

# **The Asian EFL Journal**

**October 2020**

**Volume 27, Issue 4.1**



**Senior Editor:  
Paul Robertson**



Published by the English Language Education Publishing

Asian EFL Journal  
A Division of TESOL Asia Group  
Part of SITE Ltd Australia

<http://www.asian-efl-journal.com>

©Asian EFL Journal 2020

This book is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of the Asian EFL Journal Press.

**No unauthorized photocopying**

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the Asian EFL Journal.

[editor@asian-efl-journal.com](mailto:editor@asian-efl-journal.com)

Publisher: English Language Education (ELE) Publishing

Chief Editor: Dr. Paul Robertson

Associate Production Editor: Ramon Medriano Jr.

Assistant Copy Editor: Eva Guzman

ISSN 1738-1460



Table of Contents

**Shinjae Park** ..... 5  
*Analyzing the Relationship between Korean Speakers’ Perception and Production of Second Language Onset Clusters*

**Nurairhan Mat Daud, Nor Shidrah Mat Daud and Jantima Simpson**..... 23  
*Second Language Learners’ (English Majors) Writing Apprehension and their Use of Online Applications for Writing*

**Emiko Yukawa**..... 49  
*Local and Foreign Students’ Views of English-Medium Instruction (EMI) and the Use of Multiple Languages for Learning*

**Ni Komang Arie Suwastini, Wayan Lasmawan, Ni Nyoman Artini and Ni Wayan Surya Mahayanti** ..... 73  
*Mixed-Messages about Environmental Awareness in Disney's 2016 Finding Dory*

**Ujang Suparman, Ridwan Ridwan and Hasan Hariri** ..... 94  
*Promoting Learning Performance and Learning Outcomes: The Case of an Indonesian School*

**Ying Zhou and Juming Shen**..... 111  
*Speaking Difficulties and Strategy Use of EMI Undergraduates in Mainland China*

**Abdulaziz Ali Al-Qahtani**..... 137  
*Teaching Pragmatic Competence in EFL Context: The Case of Saudi EFL Teachers*

**Abdulhameed Abdulhadi Alhuwaydi** ..... 166  
*L2 Reading Anxiety and Reading Comprehension among Undergraduates: A Correlative Study*

**Wafa’ A. Hazaymeh**..... 182  
*The Impact of Integrating Digital Technologies with Learners’ Multiple Intelligences to Facilitate Learning English as a Foreign Language*

**Ujang Suparman, Ridwan Ridwan and Hasan Hariri** ..... 213  
*Overcoming Students’ English Pronunciation in Remote Area, Indonesia*

**Nadya Nurhidayah N, Nurfitriyah Halim and Muhammad Basri**..... 230  
*Analyzing Student’s Learning Outcome Using Systemic Approach*

**Jin Guan** ..... 248  
*Pragmatic Transfer in Refusals of Requests by Chinese University ESL Learners*

**Sultan and Sakinah Fitri** ..... 276  
*The University Students Online Reading Behavior: Gender, Subject Area, and Academic Achievement in the Digital Era*

<b>Eka Prabawati Rum, Mark Garner and Muhammad Basri</b> .....	291
<i>Lecturers' Approaches to Developing Students' Interpersonal Communication Skill in Indonesian EFL Classroom</i>	
<b>Sahraini and St.Hartina</b> .....	309
<i>Developing English Material for Early Childhood Education Students at the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training in Islamic Higher Education, Indonesia</i>	
<b>Hery Yufrizal</b> .....	321
<i>Assessment of Oral Language and the Mastery of Discourse Analysis Subject for University Students</i>	
<b>Shifan Thaha Abdullateef and Asma' Abdelhaleem Amer</b> .....	338
<i>Learner Autonomy: Enhancing Language Skills of EFL Learners Using Applications</i>	



## **Analyzing the Relationship between Korean Speakers' Perception and Production of Second Language Onset Clusters**

**Shinjae Park**

*Department of English Language and Literature at Incheon National University  
South Korea*

### **Bio-profile:**

**Dr. Shinjae Park** teaches in the Department of English Language and Literature at Incheon National University, South Korea. Her research interests are phonetics, phonology, corpus studies, and language teaching and evaluation. Her email contact is [tlswo@naver.com](mailto:tlswo@naver.com).

Inchoen National University, Yeonsu-gu, Incheon, South Korea. Email address: [tlswo@naver.com](mailto:tlswo@naver.com); Tel: +82 01 8801 3036; Fax: +82 32 835 4232

### **Abstract**

Until recently, it has not been easy to draw a direct relationship between perception and production in second language (L2) acquisition. Moreover, few studies have addressed the relationship at syllable level not segment level. In this study, to analyze the correlation between the two speech modalities in L2 consonant clusters, 55 Korean undergraduates were tested, and in particular, the correlation was analyzed in detail by segmenting according to L2 proficiency and consonant cluster type. The results were as follows. First, the correlation between the two modalities was significant ( $r = 0.197$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ). The average error scores in perception and production were 5.71 (11.90%) and 9.47 (19.66%), respectively. Second, in perception, errors were affected by both the first consonant (C1) and the second consonant (C2) of the initial consonant cluster, whereas in production, the degree of errors was significantly more influenced by C2. Third, in the group with the highest L2 proficiency, a strong correlation between perception and production was revealed. Finally, in voiceless stop+liquid, a significant correlation was observed, suggesting that when learners are trained in perceiving the consonant clusters, their pronunciation ability is directly affected and vice versa.

