching platforms and the need for specific skills, insufficient network conditions, and classroom management were major challenges in online teaching. Al Meajel and Sharadgah (2017) reported technology issues as the most identified barrier to using the Blackboard online education platform in teaching.

EFL teachers' biggest challenges with instruction were seen in their reported need for extra time to plan learning activities, having students do group and peer work, and insufficient experience to use appropriate methods and tools. This finding was in accordance with Nugroho and Mutiaraningrum (2020), who reported that EFL teachers' lack of appropriate teaching practices online was due to insufficient training, limited resources, and poor digital facilitation.

EFL teachers' biggest challenges with online EFL assessment were observed in six areas: assessing students' actual academic achievement, performance, objective questions, subjective questions, following up on progress, and responding to assignments. This agreed with Todd's (2020) finding that grading assignments, achieving EFL objectives, assessing student reactions, and creating stimulating activities to check understanding were major problems in online teaching. Similarly, Kitishat et al. (2020) found that online evaluation was perceived as difficult due to time constraints, and respondents felt multiple-choice questions made it easier for students to cheat.

EFL teachers' biggest challenges dealing with students online were in six areas: students not using hardcopy learning resources, increased isolation, demotivation due to lack of support and unhealthy learning environments, passiveness, disconnection, and less collaboration. This finding was partially in line with Gulnaz et al.'s (2020) study, which reported students suffering

from social isolation and boredom while working online. Khatoony and Nezhadmehr (2020) reported similar findings on students' lower motivation, reduced attention, and lack of appropriate materials.

The challenges with teaching online were linked to gender, with female participants perceiving online instruction as significantly more challenging than their male counterparts. More specifically, women reported significantly greater challenges than men in the domains of assessment and learning. In contrast, in Al Meajel and Sharadgah (2017), men reported more barriers using Blackboard in teaching and learning. Regarding academic status, lecturers in the present study were significantly more likely than professors to view teaching online as challenging, again in the domains of assessment and students. This finding contradicted that of Al Meajel and Sharadgah (2017), who reported that assistant professors had more barriers using Blackboard in teaching and learning. However, the present study found no significant interaction between perceptions of EFL teaching online and both variables together (gender and academic status).

Conclusion

This study has shed significant light on university teachers' perceptions of their challenges in teaching EFL online during the COVID-19 pandemic in Saudi Arabia. Based on the findings, it is recommended that EFL teachers receive ongoing training and support to use learning management systems and have access to good internet and computers. We now understand that virtual learning is the way learning would go in the 21st century and sooner the teachers are trained in its wherewithal, better would it be. In addition, EFL teachers need to recognize their students' educational needs by talking to their students about what motivates them, how the learning objectives can be achieved, improving their online teaching methods through online resources and file sharing, and shifting the focus of education to a more student-centered one even in the online mode. Students can be motivated to learn by promoting their competence and sense of relatedness to teachers, classmates, and the learning process (Alkhudiry & Alahdal, 2021). Furthermore, teachers must employ methods of assessment that reflect students' actual progress, such as relying more on subjective questions and oral assessment during live sessions. This will ensure greater satisfaction for the learners, and consequently, optimization of learning process.

The study acknowledges certain shortcomings too. Self-report questionnaires may sometimes generate subjective or biased responses. A highly qualitative approach with personal interviews of teachers can be a course for future studies in this direction. The relatively small number of

respondents may limit the generalizability of the findings. The use of a quantitative survey could also have limited the richness of the results. In addition, the study only examined challenges in teaching EFL online. Future studies could search for solutions to overcome these challenges. Variables not addressed in this study, such as age, income, and geography, could likewise be incorporated to examine their relationship to challenges in online EFL instruction.

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Towards Highlighting the Importance of Oral Questioning in Teaching and Learning EFL at Qassim University, Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

The current study was necessitated when communication gaps were noticed in the EFL classes in Saudi universities that took to the online mode following the Covid19 impositions. Professors and students reported a lack of effective communication without the physical presence of one or both the agencies. Therefore, the need for innovative pedagogies that may ensure greater teacher-learner communication in the virtual space. This study employs the analytical research methodology by adopting a questionnaire to collect data from EFL professors to reach the results. The vast majority of respondents agreed that oral questioning in EFL virtual classes is highly significant in several ways such as reinforcing the rapport between instructors and learners, promoting interaction, strengthening understanding, and encouraging learners to ask questions openly. The study concludes by proposing methods to create a more communicative virtual learning environment such as using warm-up oral questions, checking on learners' understanding via oral questioning after each learning outcome, and utilizing oral questioning as an assessment tool by the end of the class to make sure that learners have actually comprehended the intended learning outcomes.

Keywords: *Oral questioning; virtual classes; rapport; effective communication; learning outcomes.*

Introduction

Laborie (2018) points out that the problem of silence in the virtual classroom is as much a result of learner unpreparedness as it is of poor framing of questions by the teachers who are sometimes poor with virtual non-verbal communication, ask unchallenging questions, or not adequately responsive to learner responses. Terada (2020)points out that one feature that distinguishes high-performing virtual classrooms from others is learner feedback that goes beyond a cursory "speak up" from the teacher. Further, they must address learners' cognitive skills instead of being leading questions. Oral questioning inside the classroom is an extremely significant as well as a sensitive matter to deal with since it concerns dealing with other human beings who come from various backgrounds, and yet, it is an element that just cannot be done away within the language classroom. In a physical class, the teacher has the added advantage of access to non-verbal cues of the learners, warning him/her when a communication barrier crops up, but with a tiny bit of rectangle with the learner's picture, this advantage is completely ruled out. Effective questioning strategies, however, can cover up for the lacuna. The utilization

of oral questioning particularly in virtual classrooms is considered as a significant tool to achieve several goals such as efficient communication since both professors and students do not see each other face-to-face, promoting EFL learners critical thinking skills, motivating learners to participate in online classes, etc. Thus, this study sets out to define oral questioning, enumerate upon the significance of utilizing oral questioning in EFL classrooms, generate ideas on effective questioning, discuss the purposes served via employing oral questioning and sums up on the different types of oral questions.

Oral Questioning

Oral questioning is an effective way to stimulate students' motivation and participation (Tofade, Elsner & Hained, 2013). Further, questioning provides for the involvement of all students. A review of the vast literature illustrates that oral questioning aims at providing a comprehensive learning involvement of all students, therefore they are seen as an effective way to stimulate both students' motivation and participation. Oral questioning is also efficient simply because it addresses students' attention as well as developing their interest and curiosity (Collier, 2018). The active usage of oral questioning techniques enables students to practice self – expression and allows the variety to be added to the lesson. Additionally, as logically sequenced questions, oral questioning can positively inspire logical and critical thinking and serve as a guide to reasoning (Ralph, 1998; Khalk, Sheir & El Nabawy, 2015; Al-Jaro, Asmawi & Abdul-Ghafour, 2020).

In addition, oral questioning focuses on student attention and develops their interest and curiosity. The effective use of oral questioning techniques provides students with opportunities to practice self-expression. At the same time, it allows the variety to be added to the lesson. Studies have also shown a correlation between students' development of critical thinking and the direct usage of questions directed at different levels of knowledge (Hall, 2016). As a result, their overall individual abilities and interests can easily be discovered. It is also found that work experiences, hobbies and family activities directly influence the acquisition of students' knowledge and skills. Thus, we can effectively promote learning via using such special abilities and interests (Chuska, 1995). As stated by Ralph (1998) we can summarize the purposes of the oral questioning techniques usage as follows: First, oral questions are effective at introducing, summarizing, and reviewing a lesson. They are also used to clarify points previously made as well as bringing up points omitted. In terms of reading assignments, we can effectively use oral questions to bring into focus any given assignments. Additionally, such questions are useful

and can assist students when it comes to forming new insights, promote students' understanding and finally develop their attitudes and values. Second, through using such valuable techniques we can enable students to efficiently use ideas and develop an overall critical thinking instead of memorizing information.

Oral questioning is also associated with testing a lesson preparation and is seen as a vital evaluation information through which we can determine students' concepts and understanding of any given task. When introducing a lesson, it is extremely important to raise some questions simply because they serve as a pre-test of students' knowledge level. Furthermore, such questions also afford instant feedback concerning students' progress while class and at least gives clues on how the instructional objectives have been accomplished (Stone, 1993; Benattabou, 2020). Oral questioning can provide vital evaluation information. Students' preparation for the lesson can be tested (e.g., through questioning, you can determine if they read and understood an assignment).

Study Questions

This study is an attempt to investigate the challenges that EFL teachers and learners encounter in proper and effective oral questioning process in virtual English classrooms. Also, the study aims at casting light on the significance of oral questioning in teaching as well as learning in any educational institution which adopts English as a course in the curriculum, particularly at the tertiary level.

In order to achieve the above objectives, the paper is designed to seek answers to the following questions:

- What is the significance of oral questioning in EFL classrooms?
- How can oral questioning promote communication in the classroom?
- Why is oral questioning associated with achieving the intended learning outcomes?

Importance of Oral Questioning

Regarding the importance of oral questions, it is found that their structures are based on three considerable levels associated with the interrogative, and clarity of meaning. Thus, there is a need to highlight oral questions that enable students to master a language via providing them effective practical opportunities for learning English. Given that such a questioning technique is fundamental for the performance of teachers and learners as well, this technique assumes even more importance for the teacher. However, its impact depends on their types and functions

as well as the skill and care adopted in their usage. Questioning techniques are vital in teaching simply because they enable students to practice language in real life situations. For example, when teaching grammar in a real context, the active participation of the students that enable them to use the language effectively through listening and manipulating syntactical elements is extremely influential as compared to the moderate or low success of just memorizing the rules (Kamii & DeVries, 1978; Kamii & Warrington, 1999; Schwartz, 1996; Stone, 1993; Nassar & Al-Ghrafy, 2020).

How does questioning promote engagement and learning

Questioning and discussion activities are key components of an active learning strategy. They <u>are as follows</u>:

- promote student-teacher interaction
- signal the value of peer co-operation
- value what students know already as the basis for what the class is trying to understand together
- generate feedback through collective interaction
- value diversity in knowledge, skills and perspectives
- set realistic challenges
- adapt to the situation
- promote time on task

How to employ Questioning

Bond (2007) presents some pertinent suggestions about questioning by paying attention to questioning strategies to decrease classroom management problems. These are:

  i. Prepare a number of questions when writing the lesson plan.
 ii. Form prospects of the learners' probable reactions before commencing questioning.
iii. Ask questions from a variety of students.
 iv. Signal students before questioning.
  v. Question at the level of students' proficiency.
 vi. Ask questions that elicit accurate responses.
vii. Offer students adequate wait time after asking a question.

viii.   Vary and change the way students answer the questions.

 ix.   Ask questions from different learners.

  x.   Respond to each of the replies and correct the errors.

 xi.   Ask follow-up questions.

xii.   Encourage and motivate learners to ask questions.

In general, according to Ellis (2008), "studies of teachers' questions in the L2 classroom have focused on the frequency of the different types of questions, wait-time (the length of the time the teacher is prepared to wait for an answer), the nature of the learners' output when answering questions, the effect of the learners' level of proficiency on questioning, the possibility of training teachers to ask more communicative questions, and the variation evident in teachers' questioning strategies" (p. 798). In much of the research, it has been assumed that L2 learning will be improved provided that the questions lead to active student participation and negotiation of meaning.

Purposes of Questioning

According Kissock and Iyortsuun (1984, p. 6) the following are the main objectives of questioning usages which can be addressed by teachers in classes.

1. Develop processes of thinking and guide inquiry and decision-making.

2. Acquire and clarify information, answer concerns, and develop skills.

3. Determine knowledge students bring to class so lessons can be made to meet their needs.

4. Provide motivation by encouraging active participation in learning.

5. Lead students to consider new ideas and make use of ideas already learned.

In the classroom, questions are used for various purposes. By understanding, the range of purposes teachers can expand their use of questioning in instruction. Among other purposes, Kissock and Iyortsuun (1982, p. 6) state that questions can be used to:

1. Develop processes of thinking and guide inquiry and decision-making.

2. Acquire and clarify information, answer concerns, and develop

skills.

3. Determine knowledge students bring to class so lessons can be made to meet their needs.

4. Provide motivation by encouraging active participation in learning.

5. Lead students to consider new ideas and make use of ideas already learned.

Types of Oral Questioning

1. Open Questions

These are useful in getting learners to speak. They can provide the tutor with a good deal of information. They often begin with the words: What, Why, When, Who, etc. They can be statements: "tell me about", "give me examples of," etc.

2. Closed Questions

These are questions that require a yes or no answer and are useful for checking facts. They should be used with care, i.e., too many closed questions can cause frustration and shut down conversation.

3. Specific questions

These are used to determine facts. For example, "How much did you spend on that?", "How long does it take from here to your town?", etc.

4. Probing Questions

These check for more details or clarification. Probing questions allow the tutor to explore specific areas. However, care should be taken because they can easily make people feel they are being interrogated. For instance, "Why do you think that is?", "What sort of impact do you think this will have?", "What would need to change in order for you to accomplish this?", etc.

Probing questions are useful in most teaching situations. Thinking about questioning styles and techniques ahead of time allows you to begin, sustain and resolve a discussion-based activity. Here is a typical questioning pattern:

- Establish the context: Introduce a topic, e.g., through pre-reading, topic introduction, experiment, process diagram, etc.

- Establish the conundrum: Positioning of the idea, e.g. "If that is true, then how do you apply that in this real situation?"
- Probing iteration
- Challenge the students. Put the ball in their court, e.g., "Discuss the conundrum in pairs and prepare an answer."
- Analyze the answers. Bring it together and work out what it means, e.g., "Tell me what you concluded. Let's list them and put them in order."
- Enrich the context. Recognize the complexity and its implications, e.g. "But in reality, it's more complex than we first thought…"
- Probing iteration
- Challenge the students. Reinforce the key ideas, e.g., "Consider this more complex situation. Now discuss these again and prepare an answer."
- Analyze the answers. Defend, develop or argue against the key proposition, e.g., "Tell me what you concluded. How can we develop our understanding of the theory?"
- Enrich the context. Evaluate what we have learned, e.g. "Here's another example. How does this help us to understand and use the theory in practice?"
- Resolve. Bring this into focus, e.g. "We have found that…"
- Clarify. Deal with the loose ends and check everyone is one the same page, e.g. "Do you agree?", "Have you any questions?", "Is there anything else we need to think about?"
- Conclude. Wrap up and summarize what we have learnt. Create some revision points, e.g. "We began with the theory/hypothesis/belief… We developed this and tested it… And found that…"

5. Hypothetical questions

These pose a theoretical situation placed in the future. For example, "What would you do if…?' These can be used to get learners to think of new situations. They are also used in interviews to find out how people might cope with new situations.

Methodology and Study Population

This study has adopted the analytical research methodology by using SPSS program to analyze data collected using a questionnaire that was distributed to a random sample group of 50 tertiary level teachers (39 males and 11 females). All the respondents teach English as their

specialization and as a foreign language in a formal setting. Moreover, all of them were experienced in teaching English online. All the respondents who graduated from universities other than KSA, are at least PhD holders, and have diverse E-teaching experience to their credit. The median age of the respondents came to 48.3 years. The data collection instrument was a fifteen item questionnaire that was administered using Google forms. This was based on earlier studies but adapted to suit the specific EFL paradigm of KSA. The aim of the instrument was to examine the respondents' attitudes towards the vital role of oral questioning in EFL virtual classroom context. Each questionnaire item required a response based upon the five-point Likert-type scale used to measure attitudes with choices ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. The questionnaire items mostly centered on the overall impacts of implementing oral questioning techniques in EFL classes and also attempting to affirm the accuracy of the three study questions. For the affirmation of both the content and face validity of the instrument as well as its reliability, a pretest was conducted and the items were checked by three experts who suggested minor modifications into the wording of the questionnaire items. There were not many enquiries about the questionnaire statements and those that were there pertained to minor clarifications.

Figure 1 below summarises the results of the survey and is followed up with a discussion.

Figure 1. The study subjects' responses on the entire questionnaire items (1-15)
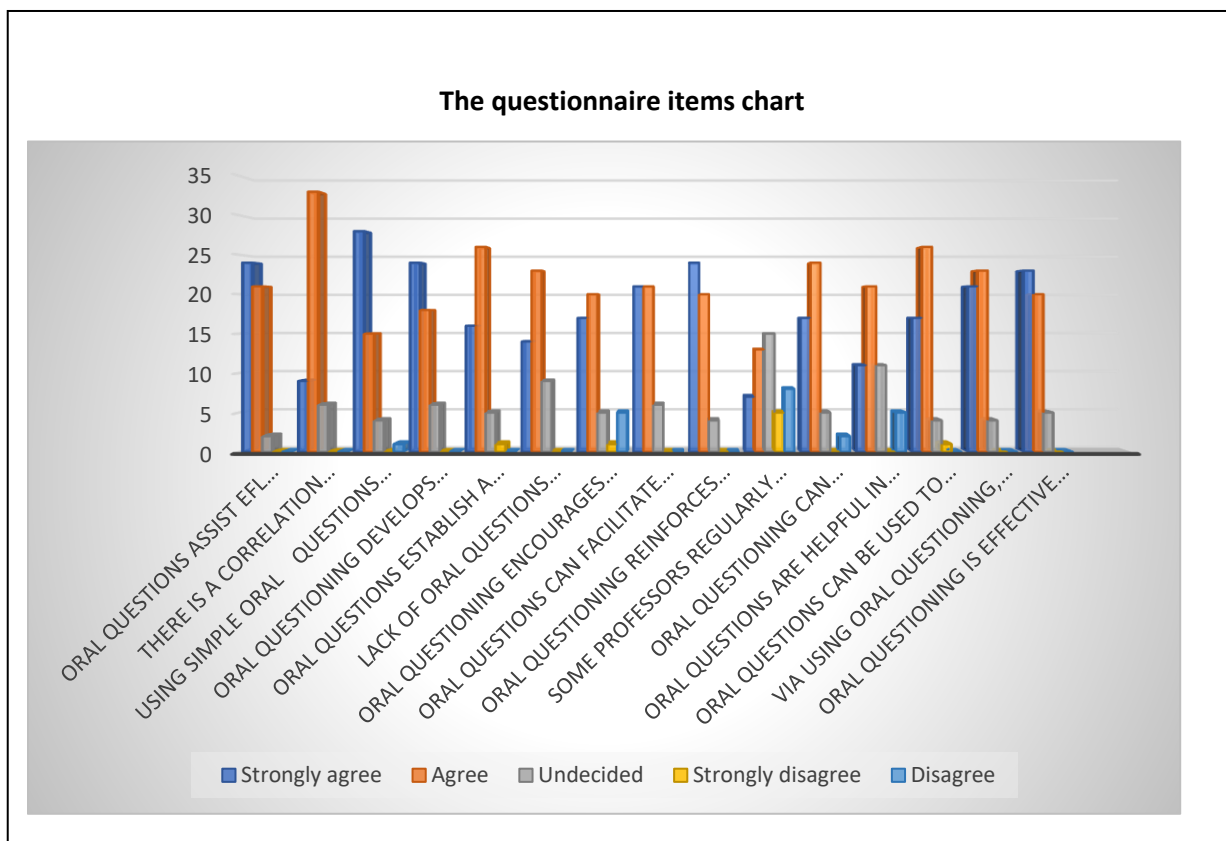
Data Analysis

Item (1) of the instrument, **" Oral questions assist EFL students in learning how to communicate in virtual classes"**, elicited a more or less unanimous response with 45 of the study subjects (that is almost 95% of the total participants) affirming that there is a great impact of the oral questioning techniques on improving the EFL students' communication skills. In other words, only five of them remained neutral with the above item. It is also found that there is a correlation between the inadequate time and the complexity level of oral questioning during classes as affirmed by 86% of the subjects which is clearly stated in the second item of the questionnaire **" There is a correlation between the insufficient time and the complex level of oral questions during classes "**. Additionally, the data also shows that 43 of the respondents, which is nearly (90%) of the entire contributors, approved the strong connection between student' overall understanding of the materials under instruction and the clear usage of oral questioning during classes as revealed in the third item of the questionnaire **" Using simple oral questions confirms students' understanding of the materials they learnt "**. Furthermore, when reflecting on how oral questioning can contribute to the students'

development of critical thinking skills, the majority of the panelists have affirmed this reality while responding to the questionnaire item 4 ″ **Oral questioning develops students' critical thinking skills** ″, and a large majority (87%) of them reported agreement with this questionnaire item. Similarly, the same majority (87%) also believe that oral questioning establishes a strong rapport between students and professors, a factor which is extremely important when it comes to communicative learning approach where effective usage of the target language unquestionably contributes to the overall improvement of the language skills. This conclusion was a result of the participants' responses towards the fifth item ″ **Oral questions establish a strong rapport between EFL students and professors** ″.