**Keywords:** *perception, production, relationship, initial consonant cluster, onset, C1, C2, AXB test*

## **Introduction**

In the process of second language acquisition, learners frequently become conscious of the difficulties associated with producing the target language in native-like fashion. In particular, late-age L2 learners tend to convert L2 phones into native-language phones when producing the target language (Sperbeck, 2010; Kang, 2012; Suntornsawet, 2019). The characteristics of consonant clusters in the initial position in a syllable (hereinafter referred to as the onset) vary according to languages. The most common production errors made by Korean learners of English are vowel insertion, consonant deletion, and sound replacement, and of these errors, it is vowel insertion that occurs most often in onset. Several researchers have argued that Korean learners are likely to assume the existence of an illusory vowel between the consonants in a consonant cluster (Kabak & Idsardi, 2007; Lee & Cho, 2005; Yun, 2009).

It is not easy to draw direct conclusions from previous studies regarding the relationship between perception and production. Some researchers state that the two speech modalities are interrelated. In this view, learners with good perception skills also have good production skills, while those with poor perception skills also have poor production skills; hence, the development of the two modalities is possibly interrelated (Bradlow et al., 1997; Sperbeck, 2010). However, there is some controversy as to which competence develops first. In first language (L1) acquisition, infants learn to perceive speech sounds before being able to produce them. In this respect, many studies suggest that perception precedes production, emphasizing that difficulty in the production of L2 speech sounds is caused by faulty perception (Strange & Broen 1980; Flege, 1995). However, Sheldon and Strange (1982) state that in L2 acquisition, production may precede perception by exhibiting that Japanese speakers' production of English /k/ and /q/ when judged by American raters was much better than their perception. Moreover, there is also a view that perception and production are not related (Kwon, 2006; Sung, 2009; Masuda & Arai, 2010; Rungruang, 2014; Shultz et al., 2012; Huensch, 2013; Komar, 2017).

Until recently, despite the abundance of studies on the relationship between the perception and production of vowels or consonants, considerably fewer studies have addressed this issue at the syllable level. Therefore, it would be meaningful to analyze this relationship with regard to consonant clusters in detail. The work reported in the present study, thus, makes an important contribution to research in this area by examining the relationship between

perception and production according to the various types of consonant clusters and the different proficiency levels of Korean speakers. Moreover, this study goes beyond the segmental level and considers the syllable structure, including the existent and nonexistent syllable structures in the English onset. The detailed analysis of the error patterns of perception and production in onset aids in defining the commonalities and differences concerning the two speech modalities, which can present another important avenue to investigate the specific relationship between them.

Thus, to determine the relationship between the two speech modalities, the following questions are addressed, and the relationship is logically defined in the process of finding answers to these questions through systematic statistical analysis: 1) Is there a direct relationship between perception and production in onset consonant clusters? In other words, is there covariation between accuracy in perception and accuracy in production? 2) In particular, does the relationship between perception and production vary by proficiency level or type of cluster?

## **Literature Review**

Previous studies on the relationship between perception and production have yielded inconsistent results as to whether accurate perception is a prerequisite for accurate production, or vice versa. Although there is some evidence attesting to a link between phonetic perception and production systems, consistent evidence of this relationship has yet to be found. However, numerous studies have demonstrated that many difficulties in L2 production are rooted in perception. Therefore, it has been argued that production ability can be automatically improved by improving perception ability through training in auditory perception, without direct training in production. In line with this notion, Yule et al. (1987) argue that practicing auditory skills helps to improve pronunciation skills. These studies assume that the difficulty in producing L2 sounds stems from erroneous perception, which presupposes that the perception process takes precedence over production (Strange & Broen 1980; Broen et al., 1983; Huensch & Tremblay, 2015). Dupoux et al. (1999) examined Japanese speakers' perception of word-medial consonantal clusters (e.g., /abge/) and discovered that the majority of Japanese speakers perceived an illusory vowel [u] in clusters. The authors claim that modification of L2 syllable structures occurs in L2 perception. It can be inferred, then, that incorrect perception of an illusory vowel in consonant clusters leads to incorrect production in these clusters for Japanese learners, as they tend to insert the vowel [u] between the consonants in the clusters when producing the syllable.

Conversely, Goto (1971), who studied the perception and production of Japanese L2 learners of English, showed that accurate production of liquids precedes accurate perception thereof. Furthermore, Sheldon and Strange (1982) present additional evidence to support Goto's (1971) findings. Although, in the study conducted by Sheldon and Strange (1982), the overall accuracy of the participants was higher than that of participants in Goto's study (1971), the same pattern, where production accuracy is higher than perception accuracy, was observed.

Moreover, previous research has also revealed many discrepancies between perception and production abilities (De Jong et al., 2009; Major, 1998; Masuda & Arai, 2010; Shultz et al., 2012; Huensch, 2013; Rungruang, 2014; Dhanapala & Yamada, 2014; Komar, 2017); Major (1998, p. 134) asserts that "[...] recognition and production are not symmetrical images of one another." Rungruang (2014) showed that there is no correlation between perception and production in the English coda clusters for Thai speakers. Similarly, Huensch (2013) found no correlation between perception and production of palatal codas by L2 learners of English ( $r = 0.038$ ,  $p = 0.91$ ); Masuda and Arai (2010) also found no correlation between perception and production in consonant clusters by Japanese EFL learners.

Furthermore, in experiments on the perception and production of consonant clusters by 30 Korean college students, Kwon (2006) found that the error patterns in perception were different from those in production in onset clusters, which suggests some discrepancies between production and perception. In particular, Korean speakers perceived better when C1 (the first consonant of the initial consonant cluster) was a voiceless strident than they did when it was a stop. In addition, there were no significant perceptual differences between voiced stop+liquid (50.3%) and voiceless stop+liquid clusters (49.7%). By contrast, in production, epenthetic vowels presented most often when C1 was a voiced stop (12.7%) and least often when it was a voiceless strident (1.5%). These results can be interpreted as suggesting that there is no direct correlation between perception and production.

With respect to the direct relationship between perception and production, i.e., whether improved accuracy in perception can lead directly to improved production, the literature suggests that the following predictions can be made: The Perceptual Assimilation Model, with its roots in direct realism, posits linked systems that share representations and would thus predict a direct relationship between perception and production systems (Best, 1995). Overall, although considerable prior research has sought to understand the correlation between perception and production in L2 learning, there is no clear answer as yet, perhaps due to the diversity of research methods, subjects, materials, and experimental settings.



## Experimental/Materials and Methods

In this study, fifty five Korean undergraduates participated in Incheon, South Korea. On the basis of the participants' Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) scores, they were divided into three groups: a high-proficiency group (HG),  $n=19$ ; an intermediate-proficiency group (MG),  $n=18$ ; and a low-proficiency group (LG),  $n=18$ ) (see Table 1). Across all participants, the average TOEIC score was 744.91; the means of the LG, MG, and HG groups were 535, 790, and 901, respectively ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Table 1

### *Participants' information*

Proficiency (N)	TOEIC Range (M)
HG (19)	860–965 (901.05)
MG (18)	690–835 (790.00)
LG (18)	400–630 (535.00)
Total (55)	744.91
ANOVA: $F(2, 52) = 173.569$ ( $p = 0.00$ )	Scheffe: $LG < MG < HG$

*Note.* HG, MG, and LG represent high-proficiency group, intermediate-proficiency group, and low-proficiency group, respectively.

A total of 48 nonce words beginning with either existent or nonexistent onset clusters in English, were used as stimuli. Participants were instructed to perform two tasks: an AXB discrimination task and a production task. The stimuli are divided into six categories by syllable structure: a) voiceless stop+glide; b) voiceless stop+liquid; c) voiced stop+glide; d) voiced stop+liquid; e) fricative+glide, and f) fricative+liquid.

### *Perception*

Stimuli consisting of 48 nonce words were divided into six categories, with each comprising four cluster types (total 2640 tokens: i.e., 55 participants  $\times$  48 nonce words). These tokens are also used in the production test.

[voiceless stop+glide]: pj-, pw-, kj-, kw- (e.g., pyus, kwas)

[voiceless stop+liquid]: pl-, pr-, kl-, kr- (e.g., pris, klus)

[voiced stop+glide]: bj-, bw-, gj-, gw- (e.g., byus, gwas)

[voiced stop+liquid]: bl-, br-, gl-, gr- (e.g., blis, grus)

[fricative+glide]: fj-, fw-, øj-, øw- (e.g., fwas, thrus)

[fricative+liquid]: fl-, fr-, øl-, ør- (e.g., flus, thlis)

This material includes legal onset clusters in English as well as illegal ones. The basic structure is CCVC (e.g., [brus], [ølis], and [fwas]), and the structure in which a vowel is inserted between initial consonants is CVCVC (e.g., [birus], [øilis], and [fiwas]). Experiment 1 consisted of the AXB discrimination task in which participants listened to triplets of a word with two versions on the basis of epenthesis such as [plis] - [pilis] - [pilis]. They were instructed to choose either the first or the third sound in each triplet as being identical to the second one and to mark their answers on the sheet provided. The aim was to clarify the perceptual difficulties that Korean learners face and to find consonant clusters that have a strong effect on their perception.

### *Production*

In Experiment 2, all Korean speakers who had participated in Experiment 1 participated again a week later with the same material (total 2640 tokens). These tokens are also used in the production test. They were instructed to read aloud sentences with the 48 target words in a structure of “I say \_\_\_\_\_ now,” and the sounds that they produced were stored using the “Tape a Talk” application. The speech sounds collected were then analyzed by four linguists, including the author of this study. In particular, the author and one linguist used the Praat software package to determine whether or not a schwa vowel had been inserted within a cluster, while the two other linguists, both native speakers of English, conducted a judgment of errors using native-speaker intuition as an alternative.

## **Results and Discussion**

### *Overall analysis of participants’ speech perception and speech production*

In this section, the author investigates whether there is a correlation between the perception and production of consonant clusters by Korean speakers. After participants had completed the AXB experiment to measure their perception abilities, as well as the reading task with carrier sentences of target words to assess their production abilities, results showed that they performed much better in the AXB task. In other words, from the total score of 48 for each participant, the average error scores in perception and production were 5.71 (11.89%) and 9.47 (19.66%), respectively. Therefore, the perception of the target sounds was stronger than their production, as the AXB results far exceeded the production results. Pearson correlation

test was conducted to determine whether a linear correlation exists between perception and production (see Table 2).