The following section includes the distribution of the panelists' reactions towards the questionnaire items (6 -10) in an attempt to identify their various views on each element. The participants were first asked about the probable negative impacts that may result due to lack of oral questions taxonomy on the students'' inclusive learning processes. The item is represented by element 6, **"Lack of oral questions taxonomy or classification, negatively impacts EFL students' learning processes"**, and states that 37% of the subjects agreed with the it while 19% stands in between since they are undecided on this statement. Regarding item 7, **"Oral questioning encourages the shy students to participate efficiently in classroom discussions"**, the data shows that 75% of the participants hold the view that there exists a strong connection between students' effective participation in numerous classroom activities and the implementation of oral questioning approaches. On the other hand, 22% of them have seen no direct connection between students' participation and oral questioning at all. The immediately next item clearly states this point **"Oral questions can facilitate classroom management, particularly when they are effectively used".** A large number (86%) reported that the statement is valid, while 12% of them disagree with it. Moreover, when referring to the subsequent item 9, **"Oral questioning reinforces better communication in the target language between EFL professors and students",** the item was designed to elicit the respondents' viewpoints towards the accuracy of the influence of oral questions on reinforcing better communication between EFL students and professors. The data demonstrate a high percentage of the participants (more than 90%) affirmed the correctness of the questionnaire item. Concerning the next item 10, **"Some professors regularly ignore using oral questions during virtual classes",** expected respondents' views about the ignorance of some professors to the vital role of oral questioning during classes, it is clear that the panelists have responded in a variety of ways: 41% believe that some professors constantly ignore using oral questioning during the virtual classes while 31% were not sure about the precision of the item, and 28% of

the participants were totally against the idea embedded in this item. As indicated by item 11, **"Oral questioning can redirect students to state their ideas clearly in the target language"**, almost 85% of the participants have clearly agreed with the validity of the statement. When referring to the questionnaire item 12, **"Oral questions are helpful in determining the overall EFL students' grades"**, the item is agreed upon by 65% of the respondents study subjects who strongly believe that through oral questions we can determine students' grades while 22% of them adopt a neutral position. To item 13, **"Oral questions can be used to check on reading comprehension tasks"**, the respondents have shown their opinions towards the relationship between oral questioning and checking on the reading comprehension tasks. As a result, the data illustrates that the item has been affirmed by 89% of the participants. The majority of study subjects, 90% in all, also believe that oral questioning can assist students to review what they have learnt. This item is clearly stated by statement 14, **"Via using oral questioning, instructors can assist students to review what they have learnt"**. Finally, it was also found that a vast majority of the panelists (88%) affirmed that we can efficiently use oral questioning to emphasize a certain point during an EFL class as clearly illustrated in the last item, 15, **"Oral questioning is effective when it comes to emphasizing a certain point during EFL classes"**.

Discussion and results

The instrument adequately answered all three research questions with data results being more or less unanimous in support or conflict of an opinion. In this sense, the study adds to available literature which agrees on a few points: i. Oral questioning is an essential element of the EFL classroom, but its success or failure is highly modulated by factors which are an area of action on the teacher's part. This is also a high point of the study as even with teachers being aware of their role, half the task is achieved. However, sometimes teachers are not equipped with the right inputs to make oral questioning, especially in virtual learning environments, as meaningful as its potential. In other words, teacher training needs to be reinforced towards empowering them to use this tool well in their classrooms.

Implementing oral questioning facilitates the interaction process between EFL professors and students in virtual classes, besides it builds up a strong rapport between them. Employing oral questioning promotes EFL learners' critical thinking, discussion, argument and debating skills. Applying oral questioning could be an instrument to motivate learners to participate and engage in classroom activities which enhances their performance particularly spoken skills. Utilizing oral questioning leads to the achievement of intended learning outcomes through emphasizing specific points in form of questions.

Recommendations

The study accordingly recommends the following:

1. The utilization of oral questioning should be adopted by university professors in virtual classes as a significant tool of assessment.

2. Oral questioning in virtual classes is highly recommended as a bridge of interaction between professors and learners.

3. Employing oral questioning in EFL virtual classes is an important instrument to achieve course learning outcomes.

4. Oral questioning should be implemented to enrich critical thinking, discussion in the target language, and speaking skills.

5. Applying oral questioning is immensely advised in EFL virtual classes to reinforce the professor-learner rapport since there is no face-to-face teaching.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the authors feel confident to claim that that implementing oral questioning techniques certainly facilitate learning and teaching of EFL. This hypothesis is proved by the data generated by the fifteen questionnaire items. For instance, it is clearly illustrated ahead that the chart displays the affirmation of the great impact of oral questioning techniques on improving the EFL students' communication skills as (95%) of the total participants have agreed with this particular element. Additionally, the data also shows that (43) of the study subjects which is nearly (90%) of the entire contributors approved the strong connection between student' overall understanding of the materials under instruction and the clear usage of oral questioning during classes as exposed in the third item of the given questionnaire. Finally, when the study subjects were asked to state their viewpoints towards the accuracy of the effect of oral questions on reinforcing strong communication connections between students and professors, the thing which enhances great rapport and facilitates learning of the target language during EFL classes, the study also demonstrates a high percentage of the study subjects exceeded (90%) who affirmed the correctness of the above questionnaire item.

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Appendix

NO.	The Questionnaire Items	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree
1.	Oral questions assist EFL studen in learning how to communicate in virtual classes.					
2.	There is a correlation between insufficient time and the complex level of oral questions during classes.					
3.	Using simple oral questions confirms students' understanding of the materials they learnt.					
4.	Oral questioning develops students' critical thinking skills.					
5.	Oral questions establish a strong rapport between EFL students and professors.					
6.	Lack of oral questions taxonomy or classification negatively impacts EFL students' learning processes.					
7.	Oral questioning encourages shy students to participate efficiently in classroom discussions.					
8.	Oral questions can facilitate classroom management, particularly when they are effectively used.					
9.	Oral questioning reinforces better communication in the target language between EFL professors and students.					
10.	Some professors regularly ignore using oral questions during virtual classes.					

11.	Oral questioning can redirect students to state their ideas clearly in the target language.					
12.	Oral questions are helpful in determining the overall EFL students' grades.					
13.	Oral questions can be used to check on reading comprehension tasks.					
14.	Via using oral questioning, instructors can assist students to review what they have learnt.					
15.	Oral questioning is effective when it comes to emphasizing a certain point during EFL classes.					

Undergraduate EFL Writing: A Study Across Curriculums

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Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the use of writing strategies to evaluate their effects on writing in terms of learners' apprehensions, which, in turn, affect their writing achievement. Findings from this study were geared to minimize the effects of learner apprehension by understanding the symbiotic relationship between foreign language learning, writing performance, and writing strategies. Anxiety is a known factor at play in foreign language classrooms and one that needs continuous evaluation in different paradigms. This study used the writing fear and writing plan inventories with self-report by the participants (N=215) who were EFL major learners enrolled across two curriculums at Qassim University, Saudi Arabia. Limited qualitative data was also collected by interviewing ten participants who volunteered for it. The aim was to isolate outstanding writing specific issues that prevent the production of desirable writing output. The t-test and ANOVA were used to determine the relation between writing and writing approaches and between students with a high and low degree of participation. The results showed that students with a low degree of writing apprehension had more writing than a high degree of fear.

Keywords: *Writing Skill, Writing Apprehension, Writing Performance, Saudi EFL*

Introduction

Reading makes a full man, conference a ready man, and writing an exact man.
                                                                 (Bacon, 1978)

Writing is a crucial skill for academic success. It is a skill which reinforces oral and reading skills in the process of learning a foreign language. It trains the learners in the organization of

thought as an effective ability, there are several obstacles that students encounter while learning to write in a foreign language (FL). This perception of the learners sometimes takes on such gigantic dimensions that they begin to associate fear with the activity. This apprehension also leads to discouragement, which in turn, leads to negative attitudes to writing (Imelda & Astuti, 2019). Most students, both high and low achievers, find composing and considering it as something they must pass only to carry out tests difficult and writing as a correspondence mechanism that sends a message to a reader using a conventional graphical system (Astrini et al., 2020). Writing calls for the structural, creative and complex cognitive method of the poet. As such, Flower and Hayes (1981) concluded that there was insufficient methodology in teaching writing which causes difficulties amongst students to appreciate it.

In a subsequent study, Hayes and Flower (1986) showed that their use of the preparation stage creates far more complex, integrated objectives than novices. Strong writers recognize the importance and understanding of the pre-writing era as "dreaming, sketching, dressing, writing lists, reading, talking and writing." Writing thus is a complex mastering art and places a range of demands on the artist. The writing method includes hard work, expertise and years of experience (Astrini et al., 2020; Jo, 2021; Ariyanti & Fitriana, 2017). It was difficult for many students to write or express their thoughts correctly when they wrote. Due to the very essence of writing as a profession, it is clear that writing has to be developed successfully. Writers need to change many jobs. This method is performed in and after the first year of experience. Particularly within the student's discipline. A strategy-oriented writing preparation also benefits persistence. Until writing a poem, writers can create a writing schedule. The use of the literacy subject areas further increases the students' ability to internalize the content and develop analytical knowledge on subjects (Alhassan, 2019; Abdelmohsen et al., 2019; Bhandari, 2020).Turan and Akdag-Cimen (2020) conducted a meta-analysis of comparative studies, whether for disabled or typically developing pupils, which revealed a great positive effect on writing levels. Results have shown that text quality can be maintained for 4–10 weeks after the treatment.. Based on this, a good author uses a variety of thorough writing tools, such as relevant texts, summarized knowledge, concluded queries, etc. An effective writing process is more likely to influence the quality of our learners' writing. The emphasis on writing is part of the institutional culture. Moreover, the association between comprehensive L1 and L2 curriculum has been shown to strengthen students' tendencies to use meta-knowledge gained in their L1 and L2 essays writing (Rabadi & Rabadi, 2020, Tsao et al., 2017; Nasser, 2020). Several cognitive studies have also shown that experienced authors use better planning and analysis methods than beginning writers, and that learners using active writing tactics are

successful in their language performance task more effectively (Jabali, 2018, McDonough, et al., 2019; Pimada, et al., 2020 ; Vire & Santillán, 2021; Yundayani & Ardiasih, 2021). Writing strategic recommendations has also been popular, especially for young people who have difficulty writing and a powerful strategy for teens. Writing approaches include teaching students methods to plan, revise and alter their compositions (Al-Sobhi et al., 2018;Nurbayti et al., 2020).

Writing Apprehension

Writing apprehension was as a primary topic for students to discuss (Al-Ahdal& Abduh, 2021, Fischer & Meyers, 2017, Britt et al., 2018). Writing anxiety has been described as a fear of writing, which outweighs the expected advantages of writing (Autman & Kelly, 2017;Fischer et al., 2017). Writing anxieties which classify individuals with one or more feelings, beliefs or behavioral combinations that interfere with a person's willingness to begin or work or finish a certain work that they can perform intellectual (Limpo, 2018). Many authors have found practical ways to compose apprehensions (Apawu & Anani, 2017; Marandi & Seyyedrezaie, 2017; Jennifer & Ponniah, 2017), adopting methods that were successful, such as the method of teaching writing, consistent instruction, graduation communication standards and motivation to work in peer groups. In addition to assigning written work, it helps reduce student worries about their papers (Wahyuni & Umam, 2017). McAllister et al., (2017) explored methods to alleviate apprehension in the freshman writing courses. By incorporating journals that allow students ample time to complete schools and encourage valuable peers, Tighe observed that the students' anxiety decreased and their level of writing improved.

Writing Achievement

Writing achievements can be defined as expressing ideas in written form in a second language or in a foreign language with equal consistency and continuity (Aloairdhi, 2019;McAllister et al., 2017). Only a few works concentrated on the study of written anxiety and its effect on results. For example, some studies indicate that the consistency of the encoded letter is negatively affected by written anxiety (Aeni et al., 2017; Aunurrahman, 2019; Soleimani et al., 2020; Wahyuni, et al., 2019). Their written progress and their ability to write or take advanced courses. As with L2, negative associations between the anxiety and L2 outcomes were established. Several polls have shown that highly concerned writers prefer academic graduates and professions that they feel are relatively less published whereas low-level authors choose academic graduates and more writing-intensive jobs. Yet another study has found that the

written anxiety and groups of students are closely connected to written lessons (Wang & Zeng, 2020). Students with low levels of writing anxiety became poor writers in early investigations (Ajmal & Irfan, 2020; Strawser, et al.,2017; Noga & Rupert, 2017). Likewise, a lot of very talented writers are very nervous. In composition classes, students who were extremely depressed were more likely to get low scores. Recently, positive correlations were found between the quality of the written proposals and the ratings.

Difference in Writing Apprehension according to gender

A gender study showed mixed findings on the relationship between fear and gender. There is, however, a common misunderstanding that women are less anxious to publish than men. Daly and his colleagues, for example, found that women are much less willing to write than men. Britt et al. (2018) correlated these results with the fact that in Chinese society, men usually have a lower role, which contributes to a relatively high degree of self-esteem than women. Güler et al. (2017) have claimed that there are as many boys as girls who encounter writing apprehension. In contrast, the study carried out by Sun and Wang (2020) found that women were more anxious than men. There have been no statistically relevant gender differences in other studies. Kavanoz (2017) also reported more anxiety among Taiwanese English students in written anxiety studies. In addition, Arquero et al. (2017) found that the traditional classroom is much tenser for women than for men. Several studies have recorded statistically relevant connections between the study year (i.e. level) and linguistic anxiety. Yih et al. (2018) found that three distinctive FL levels have increased anxiety over the years (start, middle, and advanced) among participants (i.e. freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors). On the other hand, Huerta et al. (2017) noticed that while there was no increase in anxiety depending on the written generation, the respondents in the first year were less anxious while they were the most nervous in the third year.

Research Context

The study of English as a foreign language (EFL) was considered very important in view of the social and economic trends in Saudi Arabia. English is widely considered important for widening external trade, speeding up technical growth and increasing international connectivity and cultural exchanges (Al-Ahdal & Shariq, 2019; Al-Ahdal, 2020; Alsayyali, 2018; Saeed, et al., 2020). In fact, English is the only foreign language that Saudi Arabia teaches as a compulsory subject in basic, intermediate, high and university curriculums at all levels. English-major university students must complete eight stages of writing courses

consecutively. However, after four years of learning English at college level, most of those students are unable to communicate with native speakers. Writing is the written representation of feelings, opinions, wishes and structures that require information and not experience. Professional writing, though, is a strategic activity that involves writing techniques. There have been studies that found that most students had trouble voicing their feelings in writing (Alkhuzaee et al., 2019; Hwa & Peck, 2017 ; Tawakoul, 2018). There are several explanations for this writing attitude; one of them may be anxiety. While some curriculum preparation from the Department of Foreign Languages includes writing courses, the researchers have found that the output of many students in writing is low, which negatively influences their English writing and their achievement in general. Some students are worried about writing an essay in English, and other students have severe composition problems. The lack of understanding of the essential writing techniques to be used for writing an article can be due to these difficulties. These findings raise the question of whether these students apply written techniques and whether they can help boost their performance and minimize their fear of writing.

Research Purposes

Consequent to the above, this study had a threefold aim: (1) to investigate the impacts of writing strategy on student writing apprehension; (2) to discover connections between writing apprehension and written achievement; and (3) to identify the difficulties Saudi EFL major students have while writing in English in their discovery of writing strategies.

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed a hybrid approach to methodology, including quantitative and qualitative approaches. Together, qualitative and quantitative analysis paradigms may include a group overview and snapshot of each student's experience. Using qualitative research methods, especially interviews, promotes better relationships and the gathering of accurate knowledge from non-native participants, as this approach makes better personal ties between the researchers and participants easier. Furthermore, these qualitative interviews allow participants to communicate their individual thoughts, perspectives and expectations informally, without risks.

Participants and Collection of Data

Two hundred fifteen English-major students (92 males and 123 females) participated in the present study. The reason for this level-based selection is that these participants would have already undertaken all writing courses offered by the department at different levels. Ten students were selected for the interview. The quality and quantitative evidence were generated by three primary sources in order to perform this research: (1) a personal interview with each of the ten participants and (2) brief written answers to four questions; (3) a questionnaire and a written inventory of participants' strategies. The questionnaires were completed by the researchers in one full session. Testing was used to analyze the discrepancies in written processes, inventories and men's and women's apprehension questionnaires. MANOVA was used to define potential lacunae in writing techniques and to write interpretations among groups at different level. The relation between writing (independent variables) and writing for analysis was used (dependent variable).

Instrumentation

Writing Anxiety Inventory

The Second Language Writing Anxiety Inventory (SLWAI) was included in this research. SLWAI measures to what extent a person is involved in writing an L2. The SLWAI has good internal coherence with the alpha coefficient of Cronbach 91, which is registered. It consists of 22 objects answered in a Likert scale from 'solid acceptance' to 'strong disagreement.'

Writing Strategies Inventory (SLWAI)

The researcher used the writing techniques of major students of Saudi English. The stock consists of 38 products and consists of three dimensions. Items (1-8) refer to 'before beginning' writing an essay in English, item (9- 22) to 'writing in English,' item (23-38) to 'waiting for revision.' Participants responded to each object by means of a 5-point Likert-scale from 1 (never true) to 5 (Always true).

Interview Tool

Interviews are an abundant source of collecting primary data made up of respondents' views and experiences. In the current study, students were asked to volunteer for one-to-one interviews. Of those interested, ten students were selected based upon heterogenous primary data: eight were women selected: four from the second stage (2 high production and 2 low writing) and four from the eighth stage. Eight persons, four from level two and four from level

eight, were also selected. Students were asked to explain their writing, experience and difficulties, particularly in classrooms. Open-ended questions about the learning techniques used to minimize their writing problems were also addressed. The interviews ranged on average from 40 to 5 minutes per hour. The interview time relied largely on the expression of the subject and, to some degree, on its verbal English skills and on an awareness of the topics in question. The interview consisted of four main questions opened:

1. What are or would-be motivations for using writing assignments or activities in your undergraduate courses?

2. What are challenges or barriers for using writing assignments or activities in your undergraduate courses?

3. Do writing assignments/activities work better in some undergrad courses than others? Explain.

4. Describe a writing assignment or activity that you really like and why. Would you mind sharing these materials with me?