Table 2

*Correlation between perception and production for all participants*

Types	Errors (%)	Errors per type	SD	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i> -value	N
Perception	5.71 (11.89)	0.95	0.98	0.197**	0.00	330
Production	9.47 (19.66)	1.57	1.67			330

With respect to correlation, the relationship between the perception and production modalities is statistically significant ( $r = 0.197$ ,  $p = 0.00$ ), and the speech production error rate (19.66%) is almost twice as high as the perception error rate (11.89%). This result can be compared with that of the perception and production experiments conducted by Sung (2009), who investigated the correlation between perception and production in three syllable types by Korean EFL learners, and the results showed error rates of 14.1% in perception and 22.4% in production. In relation to the present experiment, even though the error frequencies were a little different from those in Sung's (2009) findings, the results similarly indicate that participants' perception is stronger than their production. However, Sung (2009) concluded that although L1 phonotactic constraints affect perception and production of L2, there is a discrepancy between the two speech modalities. In other words, Sung (2009) claimed that production errors are not directly related to difficulties in perception. In contrast to Sung's (2007) claim, Kabak and Idsardi (2007) and Dupoux et al. (1999) argue that when Korean speakers perceive consonant clusters, they believe that there is an illusory vowel between the consonant sequences and that this is directly linked to the vowel insertion in production. Additionally, the priority of speech perception over production is endorsed by early research on child language acquisition (Strange & Broen, 1980).

Taken together, the results reported in this section provide preliminary evidence that there is, in fact, a significant correlation between perception and production; moreover, it can be inferred that perception precedes production because the speech perception error score is only about one-half of the production error score (as shown in Table 2). A more detailed analysis that is based on proficiency level and types of onset clusters will be addressed in the next section.

### *Detailed analysis*

*Analysis by proficiency level.* Compared to perception, the difference in the frequency of errors among proficiency groups is higher in the production task (see Table 3). Notably, the difference in the frequency of error in the two tasks is the lowest in HG (error rate: perception 8.99% vs. production 14.80%). That is to say, the error frequencies in the two experiments are relatively lower in HG than in the other groups (MG: perception 12.73% vs. production 19.21%; LG: perception 14.12% vs. production 25.13%). As shown in Table 3, in terms of perception, the error scores in HG, MG, and LG are 4.32, 6.11, and 9.22, respectively. In terms of production, those of HG, MG, and LG are 7.11, 9.22, and 12.11, respectively. HG made the fewest errors in both experiments. In particular, they made much fewer errors in the production experiment than the participants in the other levels.

This finding confirms that sound learning system remains adaptive over a lifetime (Flege, 1995); in other words, the L2 learning process is the same with perceptual learning abilities used when acquiring L1 “over a learner’s lifespan,” and therefore, the learner’s phonetic category will continue to evolve in proportion to language exposure; experience is evinced by the fact that with accumulation of L2 experience and the subsequent development of new categories for new L2 sounds, production accuracy considerably increases (Yun, 2009). Furthermore, the results of the analysis of participants’ perception and production indicate that the lower the level of L2 proficiency, the greater the difference between the scores in the two modalities. According to the analysis by proficiency level, there is a significant correlation between perception and production in HG ( $r = 0.217, p < 0.05$ ). Thus, the results related to HG show that learners who have acquired the ability to perceive onset clusters can acquire the ability to produce these clusters, and vice versa.

Table 3

#### *Detailed correlation of perception and production by three groups*

	Type of performance	Mean error (%)	Mean error per type	SD	$r$	$P$ value	N
HG	Perception	4.32 (8.99)	0.72	0.991	0.217*	0.02	114
	Production	7.11 (14.80)	1.18	1.436			114
MG	Perception	6.11 (12.73)	1.02	1.032	0.158	0.10	108
	Production	9.22 (19.21)	1.54	1.543			108
LG	Perception	6.78 (14.12)	1.13	0.866	0.145	0.14	108

Production	12.11 (25.13)	2.02	1.919	108
------------	---------------	------	-------	-----

Note: HG, MG, and LG represent high-proficiency group, intermediate-proficiency group, and low-proficiency group, respectively.

There is a significant correlation between perception and production ( $r = 0.197, p = 0.00$ ) for all the participants; however, after further analysis, only the result pertaining to HG revealed a significant correlation of the three groups ( $p < 0.05$ ). The detailed analysis of error patterns as shown in Table 4 are helpful in determining whether there is a significant correlation between the two modalities in HG only, and if yes, the cause of the correlation. In HG, voiced stop+liquid and fricative+liquid produced the highest error rate in both perception and production. The results of both tasks show lower error frequencies in voiceless stop+glide and voiced stop+glide. These results indicate that in the case of higher L2 proficiency, their perception and production are significantly correlated.

Although some studies have attempted to explore the relationship between intrinsic variables, such as learners' temperamental characteristics or academic engagement and their foreign language acquisition (Willingham et al., 2002; Choi & Mantik, 2017; Choi, 2018), a few studies have emphasized adult learners' L2 proficiency levels, affecting the degree of the relationship between their speaking and listening performance. Moreover, studies have revealed that highly proficient L2 learners are better at both perception and production. In this respect, Masuda and Arai (2010) state that Japanese monolinguals make significantly higher number of errors in the perception test and insert more vowels than Japanese bilinguals in onset clusters, and the trend of consonant voicing is more prevalent in monolinguals than in bilinguals.

Table 4

*Error patterns in perception and production by cluster types*

		Total	Frequency (%)	vIS+gli	vIS+liq	vdS+gli	vdS+liq	fri+gli	fri+liq
all	perception	2640	314 (11.9)	16 (0.6)	40 (1.5)	45 (1.7)	82 (3.1)	54 (2.1)	77 (2.9)
	production	2640	519 (19.7)	16 (0.6)	104 (3.9)	31 (1.2)	139 (5.3)	56 (2.1)	173 (6.6)
HG	perception	912	82 (9.0)	0 (0.0)	8 (0.9)	7 (0.8)	28 (3.1)	16 (1.8)	23 (2.5)
	production	912	135 (14.8)	10 (1.1)	14 (1.5)	7 (0.8)	33 (3.6)	20 (2.2)	51 (5.6)
MG	perception	864	110 (12.7)	4 (0.5)	14 (1.6)	24 (2.8)	26 (3.0)	20 (2.3)	22 (2.6)
	production	864	166 (19.2)	2 (0.2)	34 (3.9)	14 (1.6)	48 (5.6)	16 (1.9)	52 (6.0)

LG	perception	864	122 (14.1)	12 (1.4)	18 (2.1)	14 (1.6)	28 (3.2)	18 (2.1)	32 (3.7)
	production	864	218 (25.2)	4 (0.5)	56 (6.5)	10 (1.2)	58 (6.7)	20 (2.3)	70 (8.1)

Note: vls, vds, fri, gli, and liq represent voiceless stop, voiced stop, fricative, glide, and liquid, respectively.

*Analysis by types of onset clusters.* Figure 1 shows that two important facts are discovered in perception. First, in terms of types of onset clusters, voiced stop+liquid (3.11%) and fricative+liquid (2.92%) appear to be the most difficult consonant clusters to learn in perception. Conversely, the lowest error occurrence was observed when C1 was a voiceless stop, regardless of C2 (i.e., the second consonant of the initial consonant cluster: voiceless stop+glide 0.61%; voiceless stop+liquid 1.52%), and when C2 was a glide, regardless of C1.

Here, the reason for the first fact might be that because languages such as Korean or Japanese lack the phonemic and phonetic distinctions between [r] and [l] that is found in English (Rubrecht, 2004; Kang & Ahn, 2013; Kang, 2012; Choi, 2016), learners were less proficient in C+liquid clusters than in C+glide clusters because of the problematic segment /r/ or /l/ as evidence of negative L1 transfer.

In response to the second fact, according to sonority-based markedness, the marked bi-consonantal sequences are such that the sonority distance between the first consonant and subsequent consonant is relatively small. Then, the voiceless stop+C cluster is considered to be less marked than the voiced stop+C cluster, and the C+glide is less marked than C+liquid as the former of each item has larger sonority distance (Broselow & Finer, 1991; Sperbeck & Strange, 2012). Thus, it can be concluded that both C1 and C2 play an important role in perceptual ability.

Conversely, in production, the participants made remarkably more errors in C+liquid (vls+liquid 3.9%, vds+liquid 5.3%, and fric+liquid 6.6%) than the C+glide clusters (vls+glide 0.6%, vds+glide 1.7%, and fric+glide 2.1%). In other words, the learner's error level depends on the type of C2 mostly, regardless of C1. This indicates that unlike in the perception task, the errors made by Korean EFL speakers are significantly affected by the type of C2 in the production task.

These findings are consistent with other studies of L2 acquisition of consonant clusters. For instance, Kwon (2006) examined the production of English onset clusters by Korean speakers and found that vowel epenthesis is more commonly found in [stop+liquid] than in other clusters. Additionally, regarding C+/l/, Kang (2012) suggested that the duration of /l/ is strongly related to vowel insertion patterns because the sound of /l/ in C+/l/ onset clusters is

similar to geminate [ll] in Korean phonology. Furthermore, Ingram and Park (1998) emphasized that because the Korean language does not permit the C+liquid clusters, they are re-syllabified by vowel insertion.

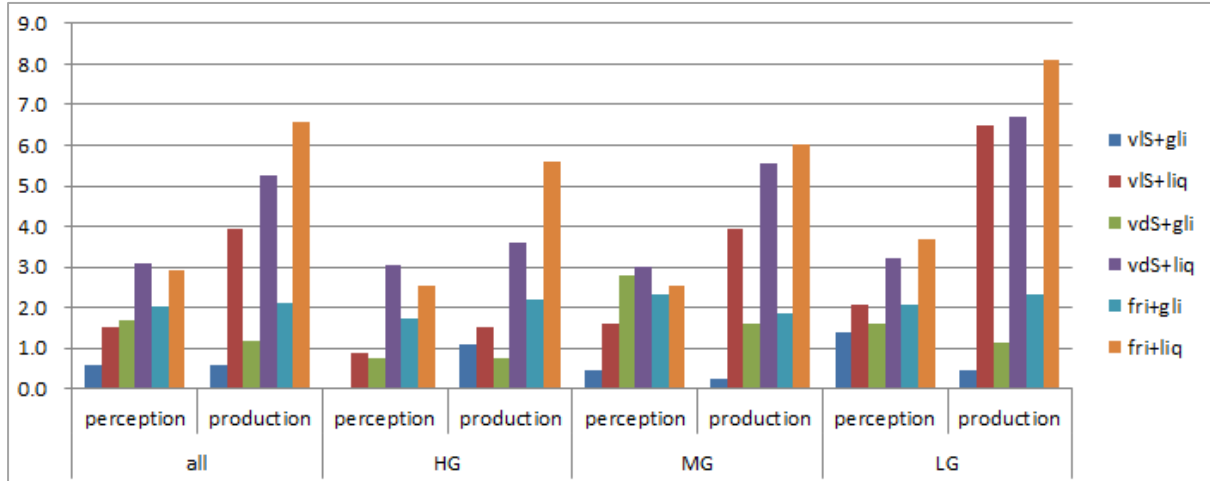


Figure 1. Error rates in perception and production by cluster types.