5. Describe a writing assignment or activity that didn't go so well and why. Would you mind sharing these materials with me?

6. What are the challenges you face in your classes?

7. What are the strengths you see in your undergraduate students' writing?

8. What kind of support would you be interested in as it relates to your learning experience?

9. Anything else you'd like to comment on regarding writing?

Results and Discussion

The goal of this study was to explore the relation between writing strategies and written apprehension with the achievement of Saudi EFL major students in writing. An analysis of qualitative and quantitative data has shown that more EFL is involved in writing in English. The theme of the findings is: the use of written techniques and the relationship between fear, writing strategies and the success of writing. There is also discussion of disparities in results, gender and degree of study.

Use of Writing Strategy

Table 1. Writing Strategies

Writing strategies dimensions	Frequency	Percentage %	Rank
1. Prewriting Strategies	212	95%	2

| 2. During Writing Strategies | 200 | 94% | 3 |
| 3. Post Writing Strategies | 221 | 100 | 1 |

To fix the first study issue, the data were submitted to see which group more closely uses written techniques. The Likert scale has a maximum rating of 5 and a minimum rating of 1. The inventory is divided into three variables that represent written strategies. The table shows that the participants preferred the post writing strategies (100%) which is ranked 1. Followed by prewriting strategies (95%), and lastly the during writing strategies (94%). The first research subject was the study of the written methods of EFL-major students. The inventory of the written technical data used in this study has been split into three dimensions: English-language pre-test strategy and English-language theoretical strategy. The new research participants have employed the second composite technique (writing in English). The third (i.e., during revision) is the second and ultimately the first is the third dimension. Many studies have shown that expert writers use superior methods as inexperienced student authors to plan and rewrite (Alamri, 2020, Alghabban, et al., 2017; Bjerkvik & Hilli, 2019; Jabali, 2018; Qu, 2017). The lack of adequate written information found by pupils during the current study can be attributed to a lack of supervised written teaching techniques, particularly during public school education. This was further strengthened by interviews revealing that all participants were given no open guidance about how to treat their prose, apart from suggestions on the essay and basic grammatical and lexical instructions. Another explanation is that students have taken inadequately written approaches for studying those courses. The students were then ready to write.

Test of Relationship Between Writing Anxiety, Writing Strategies and Writing Achievement

Table 2. Test of Relationship

	Writing anxiety	Writing Strategies	Writing Achievement
Total of writing anxiety	1.000		
Writing strategies	-.332	1.000	
Writing achievement	-.345	.345	1.000

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

The results show that the correlation between writing and anxiety/apprehension is negative. There are also negative connections between writing and anxiety. These indicate that

participants lack experience of writing methods. These findings further indicate that the students' apprehension has affected their use of methods and writing greatly. The findings show that the relationship between writing and writing strategies is unfavorable. This result is consistent with (Altinmakas & Bayyurt, 2019) results, which revealed that students' anxiety diminished and their writing rates increased after using those methods. The results discussed were also connected to a familiar line of research which shows that inefficient strategic usage induces written anxiety (Rakedzon & Baram-Tsabari, 2017;Marleni, 2020). Based on these findings, it may be suggested that writing and holding students up to speed with these methods and how and where they can use them can potentially mitigate tension and improve writing efficiency. The research participants concentrated mostly on writing techniques and did not concentrate on writing habits before writing or during the evaluation process. Finally, these findings advocated using a written approach in previous studies and concluded that writing and learning methods are well related. These results from the study indicate that students with strong writing methods are more successful at overcoming a language impediment to language success (Abd Rahim & Halim, 2017; Kusmayadi & Suryana, 2017; Lestari, 2017; Putri, 2018; Rokhmah, 2020).

Gender Difference the writing anxiety, strategies and achievement when grouped according to gender

Table 3. Gender Difference the writing anxiety, strategies and achievement when grouped according to gender

	Gender	N	t	sig
Total of writing anxiety	Male	92	-.591	0.549
	Female	123		
Total of writing strategies	Male	92	-2.723	0.007
	Female	123		
Writing achievement	Male	92	-1.160	.247
	Female	123		

Table 3 shows the rest of difference on the writing anxiety, strategies and achievement when grouped according to gender. It reveals that the average strategies of writing for boys differ greatly. There are no significant variations in writing anxiety and writing between boys and girls. The findings in current studies indicate that there were significant differences in the total use of writing strategies in males. This discovery illustrates a variety of recent studies

suggesting that women use less language education than men (Yang, 2018; Zhang, et al., 2019). Instead, some recent studies have demonstrated greater use of female language learning strategies (Naroozi, et al., 2020, Ilahiyah et al., 209). Interestingly, a more recent report found no major difference between men and women in the use of analysis learning strategies (Tang & Toms, 2013; Sthlsatz et al., 2020). In terms of current study, helping the female EFL-big students to use written strategies, including enabling organizers of graphics in general, appears to be critically necessary. There are still no significant differences in written anxiety between men and women in recent study findings. However, this finding defied the findings of Aripin and Rahmat (2021) which showed that female students felt more depressed than male students when assigned writing tasks. Similarly, Daly and his colleagues found that women students are significantly less concerned with writing than male students (Houston, 2017). As such, the findings of this analysis indicate that gender cannot be an important factor with regard to the success of writing by EFL students. Rather it goes to show that both boys and girls are tough competitors.

Interviews

The last two subjects are based on Saudi EFL issues and the methods used in English essays. Via interviews, the study looked at how participants solved their language difficulties in written essays. Quantitative data analysis found that early instruction in English writing was necessary for language issues to be understood. Interviews demonstrated that the respondents are aware of the importance of English for professional survival and better conditions of employment. Therefore, teachers should consider early writing activities for their EFL learners and prepare relevant and successful written plans for their students. Composition may be composed of fixed sentences and simple sentences with minimum writing. At the beginning of their classes, language teachers must also address their students' questions and objections and provide them with acceptable approaches, mainly written essays or compositions.

Conclusion

The current study aimed to analyze students' use of writing skills and their connections to writing fear and writing apprehension. It also aimed to discover how writing strategies mitigate writing concerns and contribute to primary EFL students' success in writing, including the ties between foreign language anxiety, writing success, and writing strategies. The results showed that the students who used effective writing strategies improved their language efficiency. EFL teachers must also strive to make students understand how their writing methods can impact

their EFL education achievement. This approach should be practiced not only by EFL professors at university level but also in the early stages of EFL education. This research highlights that gender is not a significant factor in the EFL writing process, as in education, psychology and language studies, though there are differences in the strategies that they choose for writing output.

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The Language Teacher and Native-speakerism in Saudi English Medium Schools: Pride or Prejudice?

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Abstract

This paper investigates the prevalence of native-speakerism, as defined by Holliday (2005), in the recruitment practices of three English language schools in Saudi Arabia. Three directors of three different English language schools were interviewed to investigate their perceptions of the 'native vs. non-native' dichotomy. Due to the small number of participants, this paper does not intend to draw general conclusions that represent the overall view of all Saudi English language schools' directors on the topic. Instead, it draws on Malterud et al.'s concept of *information power* (2016) and argues that a small sample can actually produce more detailed information than a larger one. The findings show that the participants consider anyone who was born in a country such as the USA, the UK, Australia or New Zealand, holds the nationality of that country and speaks a particular variety of English to be a 'native speaker'. The study concludes that, in the Saudi context, native-speakerism is not racially or ethnically motivated as many studies on native-speakerism have suggested. Rather, the teachers' nationality, accent and place of birth are the core aspects that define 'native speaker' teachers. Therefore, native-speakerism may not only discriminate against 'non-native speaker' teachers, but could also create divisions amongst 'native speakers' themselves based on their variety of English and place of birth.

1- Introduction

According to Holliday (2005, p. 4), a division that can be described in terms of 'native' and 'non-native speakers' has been created within TESOL. The alleged distinction between these two categories is that those who come from the USA, Canada, the UK, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and "a scattering of other territories" are 'native-speakers' of English, whilst those who live in other countries are 'non-native speakers' (Crystal, 2006, pp. 422-423). However, scholarly debates in applied linguistics have problematised such a distinction. Although it is not the intention of this article to review these debates in detail, highlighting two of the arguments that have problematised the distinctions between 'native speakers' and 'non-native speakers' may be useful here. Before reviewing these arguments, however, it is important to point out, as Holliday (2005) did, that the terms 'native speaker' and 'non-native speaker' will be placed in inverted commas throughout this article because, although these are questionable terms, that is how they are used in the discourse.

Jenkins (2000) offers the first example related to problematising the distinction between 'native speaker' and 'non-native speaker' when she points out that many varieties of English are spoken in countries such as Singapore where English is not only an official language but is also spoken at home between family members. In addition, in multilingual societies such as India and some African countries, English is acquired alongside other local languages, which blurs the distinction between an individual's first language and their second language and makes it difficult to identify any distinction (Jenkins, 2000).

The second example comes from Kramsch (1997), who asserts that those who are categorised as 'native speakers' do not speak an idealised, standardised version of English any more than 'non-native speakers' do and that their English—just like that of 'non-native speakers'—is influenced by geography, age and social status. Therefore, drawing a clear distinction between 'native speakers' and 'non-native speakers' categories seems problematic.

Nonetheless, a tendency to model the pronunciation, grammar and English use of 'native-speakers' continues to exist (Swan et al., 2015). Holliday (2005) argues that this tendency is an ideology rooted in the politics of TESOL where there is "an unequal power relationship between different regions of the world—between a well-sourced, politically and

economically aggressive, colonising, Western 'Centre' and an under-resourced, colonised 'Periphery'" (p. 2). Holliday (2005) uses the term *native-speakerism* to describe this ideology, and, thus, he defines native-speakerism as "an established belief that 'native-speaker teachers represent a 'Western culture' from which spring the ideals both of the English language and of English language teaching methodology" (p. 6). As a result, Holliday (2017) asserts that this ideology has created an *Other* in the form of deficient 'non-native' speaker teachers who, unlike their idealised 'native speaker' counterparts, are less capable of teaching English, which, in turn, has affected the employment opportunities of 'non-native speakers'.

Furthermore, Holliday (2017) goes on to argue that favouring 'native speaker' teachers when it comes to employment opportunities "is less to do with language and more to do with an association with "Whiteness" … "non-White" teachers who have spoken English from birth are categorised either implicitly or explicitly as "non-native speakers" (p. 2). The suggestion of linking 'native-speaker' teachers to their racial profiles is apparent in Braine's (2005) study on a number of students' perceptions of 'native speaker' teachers. He reports that the students in his study view all Caucasians—regardless of their nationalities—as 'native speakers', whilst American-born Asians may not be considered 'native speakers' because they are not Caucasians. Mahboob (2006) viewed a number of English teaching vacancies and discovered that being 'white' and Caucasian was explicitly mentioned as a requirement to hold the position. More disturbingly, Sketchley (2017) reported an English language teaching vacancy advertisement in China entitled "no Asian face", which, besides being racist, disqualifies candidates who have Asian features, even if they hold the 'native speaker' characteristics that many employers seek such as nationality and place of birth. Therefore, the ideology of native-speakerism presented by Holliday (2005) that idealises "Western culture" (p. 6) as a source of English language and English language teaching methodology is manifested in different forms such as the racial profiles of English teachers, rather than their linguistic competence.

In order to investigate the influence of native-speakerism on the recruitment process and job opportunities for English language teachers in Saudi Arabia from the perspective of recruiters, three directors from three different English language schools in Saudi Arabia that recruit English language teachers were interviewed for this study. The term 'English language schools' here refers to specialised schools or institutions where English language is the only subject that is taught. They tend to be private institutions in most cases or English language centres at universities. In order to investigate this topic, the paper starts with a review of the literature that challenged native-speakerism in the field of TESOL and then proceeds to review the presence of native-speakerism in the Saudi context. The second part of the paper discusses

the methodology used for the data collection before discussing the study's findings. The findings show that native-speakerism is manifested in three different forms: the nationality of the English language teachers, their accent and their birthplace.

2- Literature review

2.1- Challenging the ideology

Native-speakerism has been challenged for more than three decades. Paikeday (1985), for instance, problematised the notion and argued that 'the native speaker' "exists only as a figment of a linguist's imagination" (p. 12), while Phillipson (1992) claimed that the notion is a fallacy and is a socially constructed rather than an objective reality (Aneja, 2016; Lowe & Pinner, 2016). Rampton (1990) then proposed the term 'expert speaker' as an alternative. This term included every successful speaker of English; hence, being a 'native speaker' is not strictly a status that is acquired by birth, as anyone who masters the language can be a 'native speaker' at a later stage (Davies, 1991, 2003).

Despite the large number of more recent works that have problematised native-speakerism (e.g., Braine, 2010; Canagarajah, 2002; Graddol, 2006; Holliday, 2017, 2008, 2006, 2005; Kumaravadivelu, 2016, 2012; Mahboob, 2010; Moussu & Llurda, 2008; Rudolph et al., 2015), native-speakerism continues to dominate the TESOL professions and, as Holliday (2015) argues:

> Although the native-non-native speaker division is well-established as a problem, as an ideology, native-speakerism has almost disappeared between the lines of our everyday professional lives. This is particularly damaging because issues may appear to have been solved when in fact they have not. (p. 11)

One form of the damage that Holliday (2015) refers to is the discrimination against 'non-native speaker' teachers when it comes to employment (Aneja, 2016; Holliday, 2008, 2006, Kabel, 2009; Kiczkowiak, 2017; Moussu & Llurda, 2008; Lowe & Pinner, 2016; Rudolph, 2019; Ruecker, 2011; Selvi, 2010; Benattabou, 2020). Although the native-non-native distinctions are merely constructed ideologies and thus have no technical linguistic grounds (Holliday, 2017), a large number of employers consider being a 'native speaker' to be a requirement when hiring English teachers (Clark & Paran, 2007; Mahboob & Golden, 2013; Selvi, 2010). Moreover, in addition to the fallacy and the lack of linguistic evidence that supports the native-non-native distinction, 'non-native' teachers are seen as "dependent, hierarchical, collectivist, reticent, indirect, passive, docile, lacking in self-esteem, reluctant to challenge authority, easily dominated, undemocratic, traditional, Confucian, Islamic … etc."

(Holliday, 2005, p. 19). Holliday (2017) goes further to argue that the ideology of native-speakerism is a form of neo-racism which creates a culturally deficit 'Other' on the one hand and links the 'native speaker' to 'whiteness' on the other. For this reason, native-speakerism poses a real challenge to 'non-native' speaker teachers.

2.2- Possible advantages of the native-speaker teacher of English

While the debate on the pros and cons of native versus non-native language teacher goes on, it would, however, be inadvisable to lightly dismiss some of the perceived advantages that may result from engaging the native-speaker teacher rather than the non-native speaker teacher in specific circumstances. Doing so will certainly not help the learners in the long run, because it is their needs that the teaching community caters to. In order to evaluate the advantages of hiring native speaker over non-native speaker teachers of English, there is, however, a need for greater investigation of students' needs and how these can be met, or not met, by each group. There is, therefore, a need for research that diligently examines and logs learner needs as the guiding force in teacher selection to discover if learners of English have aims that go beyond simply gaining language proficiency. If groups of learners, for instance, need to learn the subtleties, colloquialisms and pronunciation of the language for some specific purpose such as overseas employment or extended travel or reside in a particular English-speaking country (e.g., North America, Australia or New Zealand), employing a native-speaker teacher of that country may actually be a more sagacious choice. In addition, a native speaker may possess an advantage over the non-native speaker when it comes to helping learners to understand and correctly use culture-specific features such as euphemisms, humour, or even sarcasm. Thus, where one of the learning objectives is acclimatisation to the target language's nation-specific culture, employing native-speakers may better address that need. However, the key word is nation-specific, as there may be few instances of learners' 'needing' to learn the culture and language variety of a particular country, and so such situations may not adequately justify employing a native speaker teacher in preference to a native-born speaker of English. Indeed, Walkinshaw and Oanh's (2014) study with English learners in Vietnam and Japan summarises similar opinions and concludes, unsurprisingly, that each of the native or non-native speaker teacher choices brings its own mixed bag of pros and cons with it and that neither one of the two can be declared superior to the other.

2.3- Native-speakerism in Saudi Arabia

A few studies have tackled native-speakerism in the Saudi context. Alseweed (2012), for instance, conducted a questionnaire survey with 169 Saudi university students to measure their perceptions of their 'native speaker' and 'non-native speaker' teachers in the classroom. He concluded that there was a preference for 'native speaker' teachers over their 'non-native speaker' counterparts, especially when the students reached an advanced level. However, the only time the students favoured 'non-native speaker' teachers was when it came to understanding the students' needs, since, compared to their 'native speaker' counterparts, they were more eager to respond to the students' needs.

Similarly, Qadeer (2019) surveyed 136 Saudi students studying English at a state university in an attempt to discover their perceptions of their 'native speaker' and 'non-native speaker' teachers. He reported that the respondents preferred 'native speaker' teachers over their 'non-native speaker' colleagues when it came to teaching speaking and listening skills. However, the respondents preferred their 'non-native speaker' teachers when they were teaching reading, writing and grammar. Although this preference for 'non-native speaker' teachers may seem to go some way towards settling the 'native vs. non-native' dichotomy, this preference did not extend to conversational skills (i.e., speaking and listening), because these skills are owned by the idealised 'native speaker' (Holliday, 2005; Kramsch, 1997; Dendup. (2020).

Both studies show the influence of native-speakerism when it comes to the students' perceptions. Alenazi (2012) tackled the issue from the recruiters' perspectives. He surveyed 56 TESOL recruiters in Saudi Arabia and concluded that nationality, accent, academic qualifications, teaching experience as well as being a 'native speaker' were the main criteria that the recruiters were looking for when hiring English language teachers.

Despite the limited number of studies that have been conducted in the Saudi context, it appears that the preference for 'native speaker' teachers is still prevalent when it comes to recruiting English teachers. The current paper, therefore, contributes to the existing literature on the 'native vs. non-native' speaker dichotomy in the Saudi context in two different ways. First, it enriches the discussion of the topic in the Saudi context, where studies on the topic are few. Secondly, although similar to Alenazi's study (2012) in some ways, the present study investigates the topic from the recruiters' perspective and is, therefore, different because it is a qualitative rather than a quantitative study. Employing interviews enabled the researcher to gather deeper and richer insights into the topic.

3- Methodology

3.1- The method

This paper investigates the presence of native-speakerism in English language schools in Saudi Arabia with regard to the hiring process and employment opportunities. Hence, the study poses the following research questions:

1- To what extent is native-speakerism present in English language schools in Saudi Arabia?

2- What are the criteria for recruiting English teachers in English schools in Saudi Arabia?

3- How do recruiters define a 'native speaker' teacher?

In order to answer these research questions, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the directors of three different English language schools; two of the schools are privately owned, whilst the third is a language centre belonging to a Saudi state university. Initially, ten English language schools' directors were approached to take part in the study; three declined to participate and three showed an interest in taking part. The participants were asked about their views on the 'native vs. non-native' speaker dichotomy; they were also presented with the counterarguments that problematised the notion in order to elicit their responses.