Note. vls, vds, fri, gli, and liq represent voiceless stop, voiced stop, fricative, glide, and liquid, respectively.

Focusing more closely on the individual type of onset clusters of voiceless stop+glide/liquid, voiced stop+glide/liquid, and fricative+glide/liquid, the correlation of each type of consonant clusters is as follows (see Table 5).

Table 5

Detailed correlations of perception and production by cluster type

Type		vls+gli	vls+liq	vds+gli	vds+liq	fri+gli	fri+liq
(N = 55)	Perception	0.29	0.73	0.82	1.49	0.98	1.40
	(SD)	(0.533)	(0.849)	(1.020)	(0.836)	(0.972)	(1.065)
	production	0.29	1.89	0.56	2.53	1.02	3.15
	(SD)	(.567)	(1.606)	(0.918)	(1.562)	(0.952)	(1.840)
r & p	r	-0.285*	0.331*	-0.244	0.068	0.060	-0.238
	p	0.04	0.01	0.72	0.62	0.66	0.08

The correlation for voiceless stop+liquid is positively significant (voiceless stop+liquid:  $r = 0.331$ ,  $p = 0.01$ ). This aspect suggests that the more learners practice to perceive voiceless

stop+ liquid onset clusters the more they improve their production ability, and vice versa. On the other hand, the correlation of the voiceless stop+glide clusters is significant but negative, and therefore, it has been excluded.

These findings are in line with those of Dupoux et al. (1999) who examined Japanese learners' perception of word-medial consonantal clusters wherein C1 is an obstruent and C2 is an obstruent or a nasal (e.g., /abge/, /akmo/, /igna/) and discovered that the speakers perceived the illusory vowel [u] between the consonants in a cluster; this study also claimed that the incorrect perception of illusory vowels leads to an incorrect production in the onset clusters for Japanese learners because they tend to insert the vowel [u] between the clusters when producing the them.

## **Conclusions**

The present study investigated the detailed relationship between perception and production of Korean EFL learners in L2 onset clusters. For this purpose, it examined learners' perception ability to examine whether they perceived the onset clusters and their associated pairs of epenthesized forms in English nonce words and production ability to focus on their vowel insertion in the onset clusters; these aspects were analyzed in detail according to the types of onset clusters and L2 levels.

In brief, the correlation between the perception and production of onset is significant ( $r = 0.197, p = 0.00$ ). The average error scores of all participants' perception and production in the experiments are 5.71 (11.90%) and 9.47 (19.66%), respectively. Thus, the learners performed much better in perception than in production. A detailed analysis according to L2 levels and types of consonant clusters yielded the following results: first, the error rate in perception is significantly lower than the error rate in production. In other words, even if Korean learners perceive a schwa vowel between consonants in onset clusters, they could nonetheless make errors in producing these clusters.

Second, in perception, the frequency of errors is affected by the consonant types of both C1 and C2, whereas in production, the degree of error frequency is influenced by the consonant type of C2 more than C1. A detailed analysis revealed both similarities and differences between the two speech modalities in this regard. In perception, learners were less likely to make errors when C1 was a voiceless stop or when C2 was a glide. However, in a comparison of error proportions with regard to C+glide and C+liquid sequences, the difference was much greater in production. In other words, C+liquid production was much more difficult than C+liquid



perception. Thus, it can be hypothesized that C2 plays an important role in determining the difficulties of production of the onset clusters.

Third, significant results were obtained from the analysis of the correlations at different L2 proficiency levels. In HG, the author found the correlation between the perception and production of onset clusters, suggesting that with higher L2 proficiency, error frequencies decrease in both perception and production tasks and more in production particularly. When types of consonant clusters were analyzed according to L2 proficiency, the results of the two tasks in HG showed more similarities in this group's error patterns. In HG, the types of consonant clusters with more errors in both perception and production were voiced stop/fricative+liquid, while fewer errors occurred in voiceless stop+glide/liquid. However, it was relatively difficult to find commonalities in the error patterns between perception and production in MG and LG. Hence, it can be concluded that with higher L2 proficiency, the correlation between perception and production is greater.

Finally, in terms of onset cluster type, in voiceless stop+liquid cluster, the present author has discovered the correlation between perception and production. This suggests that when learners are trained in perception of voiceless stop+ liquid clusters, this directly affects the pronunciation ability in the clusters, and vice versa. It implies that by improving one of the two speech modalities, the other will be improved eventually as well. However, according to the present study, this relationship does not apply to consonant clusters other than that cluster type, so it is impossible to predict this relationship for other onset clusters.