3.2- The sample size

As pointed out earlier, only three out of the ten directors who were initially contacted showed an interest in taking part in the study. Finding English language school directors who were keen to fit an interview in their busy schedule was the most difficult challenge in conducting this study. Some directors took a long time to respond; others initially agreed to take part in the study, booked an appointment but then declined later, whilst others declined immediately. In order to avoid encountering similar difficulties in future studies, the researcher asked the participants who had declined to take part in the reasons behind their decision not to participate. Although these directors claimed that they would not mind answering a questionnaire, they said that they did not wish to take part in an interview, because they could not spare the time to do so. However, another reason why they may not have wanted to take part in the study may in part be related to the "culture of suspicion" when it comes to conducting interviews in the Middle East (Clark, 2006, p. 418). Although Clark (2006) was referring to political research in the Middle East and how participants could fear prosecutions as a result of expressing their political views during interviews, two of the directors who took part in the study did exhibit some suspicion during their interviews, despite the fact they had been assured that the

anonymity of their identity and confidentiality of the interview were fully protected by the code of ethics in research at King Faisal University, and the fact that their interview data would be given a code to obscure their identities and institutional affiliations. The names of the participants here onwards in this study, however, have been given by the researcher for the sole purposes of confidentiality.

The first participant, Mohammed, refused to allow a data recording device to be used during the interview since he did not want his voice to be recorded even after assuring him that the recording was for transcription purpose only. The second participant, Rasheed, asked the researcher to record a disclaimer in his voice that no part of the interview would be shared with rival English language schools in any way whatsoever that might give them an edge over the former. Although Rasheed's request could anyhow have come to naught given the fact that editing of the said declaration was possible later, the researcher complied to reassure him. Hassan was the only participant who was not concerned about any aspect of the interview, since he had been previously introduced to the researcher by a mutual colleague.

Clearly, these challenges were a result of not building trust with the participants prior to the interview which, as Clark (2006) points out, is necessary. However, establishing a relationship built on trust with the participants before conducting the interviews was not possible, since they are busy individuals and had agreed to meet only once for the interview.

3.3- Information power

Since the study comprises only three participants, such a small sample size may not be fully representative of the views of all Saudi English language school directors on the topic. However, in order to elicit sufficient data from only three participants, the article draws on Malterud et al.'s concept of *information power* (2016, p. 1754). Although they proposed its use in qualitative health research, their concept proved very relevant and useful to this study, since it deals with qualitative research and in-depth interviews with a small-sized sample. Malterud et al. (2016) argue that the "larger information power the sample holds, the lower N [number of participants] is needed, and vice versa". Malterud et al. (2016) identify five items that impact sufficient *information power*. First, *the aim of the study*: if the aim of the study was to investigate rare or specific experiences, then the number of eligible participants will be limited. Since the aim of this study is to investigate the issue of native-speakerism in Saudi Arabia specifically from the recruiters' angle, this group i.e., English language schools' directors and their experiences proved to be rare and specific. Consequently, conducting interviews with a

larger group of directors and getting their insights from a qualitative research point of view would necessarily have proved challenging.

The second item that influences the *information power* is *sample specificity*. Malterud et al. (2016, p. 1755) state that "a less extensive sample is needed with participants holding characteristics that are highly specific for the study aim … A sample including individuals from the target group holding experiences not previously described could also enhance information power". Although the experiences of English language schools' recruiters on native-speakerism has been described in the literature, those experiences were mostly described quantitatively, whereas this study aims to provide rich qualitative data that tackles native-speakerism in Saudi Arabia from the recruiters' perspectives.

Thirdly, the *information power* is also influenced by the use of *established theory*. Malterud et al. (2016) point out that studies that are supported by limited theoretical perspectives require larger samples than do studies that use theories for planning and analysis. This study draws on the native vs. non-native dichotomy in general. That dichotomy is well-established in the literature and this paper uses Holliday's (2005) theoretical framework of native-speakerism for the purposes of planning and analysis. Therefore, as native vs. non-native speakerism is supported by sufficient theoretical perspectives, investigating it from a new perspective does not require larger samples, unlike studies that have little or no theoretical perspectives or need larger samples to enable the researcher to draw concrete conclusions (Malterud et al., 2016). Moreover, Malterud et al. (2016, p. 1755) state that "empirical studies with very small numbers can make a difference if they address and elucidate something crucial to the theory". Therefore, although its findings are based on three participants only, this study does make a difference by adding theoretical perspectives to Holliday's (2005) native-speakerism, as will be explored later in this paper.

The fourth item in Malterud et al.'s (2016) concept of *information power* is *quality of dialogue.* They argue that:

> information power is also related to the quality of the interview dialogue. A study with strong and clear communication between researcher and participants requires fewer participants to offer sufficient information power than a study with ambiguous or unfocused dialogues. In a qualitative study, empirical data are co-constructed by complex interaction between researcher and participant, and a number of issues determine the quality of the communication from which the information power is established. (Malterud et al., 2016, p. 1755)

Since conversations are an effective way to access reality (Burgess, 1984), this study used in-depth semi-structured interviews which focused on investigating native-speakerism in Saudi

Arabia from the recruiters' perspective. A number of topics were covered during the interviews such as the recruiters' definition of 'native-speakers' and their recruitment policies. This theme-focused strategy aimed to show the complex understandings of the individual, or the 'emic' strategy, as Kottak (2006, pp. 42-43) puts it. Because an emic strategy investigates how natives think, conversations are an effective way to access reality (Burgess, 1984) in terms of how individuals perceive and categorise the world, what their shared rules for behaviour and thought are, what has meaning for them and how they imagine and explain things. Therefore, although only three participants were interviewed, the deep and focused dialogues with each participant yielded valuable insight on the topic. In fact, the small number of participants enhanced the level of the depth of the conversations with the participants, and thus, established *information power.*

The final item that impacts *information power,* according to (Malterud et al., 2016), is the *analysis strategy,* whether a cross-case or a case strategy. The focus of a cross-case strategy is to provide general exploratory analysis; this approach, therefore, requires larger sample-size than a case strategy does. As the focus of a case strategy is, however, to provide deeper analysis, fewer participants are required. Since this study uses thematic analysis (Clarke, 2006), interviews began by providing broad themes for the participants to discuss and then analysed the themes under more specific subthemes, it was deemed appropriate to have a smaller number of participants, because using thematic analysis with larger groups of participants makes it more difficult to present or organise the resultant data which have a countereffect on the analysis.

As Crouch and McKenzie (2006) note, the use of small-sized samples is becoming more common in social sciences and has positive advantages. Although only three of the ten invited English language schools' directors were prepared to take part in the study, those who did were effectively able to provide deeper data and valuable insights into the issue of native-speakerism in Saudi Arabia from the recruiters' angle specifically. Moreover, interviewing recruiters fulfilled the research's aim to show the complex understandings of the individual, or the 'emic' strategy (Kottak, 2006, pp. 42-43), by investigating how natives think, how they perceive and categorise the world, what their shared rules for behaviour and thought are, what has meaning for them and how they imagine and explain things.

3.4- The participants

1- Mohammed: A Saudi citizen in his thirties and the director of a branch of an English language school chain in Saudi Arabia.

2- Rasheed: A Jordanian citizen in his forties and the regional director of a group of English language schools in Saudi Arabia.

3- Hassan: A Jordanian citizen in his late sixties. He will be retiring from work in the next few months and holds a PhD in TESOL. He is the most senior and the most experienced of the three directors.

Disclaimer: The names and nationalities given to the participants are pseudonyms and do not relate to the participants' real identities.

4- Findings

The results from the first part of the interviews indicated that the participants agree on a number of requirements when hiring English language teachers at their language schools. These were their academic qualifications, for instance, holding a degree in a TESOL-related subject area, their personality and being a 'native speaker'. Since the focus of this paper is on native-speakerism, the discussion of the findings will focus only on the requirement of being a 'native speaker' teacher.

In the second part of the interview, clips of five individuals speaking English were played to the participants. Both Mohammed and Hassan ranked the third speaker as the most intelligible, whilst the fifth was judged to be the least intelligible. In terms of recruitment, however, the fourth speaker's variety of English was the first choice for both Mohammed and Hassan, whilst the second speaker was their last choice. Figure 1 illustrates these recruiters' responses to all five of the speakers in the clips. Rasheed, however, made quite different choices. He stated that out of the five different speakers, only speakers 3 and 4 were intelligible. Nevertheless, when deciding who to recruit, Rasheed said that only speaker 4 would be recruited, because, unlike speaker 3, he is a 'native speaker'.

Figure 1

Mohammed and Hassan's Responses to the Five Different Speakers

	Nationality	First Language and English Accent	Intelligibility	Recruitment
Speaker 1	British	English (Scottish)	3rd	2nd
Speaker 2	Indian	Hindi (Indian)	4th	5th

Speaker 3	German	German (German)	1st	4th
Speaker 4	British	English (RP)	2nd	1st
Speaker 5	British	English (Geordie)	5th	3rd

5- Discussion

The findings show that all the participants found that the variety of English spoken by speakers 3 and 4 was the easiest to understand, whilst speakers 2 and 5 were the most difficult to understand. However, with regard to recruitment, being a 'native speaker' became the main criterion regardless of the speaker's intelligibility. The participants' definitions of a 'native speaker' contained three different criteria that a candidate must fulfil in order to be considered as a 'native speaker': nationality, accent and place of birth.

5.1- Nationality

The theme of a teacher's nationality commonly recurred during the interviews. It appears that the participants take the nationalities of their potential English language teachers into consideration for two reasons: at a micro-level it is the recruiters and their students who determine who qualifies as a 'native speaker', and, on a wider macro level, nationality matters because strict Saudi regulations mean that work permits are issued only to nationals of certain countries.

At the micro level, recruiters of English teachers believe that the English language is 'owned' by individuals from certain countries such as the USA, the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa (Romney, 2010). On asking Rasheed whether Singaporean citizens who speak English at home qualify as 'native speakers', he said:

> *They [Singaporean citizens] are not native speakers ... because we [at our English language school] only consider [those from] the USA, the UK, Australia and New Zealand to be English native speakers.*

Mohammed was asked the same question about Singaporean citizens and he stated:

> *Singaporean are not native speakers ... I understand that they speak English officially and at home but this is not how the society perceives native speakers, you know... native speakers are those from the USA, UK and Australia ... English is their language.*

Both statements show how the perception of who a 'native speaker' is is socially constructed (Aneja, 2016; Lowe & Pinner, 2016) rather than linguistically evident (Holliday, 2017). The social construction of the term does not concern recruiters alone, but is also important for students. Here, Rasheed made an important point when he pointed out:

> *For me it's not a matter of personal preference [for defining who a native speaker is] but rather a matter of business and the best outcomes for our students.*

This remark shows that since English language schools are essentially business-motivated, fulfilling their students' demands to provide them with 'native speaker' teachers is a high priority regardless of the recruiters' perceptions of 'native speaker' teachers. However, Holliday's (2008) response to such claims seems highly appropriate:

> I am not at all sure that this is a valid excuse. It certainly would not hold if we were to make the excuse that employers should hold on to the idea that certain occupations should be carried out by women or black people because their customers demand it. We all have the responsibility to educate our customers. (p. 121)

As the discussion above indicates, the first reason for choosing English language teachers from certain nations such as the USA, the UK and Australia is related to both the recruiters' and the students' beliefs that those teachers own the English language and, therefore, that they can deliver it better than their 'non-native speaker' counterparts.

The second reason for choosing teachers from countries such as the USA, the UK, New Zealand or Australia is related to the work permit regulations imposed by many governments on foreign workers (Ruecker & Ives, 2015; Selvi, 2010). Saudi Arabia's nationalisation scheme—*Saudiization*—whereby Saudi nationals have priority in the job market is designed to reduce the country's reliance on foreign labour in the private sector. As a result, the Saudi government has reduced the number of work permits it issues for foreigners for a very wide range of jobs. However, the issuing of work permits for English teachers from countries such as the USA, the UK, Australia and New Zealand continues, despite the fact that hundreds of Saudi nationals have degrees in English language from Saudi universities. Needless to say, it is not an intention here to suggest that, in order to support *Saudiization,* English teachers who are Saudi nationals should be prioritised over other nationals when recruiting workers. Rather, it is argued that continuing the hiring of English language teachers from certain nationalities, in spite of the large number of Saudi national teachers of English language, brings the issue of the ownership of the English language to the surface yet again (Romney, 2010).

Moreover, issuing work permits for English teachers from certain nationalities indicates that the ideology of native-speakerism where 'Western culture' is the ideal source for English (Holliday, 2005) is deeply rooted in the whole educational system rather than simply in individual cases of some English language schools' recruiters and their students.

Furthermore, unlike any other professions where individuals can be trained to become skilful professionals, TESOL would seem to be a profession that is inherited (Ashraf, 2016) rather than acquired. Consequently, the hundreds of English language graduates who leave universities every year in Saudi Arabia have only a small chance of gaining an English language teaching post in Saudi English language schools, and, even if they are hired, they will be underpaid compared to 'native speaker' teachers (Correa, 2018). Acceptance of such inequality can be seen in Hassan's response when he was asked about his views on the high salaries paid to 'native speaker' teachers.

> *Of course, they [native speaker teachers] are highly paid … they even get paid more than me… they experience difficulties such as homesickness and culture shock when they are here… so they should be paid a high salary.*

Hassan's response shows his acceptance of being paid less than his 'native speaker' staff even though he is the director with a PhD in TESOL and is more qualified than them. Although he tried to justify the pay gap by mentioning homesickness and culture shock, his next remark shows the deeper reason why 'native speakers' are paid more than 'non-native speakers'.

> *Whatever the qualifications and ability and efficiency and proficiency of the non-native speaker teachers, [they] will not match the accent, the speech dynamics and the [teaching] environment of native-speaker teachers.*

This excerpt shows the sense of inferiority (Rajagopalan, 2005; Medgyes, 1994) that many 'non-native speaker' teachers experience due to their belief that, as Liu (2005) puts it, they "will never measure up to the linguistic standards that are so valued in their profession, such as a native accent from the US or UK. They will be led to believe that their interlanguage, or the knowledge of the L2 they possess, is always inadequate" (p. 156). Therefore, Hassan's acceptance of getting paid less than his native-speaker staff and his justifications for this pay gap not only show the financial impact of native-speakerism on 'non-native speaker' teachers, but the serious impact that native-speakerism has on, for example, their self-esteem which, in turn, results in professional difficulties such as lack of publication in prestigious journals and refusal to take part in teacher training courses (Jenkins, 2000). Hassan's experience of the inequitable treatment of 'native' and 'non-native' language teachers further exemplifies the

neo-racism (Holliday, 2017) that the ideology of native-speakerism—manifested in prioritising certain nationalities—brings to the profession.

5.2- The right, pure and clear accent

The second aspect that defines 'native speaker' teachers, according to the participants, is accent. As Mohammed states:

> *A native speaker teacher must have the right accent. I mean the accent should be clear, you know … like native speakers.*

Similarly, Rasheed argues:

> *A native speaker must not have an influence of another accent on their speech… it has to be pure.*

As these comments show, both Mohammed and Rasheed describe the accents of 'native speakers' as *right*, *clear* and *pure*. 'Purity' here relates to not having any foreign accent present in the teacher's English (Medgyes, 1992; Scovel, 1969, 1998) and, therefore, monolingualism is the norm for defining a 'native speaker' (Jenkins, 2000). Nevertheless, although Mahboob (2010) argues that language variations—such as New York accents compared to southern accents in the USA, or Scottish accents compared to London accents in the UK—are natural phenomena, Rasheed asserts that he would not hire a Scottish nor an Irish teacher.

> *We've never hired a Scottish [teacher], and I don't hire Scottish people. With all respect … it's because of their accent. I ask Scottish people to repeat over and over for me to understand … their accent is really hard to understand and Irish as well … pure Irish are really hard to understand.*

Although Scotland is part of the UK, which fulfils the nationality requirement that Rasheed indicated he wanted, as discussed earlier, he actually seems to be referring to what is known as received pronunciation or "the original English accent" when referring to the British accent (Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2005, p. 232) which is a mandatory requirement for many English teaching jobs in places such as Hong Kong (Braine, 2010) and the Arabian Gulf (Ashraf, 2016).

Nevertheless, both Hassan and Mohammed point out that they would hire any 'native speaker' teachers regardless of their accent and the variety of English that they speak, even though the majority of English learners experience intelligibility challenges when they are taught by 'native speaker' teachers (Cook, 1999). In fact, both Hassan and Mohammed maintain that they themselves find varieties of English such as Geordie and Scottish difficult to comprehend, as they ranked them fifth and third for intelligibility (see Figure 1).

Nonetheless, Hassan argues at one point in the interview that such 'native' varieties of English are difficult to comprehend because they are 'too advanced', and, therefore, the issue is not about a particular variety of English being unclear, but rather about the fact that the listener's linguistic competence is not yet advanced enough to comprehend it. After asking him about the Indian speaker in the clip and whether her accent may be 'too advanced', he responded that she is not a 'native speaker' and, therefore, that her variety of English is nottoo advanced' but rather 'unclear'. Although English is one of the languages spoken in India, and hence the boundaries between an individual's first language and their second language is unclear and difficult to identify (Jenkins, 2000), Hassan's remark shows the impact of native-speakerism in which "Western culture" is the ideal model for English (Holliday, 2005, p. 6).

Furthermore, Hassan points out that beyond the linguistic aspect of English language teaching, 'native speaker' teachers can create what he refers to as 'unique qualities' of the English language for the students.

> *These teachers ... I call them native speakers who come from the US or Britain ... they can create a setting and an environment for our students where English is spoken all the time ... and where they [the students] can hear the special qualities of the English language as it comes from those native speaker teachers ... the higher the students go in their level of learning, the more they appreciate the unique qualities of each language ... so with native speaker teachers, they [the students] can enjoy that feeling more than with the non-native speaker teacher.*

What Hassan calls 'unique qualities' of English seems to refer to the use of English in the context of countries such as the USA and the UK and a belief that only 'native speaker' teachers can bring those 'unique qualities to the classroom. This attitude has two major consequences. First, as mentioned previously in this paper, it gives 'native speaker' teachers ownership of the English language and also puts them in a superior position over their 'non-native speaker' counterparts—whether Saudi or non-Saudi nationals—thus limiting those teachers' career opportunities in the field of TESOL. Secondly, this belief in the superiority of some varieties of English hinders the use of English as an international language. Crystal (2006) points out that 'non-native speakers' outnumber 'native speakers' around the world and that the figure continues to grow. He argues that the "ratio of native to non-native is around 1:3" (Crystal, 2006, p. 422). Furthermore, the majority of interactions where English is used as the medium of communication do not take place between 'native speakers' in countries like the USA, the UK or anywhere else but, rather, take place between those who are categorised as 'non-native speakers' in other parts of the world (Widdowson, 1998). Therefore, if a specific variety of English were to be taught, it should be the one which 'non-native speakers' of English use as

an international language rather than a language that is specifically attached to the English-speaking West (Jenkins, 2000). As the use of idioms and slang favoured by 'native speakers' is "largely irrelevant and unsuitable for international communication" (Holliday, 2005, p. 9), English should be taught as a lingua franca (Jenkins, 2000; Seidlhofer, 2002) and in a form which is "de-nationalised" (McKay, 2000, p. 7). In this way, the ownership of English would shift from 'native speakers' to everyone who speaks it as a second or foreign language (Graddol, 1997).