The present study provides a number of pedagogical implications as a very detailed analysis led to meaningful results concerning the relationship between perception and production of onset clusters that EFL learners find difficult to acquire. Specifically, if learners possess good perception abilities, their production is also likely to be good, since the results revealed a significant correlation between perception and production. On the other hand, a more detailed analysis showed the followings: perception ability is significantly higher than production ability; while C1 and C2 affect learners' perception ability, C2 has a significant impact on production. Therefore, educators should recognize the discrepancies in performance patterns in designing educational strategies. Specifically, a more effective approach would be to focus on C2 to improve learners' production abilities in consonant clusters. Additionally, a significant correlation was found between the listening and pronunciation abilities of the onset clusters in the high proficiency group, while no such correlation was observed in the less skilled group. Therefore, the low proficiency group requires a more detailed and unique curriculum to improve both abilities. Among six cluster types, i.e., voiceless stop+glide,

voiceless stop+liquid, voiced stop+glide, voiced stop+liquid, fricative+glide, and fricative+liquid, the present study suggests that the education of voiceless stop+liquid clusters requires more attention in L2 acquisition than other cluster types. In the EFL classroom, L2 teachers should acknowledge that dealing with voiceless stop+liquid clusters can be one pedagogical technique. Said differently, the present study highlights that in training voiceless stop+liquid clusters, reasonable effort or time allocation is possible if L2 teachers recognize that focusing on one ability of perception and production will eventually improve the other ability.

### **Acknowledgments**

This study elaborates on an important topic included in the doctoral thesis of the present author (2018), “The Perception and Production of Consonant Clusters by EFL Learners in Korea.”

### **Funding**

This research did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

### **Conflict of interest**

None.

### **No prior submission undertaking**

This is an original publication and has not been published elsewhere and has not been submitted elsewhere or is under review in any other journal.

### **References**

- Best, C. T. (1995). A direct realist view of cross-language speech perception. In W. Strange (Ed.), *Speech perception and linguistic experience: Issues in cross-language research* (pp. 171–203). York Press.
- Bradlow, A. R., Pisoni, D. B., Akahane-Yamada, R., & Tohkura, Y. (1997). Training Japanese Listeners to Identify English /r/ and /l/: IV. Some effects of perceptual learning on speech production. *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 101(4), 2299–2310. <https://doi.org/10.1121/1.418276>.

- Broselow, E., & Finer, D. (1991). Parameter setting in second language phonology and syntax. *Second Language Research*, 7(1), 35–59. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026765839100700102>.
- Broen, P. A., Strange, W., Doyle, S. S., & Heller, J. H. (1983). Perception and production of approximant consonants by Normal and articulation-delayed preschool children. *Journal of Speech, Language, and Hearing Research*, 26(4), 601–608. <https://doi.org/10.1044/jshr.2604.601>.
- Choi, H., & Mantik, O. (2017). The relationships between English language acquisition of young children in a Korean private kindergarten and their gender, teacher–student relationship, temperament, and intrinsic motivation. *The Asian EFL Journal Professional Teaching Articles*, 100, 4–26. <https://www.asian-efl-journal.com/wp-content/uploads/AEJ-TA-100-May-2017.pdf>.
- Choi, H. (2018). The Mediating Effect of Academic Engagement on the Relationship between Temperament and EFL Speaking and Listening Performance. *The Asian EFL Journal* 20(12.2), 176–196. <https://www.elejournals.com/asian-efl-journal/the-asian-efl-journal-quarterly-volume-20-issue-12-2-december-2018/>.
- Choi, J. (2016). Investigation into Korean EFL learners' acquisition of english /s/ + consonant onset clusters. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 7(2), 48–54. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.all.v.7n.2p.48>.
- Dhanapala, V. K., & Yamada, J. (2014). Oral Reading Rate, Reading Comprehension, and Listening Comprehension in Learners of EFL. *The Asian EFL Journal Quarterly* March 2014, 16(1), 337–362. <https://www.elejournals.com/asian-efl-journal/the-asian-efl-journal-quarterly-march-2014-volume-16-issue-1/>.
- De Jong, K., Hao, Y.-C., & Park, H. (2009). Evidence for featural units in the acquisition of speech production skills: Linguistic structure in foreign accent. *Journal of Phonetics*, 37(4), 357–373. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wocn.2009.06.001>.
- Dupoux, E., Kakehi, K., Hirose, Y., Pallier, C., & Mehler, J. (1999). Epenthetic vowels in Japanese: A perceptual illusion? *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance*, 25(6), 1568–1578. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0096-1523.25.6.1568>.
- Flege, J. E. (1991). Perception and production: The relevance of phonetic input to L2 phonological learning. In T. Hueber & C. Ferguson (Eds.), *Crosscurrents in second language acquisition and linguistic theories* (pp. 249–289). John Benjamins Philadelphia/Amsterdam.