Although all three participants have a preference for 'native speaker' teachers, Mohammed and Hassan's views on 'clarity' differed from those of Rasheed. Mohammed and Hassan prefer any teacher from the USA, UK, Canada, New Zealand or Australia and maintain that any lack of intelligibility relating to those accents is due to the listeners' (i.e., the students') low level of English proficiency. On the other hand, Rasheed limits his definition of what constitutes a 'clear' accent to either what is known as RP or General American English. Once again, therefore, the participants' remarks betray the presence of native-speakerism in English language schools in Saudi Arabia, but in a more subtle way. Rasheed's remarks, for instance, show that not having a specific accent disqualifies potential English language teachers from being recruited at his language school. This stance introduces even more challenges that affect not just 'native speaker' teachers themselves, but also 'non-native speaker' teachers, as it fails to accommodate an understanding of the huge variety of English accents and language usage. Thus, native-speakerism could actually discriminate against 'native-speaker' teachers too when it comes to job opportunities.

5.3- Place of birth

Place of birth is the third aspect that the participants considered as important in defining a 'native speaker' teacher. When Rasheed was asked about teachers who had migrated to countries such as the USA, UK or Australia and obtained citizenship and whether they qualify as 'native speakers', he replied:

> *They [English teachers] need to be born and raised [in order to be considered native-speakers] in the country [where English is a 'native language' such as the USA, UK, Australia and New Zealand] … if you want to teach Spanish you need to be born and raised in either Latin America or Spain … the fluency is something that we are after in teaching the language … if you come across any question whether it was a grammar-related or vocabulary-related question, somewhere or at some point of your life you've experienced or come across that terminology which shouldn't be a problem for you to answer the question.*

Hassan made a similar remark.

> *Native-speaker teachers [are those] who come from the US or Britain or countries where English is the mother-tongue, and they were born and raised in those countries.*

Defining 'native speakers' by their place of birth is a common phenomenon in TESOL. English teachers who were born in countries such as the USA, UK, Australia and New Zealand are favoured (Tatar & Yildiz, 2010; Anchimbe, 2006), which, consequently, leads to a further form of jobs discrimination. For example, in her study on the dichotomy of 'native' and 'non-native' English language teachers in the Gulf Cooperation Countries (GCC), Ali (2009, p. 56) quotes an English teaching job advert in Saudi Arabia where being "male native speakers born in England, America, Canada or Australia (British, American, Canadian or Australian passport holders)" was the first criterion for the job. It is not clear whether the advert states both the place of birth of the applicants *as well as* their nationalities as two separate requirements for occupying the job, or it is assumed that the place of birth qualifies the applicant to hold the desired nationality, and hence that, by default, they would be 'native speakers'. Moreover, it is not clear whether the desired place of birth being 'England' was just a mere assumption that England is a synonym for the UK, or if it was put there deliberately, and, therefore, applicants who were born in other parts of the UK such as Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland do not meet the job requirement set by some employers. As in the case of Rasheed's requirements, Scottish and Irish applicants would not be considered as suitable applicants, as discussed in the previous section.

The assumption that an English language teacher's place of birth qualifies or disqualifies them from being 'native speakers' is an oversimplification. For example, although Davies (2003) argues that the country of birth is a defining characteristic for 'native speakers', he also realises the restriction of this definition.

> The native speaker is for a start one who can lay claim to being a speaker of a language by virtue of place or country of birth. But birth place alone as a defining characteristic seems too restricting since children can be moved very quickly after birth from one country to another. We need to add the notion of adoption as an alternative; the definition then becomes: by place or country of adoption. (p. viii)

Nonetheless, simply adding the concept of one's country of 'adoption' as a defining characteristic for 'native speakers' still does not capture the complexity of the matter. For example, a British or an American citizen who was born during his or her parents' residency abroad in a country where English is not a functional language would not be considered a

'native speaker' according to either the place of birth nor the country of adoption criteria. In fact, Davies (2003) probes the complexity of this issue further by asking whether or not a child born in the UK into a non-English-speaking family would be considered a 'native speaker'. All of the scenarios above show that defining a 'native speaker' by the person's place of birth is overly simplistic, especially when Davies himself concludes that individuals who do not acquire English from birth can "develop a full grammatical system in the second language and in that sense to become indistinguishable from those who have had only English input since birth" (2003, p. 67). Therefore, Kramsch (2003, p. 255) points out that being considered as a native-speaker "is more than a privilege of birth or even of education. It is acceptance by the group that created the distinction between native and nonnative speakers", which shows that the argument that a 'native speaker' of English is one who has acquired English since birth is an ideological and political distinction rather than an evidently linguistic one (Holliday, 2017).

The discussion above also shows that the participants in this study not only clearly believed that one's birthplace was a defining factor in determining who is a 'native speaker', but also did so unthinkingly. As Holliday (2008) points out, ideologies can lead individuals such as those who participated in this study to be more certain about their choice (Holliday, 2008), irrespective of the fact that seeing birthplace as a defining characteristic for 'native speakers' oversimplifies an issue that is much more complex. In the same way as having to have a specific accent discriminates against some English language professionals, native-speakerism could also discriminate against those who are otherwise considered 'native speakers' on the grounds of their birthplace. In this sense, native-speakerism, therefore, limits their job opportunities.

6- Conclusion

The findings in this paper have shown that native-speakerism was prevalent in three different English language schools in Saudi Arabia. 'Native speakers' were narrowly defined in terms of a very limited view of nationality, accent and place of birth, which influenced the recruiters' choice to favour 'native speaker' teachers over what they considered to be 'non-native speaker' teachers. A number of conclusions can be drawn from the study. First, although native-speakerism has created a systematic discrimination against 'non-native speaker' teachers and limited their job opportunities, it has also created divisions amongst 'native speaker' teachers themselves. 'Native speaker' teachers who have an 'undesirable' accent or who were born outside of countries such as the USA, UK, Australia or New Zealand may face discrimination in job opportunities similar to that which 'non-native speaker' teachers face.

Secondly, unlike the findings in studies such as Holliday (2017, 2015), Mahboob (2010) and Rajagopalan (2005) which have argued that the choice of 'native speaker' teachers is racially motivated in that 'whiteness' is the main requirement (e.g., Braine, 2010; Holliday, 2017; Kubota & Lin, 2009; Ruecker, 2011), this study found that its participants' perceptions of 'native speaker' teachers had nothing to do with race or ethnicity. The participants did not consider the German speaker, for instance, as a 'native speaker' even though she was white and was rated as one of the clearest speakers in the clips they were shown. This study, therefore, concluded that race and ethnicity were not linked to 'native-speakerism'. Rather, when recruiting English language teachers, the three directors in this research viewed the teachers' nationality, accent and birthplace as the core aspects that define 'native speaker' teachers.

Finally, native-speakerism does not pertain to individual cases such as recruiters and their students only. Rather, it is deeply rooted in the whole educational system. Although *Saudization* prioritises giving jobs to Saudi nationals in the private sector, nationals from the USA, UK, Australia and New Zealand are exempted from the work permits restrictions that are imposed on those from other countries. This anomalous policy provides a further indication of the widespread belief that the English language is owned by certain nationalities and, consequently, that Saudi English language teachers cannot reach the level of 'native speaker' teachers regardless of their qualifications, experience and training.

Thus, although native-speakerism may ostensibly have disappeared between the lines (Holliday, 2015) in some countries, its hold remains explicitly prevalent in both the TESOL educational system and English language schools in Saudi Arabia. Its influence continues to hinder Saudi's nationalisation scheme on the one hand and initiates explicit widespread discriminatory regulations against many 'non-native speaker' teachers from other countries on the other. The continued hold that a poorly defined native-speakerism has on those that teach and use English not only hinders the progression of English and hampers its ability to function as an international language that is owned by everyone who speaks it, but also confines that ownership to many fewer speakers from a select number of countries. While eliminating native-speakerism in the Saudi context has some way to go, further studies that build upon this small-scale, exploratory study of the topic may help to initiate some real change.

Dedication

This work is dedicated to the best English language teacher I have ever known: my wife, Marwa, who has never stopped believing in me, and to our angel Layla: the beating heart of our family.

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Learner-centered Pedagogical Strategies in Public Schools: An Evaluative Study in KSA

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Abstract

Using a scale of 68 paragraphs, this study identified the use of student-centered learning strategies by 200 English language teachers in public education schools in Qassim region of Saudi Arabia. The content was distributed along three axes: strategies used in teaching the English language; the actual use of solid learning strategies that focus on the students; and obstacles to teachers' application of student-centered learning strategies in teaching English. The variables were teachers' gender, teachers' educational qualifications, and the level of learners they dealt with. The results indicated that the learning strategies in decreasing order of frequency of use were discussion, orientation and dialogue, cooperative learning and working in groups, brainstorming. Further, female teachers used student-centered learning strategies more often than their male counterparts, and teachers with non-pedagogical qualifications were better in estimating obstacles to implementing strategies, while teachers with greater number of years of experience were the poorest in estimating those constraints as well as secondary school teachers. Another conclusion was that there are no differences in the obstacles according to the location of the school, while the schools that fared the lowest in implementing the

strategies were those located in the Fawara and Qasayba areas, the schools in the governorates (Al-Rass, Unaizah, Al-Bukayriyah, Dhuriyah, Al-Muthanab and Al-Asiyah) showed the highest use of learning strategies.

Keywords: *Student-centered learning strategies*, *Teachers of English*

Introduction

Given the expansion of the knowledge society and the national targets stated in 2030 Vision programs viz. " human capacity enhancement " to improve the output, it is clear that the education system must focus on the student as a key axis in the educational process to produce a generation, capable of facing life challenges. This necessitates moving from traditional teaching methods to those compatible with students' minds and tendencies to help them access the highest levels of efficient and effective performance. (Al-Kasi, Tammam, Yehia, 2015) Supporting this, Qiladah (2009) indicates that attention must be paid to using teaching strategies that help raise the awareness of students to be prepared and enabled to participate in the teaching situation using appropriate teaching strategies. The employment of useful teaching strategies increases the absorption of provided information, in addition to promoting the mental capabilities and skills, then thinking grows. The impact of these strategies is clear regarding the improvement of the education system outcomes and graduation of generations that provides students with skills and developed attitudes. Al Hussein (2019) points out that learning can be described to be effective when its curricula, patterns, strategies and outputs vary. Pedagogists regard learner-centered pedagogy as the most important renewal and effectiveness method in the 21st century. It is also the means for distinguishing the outputs, according to the demands of the labor market.

Notably, educational psychologists agree that learner-centered pedagogy increasingly motivates the student to learn to improve his/her performance and skills, in addition to promoting his/her educational level and real performance. The role of teachers changes in this kind of learning, fulfilling the following advantages (McCombs & Whisler, 1997; Aladdin, 2010):

- Forming positive personal relations with students
- Considering the views and tendencies of students
- Enabling students of practicing critical thinking

- Empowering students to systematically bear the responsibility of their learning (Arseven& Şahin& Kılıç,2016)

Rresearchers have all along paid special attention to the study of learner-centered pedagogical strategies, in terms of their use, such as Al Matiri (2017), Al Hussein (2019), Al Mahrouqi, Al Bulushi, Al Siyabi (2013), Boyaci, Sahin, Hasirci, & Kilic (2017), Arseven, Şahin, Kılıç (2016), Zeki, (2014) Titar-Improgo & Gatcho (2020). The only difference lies in the varying degree of the ratios of use of learner-centered pedagogical strategies, along with their feasibility, effectiveness and impact on learning outputs. All of these showed the effective impact of using learner-centered pedagogical strategies in developing learning and notions among students.

Problem and Questions of Study

English courses in general education schools in KSA is plagued with low achievement among students and lacked access to desired learning outcomes, in addition to weak motivation and inclination among students to study English. This is confirmed by many studies, such as Al-Shahat (2012) that reveals a decline in students' level in the English language as teachers do not use interesting teaching methods that attract students to study English; Al-Sinani (2014) who indicates that the general achievement level in English is weak among middle or secondary school students. Field practices of the researcher prove that English teachers depend on using traditional methods when teaching English. The teachers mostly draw upon presentation and dictation, despite the efforts of the administration and policymakers to enforce learner-centred practices such as discussion, dialogue, project work etc., which enhance the communication skills more than focusing only on explaining the English language rules. Therefore, the researcher was prompted to conduct this study to learn about the extent of application of learner-centred teaching pedagogies in addition to the constraints that impede these practices. Consequently, the following research questions were formulated to give direction to the study:

1) Which learner-centered pedagogical strategies are used in teaching English at general education schools in Qassim?

2) What are the stages through which learner-centered pedagogical strategies pass at the level of the teachers at general education schools in Qassim? (Teaching/ planning stage - strategy implementation stage - student performance evaluation stage).

3) What obstacles are faced by English language teachers in applying learner-centered pedagogical strategies in general education schools in Qassim?

4) Are there statistically significant differences in using versus not using learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education schools in Qassim?

5) Can obstacles to applying these strategies be due to any differences (gender, grade, university qualification, years of experience)?

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

Learner-centered pedagogical strategy is defined as the method that combines the focus on students as people who have characteristics, requirements, experiences, trends and tendencies, on the one hand, and a focus on providing the best ideas and knowledge to increase their achievement and motivation, on the other hand. (Henson, 2003). It is worth noting that the implementation of the learner-centered pedagogical strategy requires him/her to play more different roles than traditional learning, from a constructivist view, which holds that students must be active and build their own knowledge Hussein, (2009) and Al Shahat (2012) state that the most important characteristics of learner-centered pedagogy are: centering of all activities and projects around the student, student responsibility and initiative, teacher's role as facilitator, emphasis on motivation, and a sense of accountability, regularity. The sample in this study consisted of 100 teachers from 10 schools from different regions in Lebanon. Results showed that the obstacles impeding teachers in the use of learner-centered pedagogy include school facilities and resources, such as technological equipment including (computers, the internet, etc.) in addition to the high density of students in classrooms. There are also obstacles associated with the curriculum and the schedule the teacher must implement at a specific time, in addition to the weak professional development of teachers.

In another significant study with 120 female teachers of English, Al Mahrouqi, Bulushi, Al Siyabi (2013), found that teachers have positive perceptions regarding the learner-centered pedagogy. They also show that there are some obstacles that limit the employment of learner-centered pedagogical strategies, including (short class time - weak level of English among female students - poor training of female teachers to use these strategies). Zeki & Sonyel (2014) conducted a study in pre-service teacher perceptions of learner-centered pedagogy through their experiences in an optional course entitled Student-Centered Education (SCE) found that learner-centered pedagogy is effective because of the diversity of teaching methods and ideas exchanged and strategies developed. Arseven, Şeyma & Kılıç (2016) found in a study with more than 600 teachers in Turkey that there existed a high level of perceptions about the use of the learner-centered pedagogy strategy. The level of use decreased from the secondary to

the elementary grades with no differences between the degree of usage, based on gender or teaching experience. In a study in Nigeria, both Ubulom and Ogwunte (2017) found that the teacher-centered teaching method is ineffective, while the learner-centered pedagogy is very sufficient in teaching secondary school accounting subject matters. Al-Hussein (2019) investigated the use of learner centred pedagogical strategies in social studies and concluded that these were rarely used because of poor teacher training. The study further established that the learner-centered pedagogy environment achieves a set of values, represented in knowledge building, confidence, vitality and activity, positivity and initiative, self-advancement, diversity, cooperative and group work, and motivation.

Learner-Centred Pedagogical Strategies

The strategy of Discussion and Dialog depends on exchanging opinions and ideas among learners by communicating experiences in the classroom. This strategy allows for interaction between students and the teacher or among students themselves, with the aim of developing thinking skills through discussions, in such a way as reflects on students' understanding of the subject matter through dialog and discussion which also provides them with an opportunity to practice communication skills with each other.

Cooperative Learning, on the other hand, is a strategy where students work together to generate their knowledges reciprocally to reach the maximum limit of educating themselves and their peers. Al Hussein (2019) believes that it enables students to learn in an atmosphere of motivation, achievement, progress and entertainment. Roles are distributed to the group head, rapporteur and the members. It is assumed that such roles are rotated from time to time according to a specific organization. Using this strategy, students strive to achieve specific goals, engage in dialog and discussion, bear individual and collective responsibility, work in group which are heterogeneous in terms of learner abilities and aptitudes, perform tangible activities, and complete the education process cooperatively.

Another pedagogical strategy is Brainstorming. Dhiyab (2012, 79) believes that brainstorming is based on storming the human mind with the problem that challenges his/her information to actively examine it and search for creative solutions. Therefore, brainstorming develops the ability of the learner to find creative solutions to problems as it brings a lot of them by raising many opinions by the participants' group. It is also based on the principle of raising motivation among learners and stimulating them to generate ideas that can be solutions for the problem. It uses a method of individual or collective thinking to solve different scientific or life problems. Brainstorming increases joy, vitality and activity among learners in the classroom, allows them

to express their opinions and ideas, trains them to respect other opinions and etiquette, and develops the spirit of cooperation and teamwork among students.

Methodology and procedures of study:

A descriptive approach is used in this study to answer the research questions. This approach is intended to identify the phenomenon and explore its causes and controlling factors to conclude general findings, according to a specific research plan by collecting, organizing and analyzing data. (Misbah, 2008, 86)**.** The study community included all English language teachers in Qassim, Saudi Arabia, during the first semester of the academic year 1441/1442 AH. The exploratory sample, which confirmed the validity and consistency of the scale used in the current research by being applied to 45 English language teachers in Qassim, Saudi Arabia, which is the same current research community, including 27 males and 18 females. They were randomly selected and subjected to application in the first semester of the academic year 1441/1442 AH. The basic study sample consisted of 200 English language teachers in Qassim, Saudi Arabia. They were randomly selected and were subject to application in the first semester of the academic year 1441/1442 AH. The following table shows the distribution of the research sample members, in light of various variables:

Table (1): distribution of basic research sample in light of various variables:

Gender	No.	Percentage	University qualification	No.	Percentage
Male	100	50.0%	Educational	191	95.5%
Female	100	50.0%	Non-educational	9	4.5%
Grade	No.	Percentage	Years of experience	No.	Percentage
Elementary	18	9.0%	Less than 4 years	15	7.5%
Middle	59	29.5%	4-8 years	65	32.5%
Secondary	123	61.5%	8 years and above	120	60.0%
School region					
Buraidah	87	43.5%	Badaie	7	3.5%
Onaizah	11	5.5%	Muzanab	4	2.0%
Riyad Khobara	9	4.5%	Shamasia	5	2.5%
Oklat Soqor	19	9.5%	Dariah	2	1.0%
Nabhania	7	3.5%	Rass	7	3.5%

Gender	No.	Percentage	University qualification	No.	Percentage
Asiah	10	5.0%	Fawara	7	3.5%
Oyoun Al Goua'a	15	7.5%	Qusaiba	6	3.0%

It can be seen from above that the percentage of males and females in the research sample is equal. As for the university qualification, it may be noted that most of the members of the research sample have educational qualifications at a rate of 95.5%, while the percentage of those with non-educational qualifications reaches 4.5%. It is also clear that the majority of the research sample members are secondary school teachers at 61.5%, followed by middle school teachers at 29.5%, and finally, elementary school teachers at 9.0%. In terms of the years of experience, the highest percentage of the years of experience in the research sample range from 8 years or more, at 60.0%, followed by those with 4 to less than 8 years of experience at 32.5%. Finally, those with less than 4 years of experience come at 7.5%.

The majority of the study sample members come from Breedah schools at 43.5%, Oklat Soqor at 9.5%, Oyoun Al Goua'a at 7.5%, Eneeza at 5.5%, Asiah at 5.0%, then Riyad Khobara at 4.5%. The proportion of study sample individuals equaled from Badaie, Fawara, Rass and Nabhania at 3.5%, followed by Qusaiba at 3.0%, Shamasia at 2.5%, Muzanab and Bakiria at 2.0%, and finally Dharia at 1.0%.

In order to collect the data necessary to answer the questions of this research and achieve its goals, previous studies related to the subject of this research, as well as the used tools, were examined. Accordingly, a scale was established to examine the learner-centered pedagogy in teaching English, using the following studies: (Al Hussein, 2019; Ubulom, Ogwunte, 2017; Al Mutairi, 2017; Arseven, Şahin, Kılıç, 2016; Al-Kasi, Tammam, Yehia, 2015; Jabbour, 2013; Aladdin, 2010).

The scale included 68 paragraphs in its initial image, distributed over three axes. The first axis is dedicated to the strategies used in teaching English, so that the teacher chooses the most used strategies out of the ten strategies of learner-centered pedagogy. These are directed discussion and dialog, cooperative learning and group work, brainstorming, project- and problem-based learning, simulation and role play, educational games, individual learning, self-learning and peer learning. The second is specified to the actual use of these strategies, according to known steps for using the strategy, including planning, implementation and assessment. The third axis

detects the obstacles teachers face when applying learner-centered pedagogical strategies in teaching English.

Statistical validity of scale:

Face validity:

The scale was presented to expert arbitrators in the field, and they were asked to study the standard and express their opinions, in terms of the correlation of each statement to the axis it belongs to, clarity of statements and soundness of their structure and their suitability to achieve the goal for which they were written, in addition to suggesting ways to improve it by omitting, adding or reformulating it. The arbitrators provided valuable observations that benefited the research, influenced the scale, and helped produce it well.

Internal consistency:

The validity of the scale was also verified by the internal consistency. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to calculate the correlation coefficients between the degree of each statement and that of the axis to which it belongs. This is to ensure the consistency and homogeneity of the statements of each axis. So, the correlation coefficients were as shown in the following table:

Table (2): Correlation coefficients between the scores of scale statements and the total degree of the axis to which the statement belongs:

Paragraph	Correlation	Paragraph	Correlation	Paragraph	Correlation
Teaching planning stage		Strategy implementation stage			
1	0.706**	1	0.544**	12	0.381**
2	0.673**	2	0.531**	13	0.513**
3	0.695**	3	0.609**	14	0.559**
4	0.687**	4	0.468**	15	0.606**
5	0.765**	5	0.533**	16	0.723**
6	0.800**	6	0.569**	17	0.709**
		7	0.651**	18	0.602**
7	0.669**	8	0.822**	19	0.499**
		9	0.557**	20	0.449**
8	0.515**	10	0.532**	21	0.553**
		11	0.527**		

Paragraph	Correlation	Paragraph	Correlation	Paragraph	Correlation
Student progress assessment stage		Obstacles to strategy application			
1	0.719**	1	0.719**	12	0.459**
2	0.508**	2	0.451**	13	0.526**
3	0.542**	3	0.520**	14	0.411**
4	0.748**	4	0.625**	15	0.592**
5	0.440**	5	0.533**	16	0.502**
6	0.720**	6	0.722**	17	0.566**
		7	0.628**	18	0.417**
7	0.636**	8	0.755**	19	0.522**
		9	0.613**	20	0.545**
8	0.569**	10	0.433**	21	0.630**
		11	0.643**		

* Function at 0.05, ** Function at 0.01

It is clear from the previous table that the correlation coefficients between the scores of the scale statements and the overall degree of the axis to which the statement belongs are all positive and statistically significant at 0.01 level. This confirms the consistency and homogeneity of the statements of each axis and their cohesion.

The validity of internal consistency of the second, third and fourth axes of the scale was also verified by calculating the correlation coefficient between the degree of each of the three axes and their overall degree. These are shown in the following Table 3:

Table (3): Correlation coefficients among scale axes and the overall degree:

Teaching planning stage	Strategy implementation stage	Student performance assessment stage
0.844**	0.960**	0.679**

It is clear from the previous table that correlation coefficients between the degrees of the three axes for the use of strategies and their application and the overall degree of the three axes are all positive and statistically significant at 0.01 level. This confirms the consistency and homogeneity of the axes and their cohesion.

Stability:

Stability of the scale grades and its sub-axes were verified using the alpha Cronbach stability factor. Stability parameters were as shown in the following table:

Table (4): Alpha Cronbach stability coefficients for the scale and its sub-axes:

Teaching planning stage	Strategy implementation stage	Student performance assessment stage	Obstacles to strategy application	
0.767	0.837	0.747	0.822	
0.892				

It is clear from the previous table that the scale and its sub-axes have high stability and statistically acceptable coefficients. So, the scale has good statistical indicators (validity, stability). This is confirmed by the validity of its use in this research.

Notably, the statements of the scale are responded to by selecting out of three options that express the degree of practice in the case of the axis of using the strategy (teaching planning stage, strategy implementing stage, student performance assessment stage). These options are (*I do so a lot, I do so sometimes, I never do so*) to meet the grades (3, 2, 1) respectively. But in the case of the axis of the obstacles to implementing the strategy, the options are (agree, neutral, disagree) to meet the grades (3, 2, 1) respectively. The high degree in any statement or axis on the scale expresses a high degree of practice, in the case of the three axes of using the strategies. These express a high degree obstacle materialization, in case of application obstacles. It should be noted that the following criteria have been relied upon when determining the level of teacher's applying learner-centered pedagogical strategies, along with the application obstacles, based on arithmetic averages of statements and weigh averages of the axis:

Table (5): criteria of the level of the teacher's applying learner-centered pedagogical strategies, along with the application obstacles:

Arithmetic average of a statement or weigh average of the axis	Level of strategies use	Obstacles materialization degree
Less than 1,67	Nil	weak
From 1,67 to less than 2,34	Average	Medium
From 2,34 and above	High	High

Research results and discussion:

The first question of this research is "Which learner-centered pedagogical strategies are used in teaching English at general education schools in Qassim?"

To answer this question, repetitions and percentages of the responses of teachers, sample of study, were calculated on the first axis of the scale, used in this study, where teachers were asked to determine the most used strategies in teaching English. The findings were as shown in the following table:

Table (6): Learner-centered pedagogical strategies used in teaching English at public schools in Qassim:

SN	Strategies	Repetition	Percentage	Rank
1	Directed discussion and dialog	178	89.00%	1
2	Cooperative learning and group work	132	66.00%	2
3	Brainstorming	118	59.00%	3
4	Project-based learning	15	7.50%	9
5	Problem-based learning	7	3.50%	10
6	Simulation and role play	27	13.50%	6
7	Educational games	42	21.00%	4
8	Individual learning	21	10.50%	7
9	Self-learning	31	15.50%	5
10	Peer learning	20	10.00%	8

The previous table shows that the most learner-centered pedagogical strategies used in teaching English in general education schools in Qassim, Saudi Arabia, is the "guided discussion and dialog" at 89%, followed by the "cooperative learning and groupwork" at 66%, then, the "brainstorming" at 59%. These three strategies can be the most frequently used in teaching English.

There is a set of strategies that can be used "sometimes" and moderately in teaching. These are the "educational games" at 21%, the "self-learning" at 15.5%, "simulation and role play" at 13.5%, "individual learning" at 10.5%, and the "peer learning" at 10%. "Project-based learning" and "problem-based learning" are rarely used in teaching English in general education schools in Qassim. This is clear by the following figure:
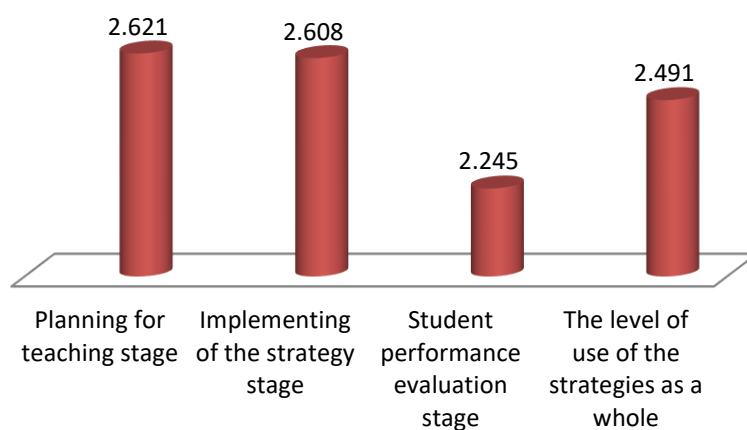
Figure (1): Using learner-centered pedagogical strategies in teaching English at public schools in Qassim

The second question of this research is "What are the stages through which learner-centered pedagogical strategies pass at the level of the teachers at general education schools in Qassim?" To answer this question, means and standard deviations have been calculated for the responses of the research sample for each paragraph of the scale, related to the use of learner-centered pedagogical strategies to determine the degree of using each of them. Findings were as shown in the following:

Teaching planning stage:

Table (7): Means and standard deviations of study sample responses regarding the statements of the teaching planning stage

SN	Statements	Mean	Standard deviation	Level of use	Rank
1	Understanding students' cultural backgrounds, interests, skills and abilities	2.695	0.483	High	5
2	Understanding the nature of individual differences among students to diversify the various teaching strategies	2.870	0.366	High	1
3	Understanding students' motivation and interests	2.805	0.410	High	3
4	Clarifying expected student performance outcomes	2.100	0.650	Medium	8
5	Planning implementation of the strategy in a group or individual way, according to student levels	2.455	0.693	High	7

SN	Statements	Mean	Standard deviation	Level of use	Rank
6	Designing educational activities that provide learning opportunities for students to acquire new terms	2.485	0.694	High	6
7	Selecting teaching and learning resources, appropriate for the lesson objectives	2.720	0.493	High	4
8	Determining appropriate teaching method for objectives and content	2.835	0.398	High	2
The first dimension as a whole (teaching planning stage)		2.621	0.523	High	

The previous table reveals that the level of using learning-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education schools in Qassim, in relation to the teaching planning stage, is high. The weighed average of degrees in this dimension is 2.621, with a standard deviation of 0.523. All the paragraphs of this dimension came to express a high degree of use, except for one paragraph that came with a medium degree. The highest paragraphs of this dimension came in terms of the level of use "Understanding the nature of individual differences among students to diversify the various teaching strategies", followed by "Determining appropriate teaching method for objectives and content", "Understanding students' motivation and interests", "Selecting teaching and learning resources, appropriate for the lesson objectives", "Understanding students' cultural backgrounds, interests, skills and abilities", "Designing educational activities that provide learning opportunities for students to acquire new terms", "Planning implementation of the strategy in a group or individual way, according to student levels" and finally "Clarifying expected student performance outcomes".

Strategic implementation stage:

Table (8): Means and standard deviations for the responses of study sample regarding the statements of strategy stage:

SN	Statements	Mean	Standard deviation	Level of use	Rank
9	Students are allowed to express their views and ideas freely	2.830	0.427	High	1
21	I help students to make them feel they belong to the classroom I teach	2.825	0.419	High	2

SN	Statements	Mean	Standard deviation	Level of use	Rank
19	Establishing a bond between the teacher and students, based on warmness and acceptance	2.800	0.481	High	3
6	Linking new concepts with previous knowledge of the student	2.765	0.459	High	4
1	Directing the progress of student towards educational objectives	2.755	0.454	High	5
5	Emphasizing communication as a tool for learning through discussion, listening, collaborating and responding to others	2.750	0.457	High	6
8	Engaging students in the learning process and allowing them to interact with each other in the classroom	2.705	0.509	High	7
13	Providing students with enough time to participate and interact without restrictions	2.680	0.556	High	*8*
4	Using different methods of asking questions to develop students' thinking levels	2.665	0.514	High	9
16	Providing immediate support and feedback	2.660	0.544	High	10
3	Adapting and organizing learning, using various teaching methods such as brainstorming and open discussions	2.645	0.520	High	11
15	Organizing the educational environment that helps effective learning	2.635	0.532	High	12
17	Promoting students to learn and interact with the components of the learning environment	2.630	0.543	High	13
20	I ask students to listen and think about their colleagues' opinions, even if they do not agree with them	2.605	0.584	High	14
12	Using cooperative learning opportunities inside the learning environment	2.600	0.558	High	15
14	Encouraging students to research, survey, build knowledge and learn	2.595	0.568	High	16
10	Asking a question at the beginning of the class and receives all student answers	2.445	0.564	High	17
18	Providing opportunities for students to learn according to their own capacity	2.440	0.615	High	18

SN	Statements	Mean	Standard deviation	Level of use	Rank
7	Developing students awareness of their thinking processes and meditation to build new knowledge	2.320	0.632	Medium	19
2	Determining the progress and difficulties, experienced by students in learning	2.240	0.612	Medium	20
11	Providing guidance to students as they consider solving a study problem or an educational task	2.175	0.726	Medium	21
Second dimension as a whole (strategy implementation stage)		2.608	0.537	High	

This table shows that the level of using learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in public schools in Qassim, regarding strategy implementation stage, is high. The weigh average of degrees in this dimension is 2.608, with a standard deviation of 0.537. All the paragraphs of this dimension express a high degree of use, except for three paragraphs that came with a moderate degree. Among the statements that express a high degree of use are "Students are allowed to express their views and ideas freely" in the first place, followed by "I help students to make them feel they belong to the classroom I teach", "Establishing a bond between the teacher and students, based on warmness and acceptance", "Linking new concepts with previous knowledge of the student", and "Emphasizing communication as a tool for learning through discussion, listening, collaborating and responding to others". The statements that express an average degree of use are "Developing students awareness of their thinking processes and meditation to build new knowledge", "Determining the progress and difficulties, experienced by students in learning" and finally "Providing guidance to students as they consider solving a study problem or an educational task".

Student progress assessment stage:

Table (9): Means and standard deviations of study sample responses regarding the statements on student progress assessment stage:

SN	Statements	Mean	Standard deviation	Level of use	Rank
8	Varying the use of assessment methods according to the educational situation	2.665	0.552	High	1
6	Discussing with the students the results of their exams	2.630	0.561	High	2

SN	Statements	Mean	Standard deviation	Level of use	Rank
7	Students are allowed to present, discuss and assess their work with classmates	2.430	0.747	High	3
5	Judging how far the student achieves learning outcomes	2.205	0.628	Medium	4
1	Describing the extent to which each student has achieved educational goals	2.160	0.661	Medium	5
2	Explaining strengths and weaknesses, based on the assessment results for students during and after the implementation of strategy	2.085	0.671	Medium	6
3	Recording the assessment results and reporting them for analysis and evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the strategy used	1.925	0.687	Medium	7
4	Analyzing the assessment information, collected before and during the teaching, to understand the progress of each student and take this into consideration when planning for future teachings	1.860	0.626	Medium	8
The third dimension as a whole (student performance assessment stage)		2.245	0.642	Medium	

The previous table shows that the level of using learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education schools in Qassim, regarding the stage of student performance assessment, is an intermediate. The weigh average of degrees in this dimension is 2.245 with a standard deviation of 0.642. Only three paragraphs came in this dimension to express a high degree of use, while the others express an average degree. The paragraphs of high degree of use are "Varying the use of assessment methods according to the educational situation", followed by "Discussing with the students the results of their exams", and "Students are allowed to present, discuss and assess their work with classmates". The statements of medium use are "Judging how far the student achieves learning outcomes", followed by "Describing the extent to which each student has achieved educational goals", "Explaining strengths and weaknesses, based on the assessment results for students during and after the implementation of strategy", "Recording the assessment results and reporting them for analysis and evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the strategy used" and finally "Analyzing the assessment information, collected before and during the teaching, to understand

the progress of each student and take this into consideration when planning for future teachings".

The overall conclusions in the answer to the previous question, related to the level of using learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education schools in Qassim can be summarized in the following table:

Table (10): Level of using learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in public schools in Qassim:

Using learner-centered pedagogy gives	Weigh average	Standard deviation	Level of use	Rank
Teaching planning stage	2.621	0.523	High	1
Strategy implementation stage	2.608	0.537	High	2
Student performance assessment stage	2.245	0.642	Medium	3
Level of using strategies as a whole	2.491	0.567	High	

The previous table shows that the level of using learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education schools in Qassim is high. The weigh average of total scores on the scale, in relation to the axis of using strategies, equals 2.491, with a standard deviation of 0.567. The teaching planning stage came first with a weigh average of 2.621, a standard deviation of 0.523 and a high level of use. In the second order was the strategy implementation stage with a weigh average of 2.608, a standard deviation of 0.537 and a high level of use. The third and last rank was for the student performance assessment stage with a weigh average of 2.245, standard deviation of 0.642, and a medium use. This is evident by the following figure:
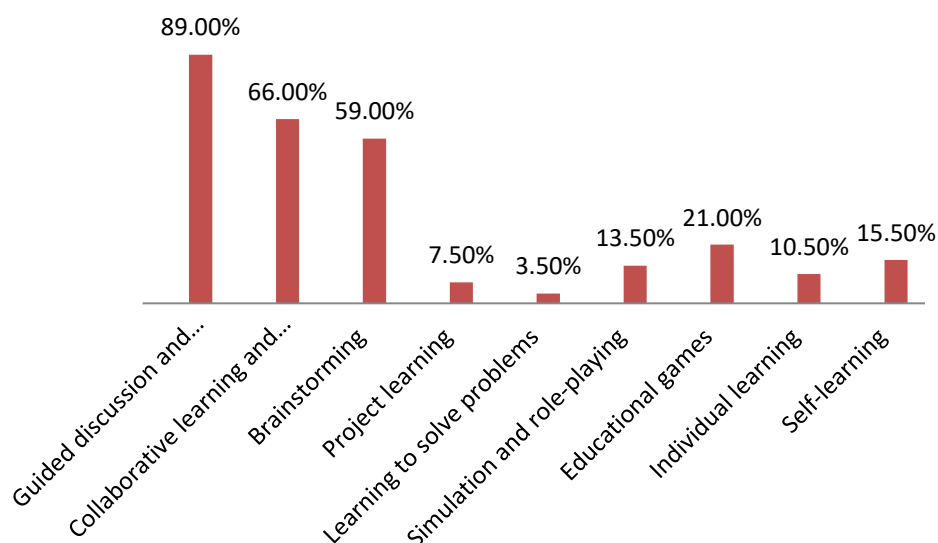
Figure 2: the level of use of English language teachers in public schools in Qassim

Figure (2): Level of using learning-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in Qassim

The researcher attributes these findings to the efforts of the Ministry of Education, particularly Qassim Educational Region, whereas the efficiency of teachers is enhanced in the three stages (elementary, middle and secondary). These findings conform to the conclusions of Arseven, Şeyma, Kılıç (2016), Aladdin (2010), Al Mahrouqi, Al Bulushi, Siyabi (2013), while they differ with Otara, Uworwabayeho (2019), Al Hussein (2019) and Jabbour (2013).

The third question in this research is "What obstacles are faced by English language teachers in applying learner-centered pedagogical strategies in general education schools in Qassim?".

To answer this question, the means and standard averages were calculated for the responses of the research sample members on each paragraph of the third axis on the scale, related to the obstacles to applying learner-centered pedagogical strategies to determine the degree of achievement of each of these obstacles. The results were as shown in the following:

Table (11): Means and standard deviations for the obstacles to applying learner-centered pedagogical strategies:

SN	Statements	Mean	Standard deviation	Level of use	Rank
1	Strategy is unsuitable for teaching English language topics	1.585	0.785	Weak	19
2	Constraints of educational system and teaching plan	2.750	0.519	High	6

SN	Statements	Mean	Standard deviation	Level of use	Rank
3	Strategy cannot be applied to all schools because of differing capabilities and facilities	2.905	0.383	High	1
4	Limited class time and need of this strategy for more time	2.740	0.604	High	7
5	The teacher's use of this strategy underestimates them before students	1.370	0.644	Weak	21
6	Learning activities in the available English language books do not support this strategy	2.405	0.724	High	11
7	Curricular/school environments are not appropriate for the application of this strategy	2.160	0.786	Medium	16
8	Readability of students is not suitable for applying the strategy	2.195	0.866	Medium	14
9	Students cannot access information themselves	2.135	0.923	Medium	17
10	Teachers are not sufficiently trained to use this strategy	2.430	0.805	High	10
11	There is no manual to help apply the strategy in English topics	2.800	0.501	High	4
12	Conformity of strategy application and English language objectives is difficult	2.460	0.671	High	9
13	Weak student level in English hinders the application of this strategy	2.295	0.867	Medium	12
14	Parents do not accept the use of this strategy in teaching English language	1.390	0.648	Weak	20
15	Weak capabilities of students to interact with the strategy in English language classes	2.200	0.839	Medium	13
16	Students are used to the traditional methods of learning English	2.730	0.599	High	8
17	Using this strategy causes mess in the class and inability of the teacher to control students	2.025	0.823	Medium	18
18	Lack of suitable educational means to apply the activities of this strategy	2.775	0.544	High	5
19	Too many students in the one class	2.820	0.489	High	3
20	Unsuitability of the class to apply the strategy	2.165	0.807	Medium	15
21	Applying the strategy in English classes requires double efforts by the teacher	2.845	0.438	High	2
	Average weigh of the obstacles to applying the learner-centered pedagogical strategies	2.342	0.679	High	

The previous table shows that the obstacles to implementing the learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education schools in Qassim are largely achieved, with a weigh average of degrees in this dimension of 2.342 and a standard deviation of 0.679. There were 11 obstacles that were largely achieved, including 7 with a medium achievement degree and 3 with a weak one. The first place included "Strategy cannot be applied to all schools because of differing capabilities and facilities", followed by "Applying the strategy in English classes requires double efforts by the teacher", "Too many students in the one class", "There is no manual to help apply the strategy in English topics", "Lack of suitable educational means to apply the activities of this strategy", and "Constraints of educational system and teaching plan". In the following order came "Limited class time and need of this strategy for more time", then "Students are used to the traditional methods of learning English". The following order included "Conformity of strategy application and English language objectives is difficult", "Teachers are not sufficiently trained to use this strategy", then "Learning activities in the available English language books do not support this strategy". The previous obstacles are largely realized from the teachers' point of view.

Some obstacles (7) were achieved at a moderate degree. They were "Weak student level in English hinders the application of this strategy", then "Weak capabilities of students to interact with the strategy in English language classes", "Readability of students is not suitable for applying the strategy", "Unsuitability of the class to apply the strategy", "Curricular/school environments are not appropriate for the application of this strategy", "Students cannot access information themselves", and "Using this strategy causes a mess in the class and inability of the teacher to control students". These obstacles are achieved by a medium degree, according to the teachers' view.

Some obstacles (3) came poorly achieved from the teachers' point of view. These are, in turn, "Strategy is unsuitable for teaching English language topics", "Parents do not accept the use of this strategy in teaching English language", then "The teacher's use of this strategy underestimates them before students".

The fourth question of the study is "Are there statistically significant differences in using versus not using learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education schools in Qassim?"

The following section deals with the fifth question of this study, "Can obstacles to applying these strategies be due to any differences (gender, grade, university qualification, years of experience)?"

Gender variable

The Independent Samples T-Test was used to find the significance of differences in using learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education in Qassim and the obstacles to applying strategies that are due to gender differences (male and female). The results were as shown in the next table:

Table (12): Significance of differences in using learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education in Qassim and the obstacles to applying strategies due to gender differences:

Variables		Gender	Mean	Standard deviation	T-Test	Significance level
Using learner-centered pedagogical strategies	Teaching planning stage	Males	19.940	2.597	6.269	0.01
		Females	21.990	1.987		
	Strategy implementation stage	Males	53.090	5.758	4.605	0.01
		Females	56.440	4.446		
	Students performance assessment stage	Males	17.890	3.467	0.324	Insignificant
		Females	18.030	2.576		
	Level of using strategies as a whole	Males	90.920	9.902	4.364	0.01
		Females	96.460	7.946		
Obstacles to strategy implementation		Males	48.690	6.219	1.050	0.295
		Females	49.670	6.962		Insignificant

The previous table shows that:

- There are statistically significant differences at the level of 0.01 in the total score for using learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education schools in Qassim, as well as the dimensions of (lesson planning stage, strategy implementation phase) due to the difference in gender. Differences are in favor of females, but in the case of assessing student performance stage, differences were not statistically significant.

- There are no statistically significant differences in the obstacles to applying the learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education schools in Qassim due to gender differences.

Grade variable:

One Way ANOVA test was used to find the significance of the differences in using learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education schools in Qassim and the obstacles to applying strategies. These are due to different levels of grades (elementary, middle, and secondary). They are shown in the following:

Table (13): Means and standard deviations for the level of using learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education schools in Qassim and obstacles to applying them according to the grade:

Variables	Elementary		Middle		Secondary	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Teaching planning stage	19.833	2.595	21.136	2.549	21.049	2.482
Strategy implementation stage	53.167	5.480	54.390	5.586	55.179	5.282
Student performance assessment stage	18.000	3.395	17.746	2.814	18.057	3.121
Level of strategies use as a whole	91.000	9.331	93.271	9.434	94.285	9.351
Obstacles to strategy implementation	51.167	5.711	50.881	6.139	48.073	6.740

Table (14): Significance of differences in using learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education schools in Qassim and obstacles to implementing the strategy according to the grade:

Variables	Divergence source	Total squares	Freedom degrees	Average squares	"F" value	Significance level
Teaching planning stage	Among groups	25.632	2	12.816	2.031	0.134 Insignificant
	Inside groups	1243.123	197	6.310		
	Total	1268.755	199			
Strategy implementation stage	Among groups	75.356	2	37.678	1.297	0.276 Insignificant
	Inside groups	5724.599	197	29.059		
	Total	5799.955	199			

Variables	Divergence source	Total squares	Freedom degrees	Average squares	"F" value	Significance level
Student performance assessment stage	Among groups	3.892	2	1.946	0.208	0.812 insignificant
	Inside groups	1843.788	197	9.359		
	Total	1847.680	199			
Level of strategies use as a whole	Among groups	184.078	2	92.039	1.048	0.353 insignificant
	Inside groups	17308.702	197	87.861		
	Total	17492.780	199			
Obstacles to strategy implementation	Among groups	392.509	2	196.255	4.668	0.01
	Inside groups	8283.011	197	42.046		
	Total	8675.520	199			

The previous table shows that:

- There are no statistically significant differences in using learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education schools in Qassim (total degree, lesson planning stage, strategy implementation stage, student performance assessment stage) due to the different grade.

- There are statistically significant differences at the level of 0.01 in the obstacles to the application of learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education schools in Qassim due to the different grade.

To learn about the statistically significant differences between the teachers of the study sample at different stages of education in estimating the obstacles to applying learner-centered pedagogical strategies, a test of the least significant difference (LSD) was used for dimensional comparisons with the significance of unidirectional variance analysis, as shown in the following table:

Table (15): Comparisons between general education teachers in Qassim in different academic levels regarding their estimation of the obstacles to implementing the strategy:

Grade	Elementary (M= 51.167)	Middle (M= 50.881)
Middle (M= 50.881)	0.286	

Secondary (M= 48.073)	*3.094***	*2.808***

** Differences between the two means are statistically significant at the level of 0.01

The previous table reveals that the least teachers in estimating the obstacles to applying the strategies are the secondary stage teachers. Those of other grades (elementary, middle) outperformed with statistically significant differences at the level of 0.01 over the secondary ones in estimating these obstacles.

University qualification variable:

Mann-Whitney U test was used to find the significance of differences in using learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education schools in Qassim and obstacles to implementing the strategy and the obstacles to applying strategies. These are due to the different university qualifications (educational, non-educational) due to the small number of members of the non-educational qualification group. Results were as shown in the following table:

Table (16): Significance of the differences in using learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education schools in Qassim and obstacles to implementing the strategy and obstacles to implementing the strategy according to the university qualification:

Variables		University qualification	Average rank	Rank group	"U" value	"Z" value	Significance level
Using learner-centered pedagogical strategies	Teaching planning stage	Educational	100.230	19144.00	808.00	0.308	0.758 Insignificant
		Non-educational	106.222	956.00			
	Strategy implementation stage	Educational	101.647	19414.50	640.50	1.294	0.196 Insignificant
		Non-educational	76.167	685.50			
	Student performance assessment stage	Educational	100.906	19273.00	782.00	0.460	0.646 Insignificant
		Non-educational	91.889	827.00			
	Level of strategies use as a whole	Educational	101.209	19331.00	724.00	0.799	0.424 Insignificant
		Non-educational	85.44	769.00			
		Educational	98.649	18842.00	506.00	2.086	0.05

Variables	University qualification	Average rank	Rank group	"U" value	"Z" value	Significance level
Obstacles to strategy implementation	Non-educational	139.778	1285.00			

The previous table shows that:

- There are no statistically significant differences in using learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education schools in Qassim (total degree, lesson planning stage, strategy implementation stage, student performance assessment stage) due to the different university qualifications.

- There are statistically significant differences at the level of 0.05 in the obstacles to applying learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education schools in Qassim due to the differences in the university qualification. These differences are in favor of teachers with non-educational qualifications.

Years of experience variable:

One Way ANOVA test was used to find the significance of the differences in using learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education schools in Qassim and obstacles to implementing the strategy and obstacles to implementing the strategy according to the difference in experience years (less than 4 years, 4 to less than 8 years, 8 years or more). The results were as shown in the following:

Table (17): Means and standard deviations for the level of using learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education schools in Qassim and obstacles to implementing the strategy and obstacles to implementing the strategy according to the years of experience:

Variables	Years of experience					
	Less than 4		4 to less than 8		8 or more	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Teaching planning stage	21.467	2.386	20.646	2.117	21.075	2.735

Strategy implementation stage	54.133	6.140	54.000	4.517	55.258	5.720
Student performance assessment stage	18.133	4.533	17.708	2.832	18.075	2.957
Level of strategies use as a whole	93.733	11.061	92.354	7.557	94.408	10.020
Obstacles to strategy implementation	50.067	7.787	51.569	6.514	47.775	6.143

Table (18): Significance of the differences in using learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education schools in Qassim and obstacles to implementing the strategy and obstacles to implementing the strategy according to the years of experience:

Variables	Divergence source	Total squares	Freedom degrees	Average squares	"F" value	Significance level
Teaching planning stage	Among groups	11.835	2	5.918	0.927	0.397 Insignificant
	Inside groups	1256.920	197	6.380		
	Total	1268.755	199			
Strategy implementation stage	Among groups	73.230	2	36.615	1.260	0.286 Insignificant
	Inside groups	5726.725	197	29.070		
	Total	5799.955	199			
Student performance assessment stage	Among groups	6.176	2	3.088	0.330	0.719 Insignificant
	Inside groups	1841.504	197	9.348		
	Total	1847.680	199			
Level of strategies use as a whole	Among groups	177.993	2	88.997	1.013	0.365 Insignificant
	Inside groups	17314.787	197	87.892		

Variables	Divergence source	Total squares	Freedom degrees	Average squares	"F" value	Significance level
	Total	17492.780	199			
Obstacles to strategy implementation	Among groups	619.723	2	309.862	7.577	0.01
	Inside groups	8055.797	197	40.892		
	Total	8675.520	199			

The previous table shows that:

- There are no statistically significant differences in using learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education schools in Qassim (total degree, lesson planning stage, strategy implementation stage, student performance assessment stage) due to different years of experience.

- There are statistically significant differences at the level of 0.01 in the obstacles to applying learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education schools in Qassim due to different years of experience.

To learn about the statistically significant differences between the study sample teachers with different years of experience in estimating the obstacles to applying learner-centered pedagogical strategies the test of the least significant difference was used for dimensional comparisons in the case of the significance of the unidirectional variance analysis. The results are as shown in the following table:

Table (19): Comparisons between general education teachers in Qassim with different years of experience in their estimation of the obstacles to implementing the strategy:

Years of experience	Less than 4 (M= 50.067)	4 to less than 8 (M= 51.569)
4 to less than 8 (M= 51.569)	1.503	
8 or more (M= 47.775)	2.292**	3.794**

** Differences between the two means are statistically significant at the level of 0.01

The previous table shows that the teachers lowest in estimating the obstacles to applying strategies are those with high years of experience (8 or more). Teachers with low experience (less than 4) and average experience (4 to less than 8) outnumbered with statistically significant

differences at the level of 0.01 over those with high experience (8 or more) in estimating these obstacles.

School region variable:

Kruskal-Wallis H test was used to find the significance of the differences in using learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education schools in Qassim and obstacles to implementing the strategy and obstacles to implementing the strategy according to the different school region. This test is suitable for the comparison between small groups. The results were as shown in the following table:

Table (20): Significance of the differences in using learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education schools in Qassim and obstacles to implementing the strategy and obstacles to implementing the strategy according to the school region:

Region	Rank average				
	Teaching planning stage	Strategy implementation stage	Student performance assessment stage	Level of using strategy as a whole	Obstacles to applying strategy
Breedah	99.115	97.391	95.580	96.563	96.178
Eneeza	131.909	141.136	147.409	152.000	82.545
Riyad Khobara	83.667	98.833	90.444	89.333	107.000
Oklat Soqor	102.316	99.579	92.921	97.184	118.526
Nabhania	91.143	81.286	72.929	78.000	141.000
Asiah	111.300	108.950	128.400	115.550	92.300
Oyoun Al Goua'a	97.667	92.967	83.033	89.500	96.200
Bakiria	109.000	148.625	173.625	151.250	92.250
Badaie	74.857	90.357	75.214	80.143	98.357
Muzanab	102.625	111.500	139.250	121.625	97.625
Shamasia	120.700	75.700	97.700	89.200	91.000
Dariah	131.500	137.000	103.750	128.250	62.250
Rass	151.000	174.571	181.357	189.357	58.857

Region	Rank average				
	Teaching planning stage	Strategy implementation stage	Student performance assessment stage	Level of using strategy as a whole	Obstacles to applying strategy
Fawara	79.000	54.214	51.000	50.857	138.214
Qusaiba	44.333	52.167	73.833	49.333	141.583
"Chi square" value	19.761	32.041	43.888	43.334	17.983
Significance level	0.138 Insignificant	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.208 Insignificant

The previous table shows that:

–   There are no statistically significant differences in using learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education schools in Qassim and obstacles to implementing the strategy and obstacles to implementing the strategy according to the difference in the school region.

–   There are statistically significant differences at the level of 0.01 in using learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education schools in Qassim (total degree, strategy implementation stage, student performance evaluation stage) due to the difference in the school region.

–   There are no statistically significant differences in the obstacles to applying learner-centered pedagogical strategies by English language teachers in general education schools in Qassim due to the difference in the school region.

According to the values of the average ranks, shown in the previous table, we note that the English teachers highest in using learner-centered pedagogical strategies in general education schools in Qassim (total degree, strategy implementation stage, strategy assessment stage) are those of Rass, Eneeza, Bakiria, Dariah, Muzanab and Asiah). Meanwhile, the teachers of Oklat Soqor, Breedah, Oyoun Al Goua'a, Riyad Khobara, Shamasia, Badaie and Nabhania use the strategies moderately. The teachers using them the least were those of Fawara and Qusaiba. The overall results reached in the answer to the fourth question confirm generally that females score higher than males in applying learner-centered pedagogical strategies. Teachers with non-educational qualifications and greater years of experience are the poorest in estimating

these obstacles, as well as secondary school teachers. There are no differences in the obstacles according to the school region, while the schools lowest in implementing strategies were in Fawara and Qusaiba, while the highest are in Rass, Eneeza, Bakiria, Dariah, Muzanab and Asiah). Use of the teachers of other schools came as average. Results of this question are consistent with the previous studies that reveal the obstacles that prevent teachers from using and implementing learner-centered pedagogical strategies, including what is due to the lack of school facilities, such as Jabbour (2013) and Al Mahrouqi, Al Bulushi, Siyabi (2013). Some of these attributes this to the lack of training and professional development, such as (Otara &Uworwabayeho, 2019;   Al Hussein, 2019). The researcher attributes the reasons of high application of the learner-centered pedagogy strategy in Rass, Eneeza, Bakiria, Dariah, Muzanab and Asiah to the attention of the educational departments in those regions, in terms of developing the capabilities of teachers and the keenness on creating an effective learning environment. Application of the learner-centered pedagogy strategy is lesser in Fawara and Qusaiba because of the remote location, a small number of teachers and the weak follow-up by the school administration.

Recommendations of study:

- Training sessions should be organized to develop the skills of English language teachers in general education to use learner-centered pedagogical strategies.

- Attention must be given (in terms of equipment, resources, number of students in classes and all requirements for preparing the learning environment) to the areas surrounding Breedah Governorate (such as Fawara and Qusaiba). Results showed that they are the lowest in Qassim to implement the learner-centered pedagogy strategy.

- School managements must overcome all obstacles that limit teachers' implementation of the learner-centered pedagogy strategy.

- Curricula developers need to consider the content of English language course activities to fit with learner-centered pedagogy strategy.

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Intermediate EFL Textbooks and Communication Standards: An Analysis of Course Content

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to analyze and evaluate Full Blast package of English language textbooks in the light of Communication Standards using descriptive qualitative content analysis design. The study used an analysis card, after being refereed, to analyze the content of two out of the six prescribed textbooks. When the content was quantified using frequencies and means, results showed that the content of the package is fair in the light of the Communication Standards as the currently included standards are in the range of high to medium except standards of giving chances to learners to present concepts to explain on a variety of concepts using appropriate media. The study therefore, recommends revising the package to include such activities as provide chances to learners to explain a variety of concepts using appropriate media.

Keywords: *Communication Standards, English language, Evaluation, Full Blast package, Textbooks*

Introduction

With an ever increasing number of users across the globe and the largest corpora of information available in any language, English has the unique and indisputable status of a truly international language. Indeed, so widespread is its influence that no one country can be called

its home, it either belongs to everyone or none (Al-Ahdal & Algasham, 2020, Alfallaj, 2020). This has caused English to be a diverse, rich and growing language which has not only enriched other languages, but also, has liberally adopted from them. As a result, it is more acceptable to users from different cultural backgrounds. English is the only foreign language taught in public schools in Saudi Arabia. It was chosen as it is one of the means of communication with people all over the world in all areas of politics, economy and education (Hamidi, Bagheri, Sarinavaee, & Seyyedpour, 2016). Further, the document of Saudi educational policy states that all Saudi students should be equipped with at least one international language in order to help them gain access to knowledge (Alageel, 2013, Al-Ahdal, 2020). The aim of teaching English in Saudi Arabia is, therefore, to develop students' intellectual, personal and professional abilities, enable them to communicate with English speaking people and help them acquire the linguistic competence required in various life situations and different professions (Ministry of Education, 2002). Whether in private or public education systems, every student in the country learns English for a minimum of nine years. However, studies show that Saudi students' proficiency in English is not satisfactory (Alrabai, 2016; Alharbi & Al-Ahdal, 2019; Drbseh, 2019). The ministry of education sponsored many solutions by training the teachers, changing textbooks and other materials used so far, and introducing technology to schools. Each of these had some, though not optimum, impact on the outcomes. One of the textbooks packages introduced recently is "Full Blast" which is recommended for students in the intermediate stage. It is part of the series prepared and contains "Smart Class" package for the elementary stage and "Travellers" package for the secondary stage in addition to the current one. Intermediate stage is the second stage in the Saudi educational system and it lasts for three years, preceded by the elementary stage which lasts for six years and followed by the secondary stage which lasts for three years. Pupils, in public schools, start learning English in the second part of the elementary stage.

Literature Review

Evaluation is an important part of any system as it gives feedback about pros and cons. In the field of education, evaluation plays a critical job. It is widely available in educational research as it involves value judgement on the part of those involved(Alageel, 2013). Evaluating textbooks helps teachers and decision makers to select appropriate books and to find out points of weakness and strength(Mukundan, Jayakaran Hajimohammadi, Reza Nimehchisalem, 2011). Textbooks are thought to influence teaching as they help in the process

of lesson planning and giving a wide selection of resources and tasks and cover many topics(LIU, 2016).

Evaluating textbooks has many approaches and can be achieved in many ways. (Alageel, 2013) listed three types of textbooks' evaluation. They are based on the time the textbook is used, the circumstances and the purpose of evaluation. Textbooks' evaluation can be categorized into three categories; predictive evaluation, in-use evaluation and post-use evaluation(Abhar, 2017). One of the prominent evaluation ways is the evaluation achieved through analyzing the content of the textbooks in the light of specific standards. Standards are defined by(Neitzel, Johnson, & Delfosse, 2019: 4) as "clear statements that provide a vision for what students should know and be able to do with their language and cultural knowledge and skills". Standards vary in their scope, approach and categories. Sets of standards are published and used by evaluators in accordance with the purpose of their studies. One example of standards in the field of language learning is the world-readiness standards. The world-readiness standards for learning languages cover five goal areas. These five are referred to as 5Cs which include: communication, cultures, connections, comparisons and communities. The five "C" aims to enable language learners to apply the skills and understandings measured by the standards and to bring global competence to their careers and experiences.(American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 1996, Kitishat et al, 2020)

The standards are revised on what educators implemented for more than 15 years. They take into consideration many issues relating to college and career readiness and 21st century skills. The ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia allows English to be taught in schools of intermediate stage using one of three packages; Full Blast, Lift off and Super Goal. In this study, I am evaluating Full Blast package in the light of communication standards listed in world readiness standards. The community covers Full Blast books and the sample is limited to books 3(Malkogianni, 2019a) and 4(Malkogianni, 2019b) taught to students in the second intermediate year. This package has been taught for 10 years and it is regularly revised. Each book consists of 3 parts: student's book, workbook and grammar book. There are 4 modules in every book. Every module is divided among the three parts according to the parts concentration. QR codes are used to give more enrichment and supply audio recordings. This study aims to give a hand in evaluating the package using global standards. In the context of evaluating English language textbooks, (Kfair & Smadi, 2019) analyzed the content of teacher's book in light of Skierso's evaluation checklist to determine the extent to which the books meets the needs of teachers in Jordanian schools. Main findings show that the Action Pack 5 teacher's book provides guidance to teachers on the items and skills of language teaching in addition to

providing effective material for training the students in all four language skills and integrating them. It also provides teachers with beneficial teaching aids. Traveller English textbooks package for Saudi Secondary schools were evaluated by (Aljouei & Alsuhaibani, 2018; Benattabou,2020) and results showed the effectiveness of the package in its layout, accessibility, activities and skills but teachers thought it was above students' language level and they showed mixed perspectives toward the appropriateness of the package concerning culture and class time but teachers with training sessions held more positive perceptions toward activities and skills in the package. Some other studies provided evaluating textbooks in light of dealing with some issues. (Alsallal & Aldabes, 2018; El Motabit, 2020)) evaluated the presence of creative thinking skills in the textbook used for teaching English to second intermediate year students in Saudi Arabia. The study revealed that the creative thinking skills are available with a mean of 32% distributed among fluency with 47.2%, flexibility with 38%, originality with 24.8% and details as the least with 17%. (Alhomaidhy, 2019) analyzed the textbook of English language for the first intermediate year in the Saudi schools for the skills of creative thinking. Evaluation checklists are various and covering many aspects as well as different vision areas. Due to this, (Mukundan, Jayakaran Hajimohammadi &Reza Nimehchisalem, 2011) investigated many available checklists and developed their checklist. They ended up to a list of evaluative criteria, categorized its items and built a five-point scale. An evaluation checklist for presenting new vocabulary in EFL textbooks was developed by (Hussin, Nimehchisalem, & Kalajahi, 2015). Referring to related literature and revising available evaluation checklists, they built their checklist, refined it by having interviews with English language teachers who judged the relevance and clearance of the checklist's items. Values of character building in Indonesian junior high school English language textbooks were evaluated by (Lestari, 2019). He found that each unit in the books reflected character building implicitly, but not all eighteen values of character building were covered in the books.

Statement of the Problem

With the world becoming a knowledge based global community, technology and information explosion have led people to come in greater contact with other ultures (Hawiti, Saif,& Badawi , 2019). The changed geopolitical paradigm of this new world order has made it imminent for students to be trained and equipped with adequate means of communication if they are not planned to be kept isolated. Hence the importance of foreign language proficiency. The Ministry of Education is Saudi Arabia invests heavily in terms of both manpower and infrastructure to make the student community competent in English, because it is the most

popular international language and has the potential to open the doors of vast knowledge for the users (Alageel, 2013). However, the experience of the teaching community and numerous research studies show that students' linguistic proficiency is not satisfactory as they lack authentic opportunities to communicate in English (Alharbi, 2015). Here appears the importance of evaluating teaching materials in relation to communication standards.

Objectives and Significance of the Study

The aims of this research are rather limited as it focuses on one of the three institutional pillars in any learning environment: Teacher, infrastructure, and materials. The concern of this study is with the last of these directed towards the following aims:

- Analyze the content of English language textbooks in Full Blast package.
- Evaluate the content of Full Blast package in the light of Communication Standards.

The study is expected to evaluate the content of the English language textbooks and determine to which extent they match the standards of world-readiness in the field of communication. It is expected to help decision makers and curriculum developers have a realistic evaluation of the textbooks in use as the Ministry of Education is periodically revising and evaluating textbooks of courses in vogue. This study, as far as the researcher knows, is the first study in the Arab World which uses Communication Standards to evaluate the content of textbooks used in teaching English, and sets out to answer the following research questions:

- What is the percentage of communication standards available in Full Blast textbooks?
- What is the evaluation of Full Blast textbooks in the light of communication world-readiness standards for learning languages?

Methodology

The study uses the descriptive qualitative content analysis. Content analysis is defined as "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from text(or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use" (Krippendorf, 2018, p. 24). A list of standards for communication is prepared based upon the available literature. A detailed reference matrix is used for a thorough analysis of the content to evaluate its communication standards.

The Sample

The study included Full Blast package of textbooks which is taught in the intermediate stage in Saudi Arabia. The sample is limited to Full Blast 3 and Full Blast 4 textbooks. These two books are chosen as they are the middle of the package.

Name	volume	Edition	content		pages
			modules	audio clips	
Full Blast	3	2019	4		180
	4	2019	4		

Each book is divided into three parts; student's book, workbook and grammar book. Each book consists of four modules. The four-language skills are integrated in each part of the modules. Audio clips and some additional enrichment activities are available online and can be reached using a QR code on the page. These books are analysed for the concepts of communication. Through the use of a checklist, it is determined whether or not the books provide adequate communication standards and how far these are available to the users. Further, if they are available, they are determined as clear or impeded. The researcher designed an analysis card, sent it to four juries and received feedbacks on the two books. Two months later, the researcher repeated the analysis to find out the study tool's reliability.

Procedures

Instrument

After reviewing relevant literature and in the light of standards of communication, a list of standards was developed. It was sent to three referees specializing in teaching EFL. Their comments and remarks were taken into consideration to get a final draft which was turned to an analysis card. The card consisted of a checklist with four fields in representing each standard. A checklist is thought to give chance to evaluators to evaluate teaching material, including books, in reference to a set of generalizable standards(Mukundan & Nimehchisalem, 2012). The card was used to analyze the contents of Full Blast 3 and Full Blast 4 where the analysis unit was the unit of idea or subject. The researcher conducted a thorough study of the two books and used the card to decide the availability of ideas or subjects reflecting each standard and its extent. Availability of ideas or subjects reflecting standards was categorized into *explicit, implicit* or *not available*. The extent of availability was categorized into *detailed* or *brief*. A four-grade scale was used to measure the extent of availability as follows:

Explicit and detailed = 4

Explicit and brief = 3

Implicit = 2

Not available = 1

And the following equation was used:

Range= highest – lowest

$$= 4 - 1 = 3$$

Period length = range / response categories

$$= 3/4 = 0.75$$

On this basis, availability of the standards was evaluated as follows:

- If the mean ranges from 1 to 1.75, the standard is not reflected.

- If the mean ranges from 1.76 to 2.5, the standard is reflected in a low extent.

- If the mean ranges from 2.51 to 3.25, the standard is reflected in a medium extent.

- If the mean ranges above 3.25, the standard is reflected in a high extent.

Statistical Procedures

Frequencies and means were used to measure the availability of the standards of communication in the textbooks. Table 1 summarizes the results:

no	standard	availability of the standard		
		Full Blast 3	Full Blast 4	The mean
Interpersonal Communication: gives chance to learners to:				
1.1	interact and negotiate meaning in spoken conversations.	4	4	4
1.2	interact and negotiate meaning in signed conversations.	4	4	4
1.3	interact and negotiate meaning in written conversations.	4	4	4
1.4	share information.	4	4	4
1.5	share reactions.	4	4	4
1.6	share feelings.	4	4	4
1.7	share opinions.	4	4	4
Interpretive Communication: gives chance to learners to:				
2.1	understand what is heard on a variety of topics.	4	4	4
2.2	interpret what is heard on a variety of topics.	2	4	3
2.3	analyze what is heard on a variety of topics.	4	4	4
2.4	understand what is read on a variety of topics.	3	4	3.5
2.5	interpret what is read on a variety of topics.	3	3	3

no	standard	availability of the standard		
		Full Blast 3	Full Blast 4	The mean
2.6	analyze what is read on a variety of topics.	4	3	3.5
2.7	understand what is viewed on a variety of topics.	4	4	4
2.8	interpret what is viewed on a variety of topics.	2	4	3
2.9	analyze what is viewed on a variety of topics.	2	4	3
Presentational Communication: gives chance to learners to:				
3.1	present information to inform on a variety of topics using appropriate media.	4	4	4
3.2	present concepts to inform on a variety of concepts using appropriate media.	1	3	2
3.3	present ideas to inform on a variety of concepts using appropriate media.	3	4	3.5
3.4	present information to explain on a variety of concepts using appropriate media.	4	4	4
3.5	present concepts to explain on a variety of concepts using appropriate media.	1	1	1
3.6	present ideas to explain on a variety of concepts using appropriate media.	1	4	2.5
3.7	present information to persuade on a variety of concepts using appropriate media.	3	4	3.5
3.8	present concepts to persuade on a variety of concepts using appropriate media.	1	4	2.5
3.9	present ideas to persuade on a variety of concepts using appropriate media.	1	4	2.5
3.10	present information to narrate on a variety of concepts using appropriate media.	4	3	3.5
3.11	present concepts to narrate on a variety of concepts using appropriate media.	1	3	2
3.12	present ideas to narrate on a variety of concepts using appropriate media.	1	4	2.5

Table 1: The extent of Availability for Full Blast

Figure 1 below presents the data graphically for ease of use.

Figure 1
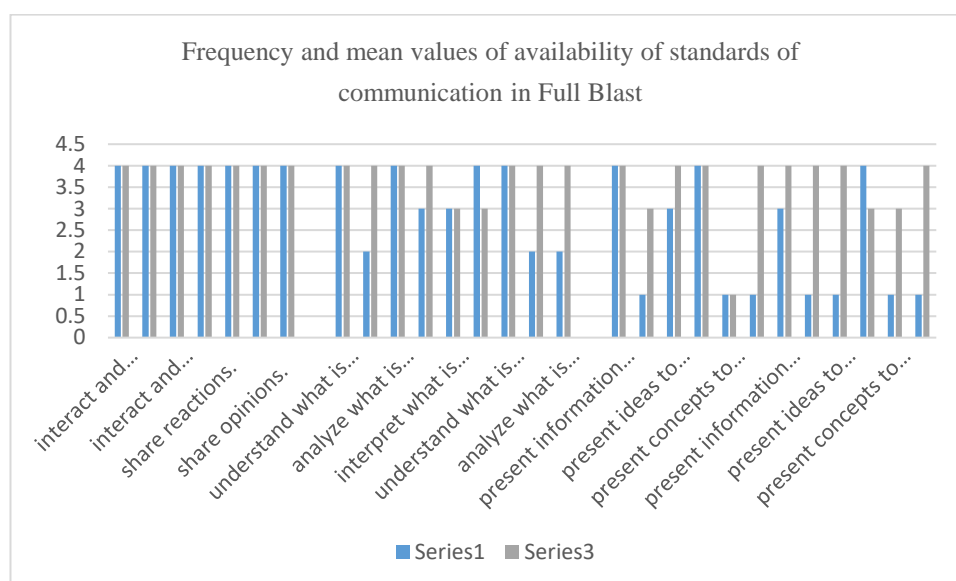
Reliability: Two months later, the analysis was repeated by the researcher to ensure reliability. Scott's equation(Krippendorff, 2004) is used to find out the reliability and it shows the following:

$$Po= na/no*100$$

as (Po) stands to reliability of the instrument, (na) stands to number of agreed statements and (no) stands to total number of statements. Calculating the reliability, it appears to be 92% which is an acceptable percentage.

Material Analysis

Interpersonal Communication

On all seven parameters of interpersonal communication, the individual and mean scores are 4, which reflects a high presence of available ideas and subjects for the practice of these skills. The examined textbooks provide ample opportunity for students to engage in English interactions as the situations and content therein are close to real-life. There are activities based on both pair and group work so that they get to interact with peers in at least two communicative paradigms. Some of the activities in the books are controlled with adequate speaking models for them to refer to. At the same time, there is a sufficient level of difficulty to make them challenging for the learners and engage in critical thinking and bank upon their communication

strategies and linguistic inputs. The extent of 'wh' questions is limited in the books whereas the 'how' questions are liberally interspersed in the materials. One special characteristic noticeable in the books is that the language used in them is not superficial nor does it appear anywhere to have been a translation from Arabic, which is sometimes the case with some other publications for EFL. The Free interactions in the form of role play activities backed up with teacher's handbook ensure that meaningful and correct output is produced by the users. In the audio and video backups, no instance could be found of the use of foreign accents, and where there is an element of foreign accent, native speakers of those accents appear to have given the voice over.

Interpretive Communication

The material under consideration successfully establishes situational contexts for listening-speaking activities. The situational contexts in the books are realistic and sufficiently varied for full exposure for the users. Where there are monologues in the content, an adequate setting is explained to the users in the introduction to the lesson so that users can easily identify the context accurately. This is important where some situations depicted are foreign to the users (such as a visit to a planetarium) and background information comes in handy in getting a grasp of the context. In the parallel teacher's book, where new ideas are introduced to the users, there are references to cultural or environmental differences which gives the teacher a foothold in the class.

Presentational Communication

The series under consideration, as stated earlier, use at least three media for imparting language inputs: Textual, Audio, and Video. However, it was noted that without teacher's support, in some sections they cannot be used meaningfully by the users. At least five to seven instances have been pointed out by the experts where each of the books appear to superimpose foreign culture on the users. It must be stated here that Saudi Arabians are deeply religious and culture conscious people and educational contexts that challenge or subvert their values are likely to encounter disapproval. It is therefore necessary that materials be conducive to the collective consciousness and be considerate to the local culture.

Results and Discussion

   The above analysis of the content of Full Blast package textbooks in the light of communication standards shows that it gives adequate chance to learners to highly interact and

negotiate meaning in spoken and written conversations. It also highly gives opportunities to learners to share information, reactions, feelings and opinions. On the matter of interpretive communication, the content of Full Blast package of textbooks gives learners good opportunity to understand, interpret and analyze what is heard on a variety of topics. Concerning reading skill, the package gives chance to a high extent for learners to understand what is read in a variety of topics. Moreover, it gives a medium-extent opportunity to learners to interpret and analyze what is read on a variety of topics. It also gives good opportunity to learners to understand, interpret and analyze what is viewed in a variety of topics.

On the basis of presentational communication, analysis of Full Blast books package shows that it gives chance to a high extent to learners to present information and to inform on a variety of topics using appropriate media. Further, the content presents a moderate opportunity to the users to present concepts to inform on a variety of concepts using appropriate media though there is scope for improvement on this count. Moreover, the users of Full Blast package have the chance to a high extent to present ideas to inform on a variety of concepts using appropriate media. They also have a high-extent chance to present information to explain a variety of concepts using appropriate media. The lacuna in the books lies in their presenting opportunities to learners to present concepts to explain on a variety of concepts using appropriate media. However, they give chance to a medium extent to the users to present ideas to explain a variety of concepts using appropriate media and they give a high-extent chance to learners to present information to persuade on a variety of concepts using appropriate media. These books offer moderate chances for learners to present concepts and ideas on a variety of concepts using appropriate media. They also offer chances to a moderate extent to learners to present information and concepts to narrate on a variety of concepts using appropriate media. Finally, learners have a high chance to present ideas to narrate on a variety of concepts using appropriate media. Thus, the analysis concludes that the Full Blast package is satisfactory in the light of Communication Standards as it scores on most of the standards in a high or medium range.

Recommendations

In the light of the results, the study recommends Full Blast package to be revised to have activities which provide learners with chances to present concepts to explain a variety of concepts using appropriate media. It also recommends incorporating more opportunities for learners to present concepts to inform on a variety of concepts using appropriate media, present ideas to explain on a variety of concepts, present concepts and ideas on a variety of concepts

and present information and concepts to narrate on a variety of concepts using appropriate media.

Suggestions

The study suggests the following studies to be conducted:

- Evaluating other two packages in the light of Communication Standards.
- Evaluating other series of English language books in the light of Communication Standards.
- Comparison among the three series in the light of Communication Standards.

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