- Flege, J. E. (1995). Second language speech learning: Theory, findings and problems. In W. Strange (Ed.), *Speech perception and linguistic experience: Issues in cross language research* (pp. 233–272). York Press.
- Goto, H. (1971). Auditory perception by normal Japanese adults of the sounds “l” and “r”. *Neuropsychologia*, 9(3), 317–323. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0028-3932\(71\)90027-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/0028-3932(71)90027-3).
- Huensch, A. (2013). *The perception and production of palatal codas by Korean L2 learners of English* [Doctoral Dissertation]. IL, USA: University of Illinois, Urbana.
- Huensch, A., & Tremblay, A. (2015). Effects of perceptual phonetic training on the perception and production of second language syllable structure. *Journal of Phonetics*, 52, 105–120. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.wocn.2015.06.007>.
- Ingram, J., & Park, S. G. (1997). Cross-language vowel perception and production by Japanese and Korean learners of English. *Journal of Phonetics*, 25(3), 343–370. <https://doi.org/10.1006/jpho.1997.0048>.
- Kabak, B., & Idsardi, W. J. (2007). Perceptual distortions in the adaptation of English consonant clusters: Syllable structure or consonant contact constraints? *Language and Speech*, 50(1), 23–52. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00238309070500010201>.
- Kang, S. Y. (2012). The patterns of vowel insertion in Korean speakers’ production of English C+/l/ and C+/r/ clusters. *Phonetics and Speech Sciences*, 4(4), 3–17. <https://doi.org/10.13064/KSSS.2012.4.4.003>.
- Kang, S. H., & Ahn, H. K. (2013). An intelligibility-based approach to English pronunciation teaching: Evidence of [r] pronunciation. *Language Research*, 49(3), 631–646. <http://space.snu.ac.kr/bitstream/10371/90738/1/06-%EA%B0%95%EC%84%9D%ED%95%9C%28631-646%29.pdf>.
- Komar, S. (2017). The relationship between the perception and production of four general British vowels by Slovene university students of English. *Linguistica*, 57(1), 161–170. <https://doi.org/10.4312/linguistica.57.1.161-170>.
- Kwon, B. (2006). *Korean speakers’ production of English consonant clusters: Articulatory and perceptual accounts* [Doctoral Dissertation]. MI: Michigan State University.
- Lee, S., & Cho, M.-H. (2005). Perception and production of consonant clusters by Korean learners of English. *English Language and Literature*, 50(5), 1101–1132.
- Major, R. C. (1998). Interlanguage phonetics and phonology: An introduction. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 20(2), 131–137. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263198002010>.

- Masuda, H., & Arai, T. (2010). Processing of consonant clusters by Japanese native speakers: Influence of English learning backgrounds. *Acoustical Science and Technology*, 31(5), 320–327. <https://doi.org/10.1250/ast.31.320>.
- Rubrecht, B. G. (2004). Teaching /l/ and /r/ to Japanese EFL learners: Support for segmental-level pronunciation instruction. *Asian EFL Journal*, 6, 254–271. <https://www.asian-efl-journal.com/monthly-journals/teaching-l-and-r-to-japanese-efl-learners-support-for-segmental-level-pronunciation-instruction/>.
- Rungruang, A. (2014). The relationship between the perception and production of English coda clusters by EFL Thai learners. *International Journal of Humanities and Management Sciences*, 2(4), 167–171. <http://www.isaet.org/images/extraimages/P1214038.pdf>.
- Sheldon, A., & Strange, W. (1982). The Acquisition of /r/ and /l/ by Japanese Learners of English: Evidence that Speech Production can Precede Speech Perception. *Applied Psycholinguistics*, 3(3), 243–261. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0142716400001417>.
- Shultz, A. A., Francis, A. L., & Llanos, F. (2012). Differential cue weighting in perception and production of consonant voicing. *Journal of the Acoustical Society of America*, 132(2), 95–101. <https://doi.org/10.1121/1.4736711>.
- Sperbeck, M. (2010). *The acquisition of consonant clusters by Japanese learners of English: interactions of speech perception and production* [Doctoral dissertation]. NY: City University of New York.
- Sperbeck, M., & Strange, W. (2010). The perception of complex onsets in English: Universal markedness? *University of Pennsylvania Working Papers in Linguistics*, 16(11), 22. <https://repository.upenn.edu/pwpl/vol16/iss1/22/>.
- Strange, W., & Boren, P. A. (1980). Perception and production of approximant consonants by three-year-olds: A first study. *Child Phonology*, 2, 117–154.
- Sung, E. (2009). Phonotactic knowledge in L2 speech perception and production by Korean learners of English. *Studies in Phonetics, Phonology, and Morphology*, 15(2), 231–262. <https://doi.org/10.17959/sppm.2009.15.2.231>.
- Suntornsawet, J. (2019). Problematic Phonological Features of Foreign Accented English Pronunciation as Threats to International Intelligibility: Thai EIL Pronunciation Core. *Journal of English as an International Language*, 14(2), 72–93. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1244216.pdf>.

- Willingham, W. W., Pollack, J. M., & Lewis, C. (2002). Grades and test scores: Accounting for observed differences. *Journal of Educational Measurement*, 39(1), 1–37. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-3984.2002.tb01133.x>.
- Yule, G., Hoffman, P., & Damico, J. (1987). Paying attention to pronunciation: The role of self-monitoring in perception. *TESOL Quarterly*, 21(4), 765–768. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3586994>.
- Yun, G. H. (2009). Illusory vowel perception in English onset clusters by Korean learners of English. *Studies in Modern Grammar*, 57, 15–41. <http://grammars.or.kr/journal/article.php?code=56414>.



## **Second Language Learners' (English Majors) Writing Apprehension and their Use of Online Applications for Writing**

**Mat Daud, Nuraihan**

*Kulliyah of Languages and Managemnet,  
International Islamic University Malaysia.*

*Email: [nurairhan@iium.edu.my](mailto:nurairhan@iium.edu.my)*

**Corresponding author**

**Mat Daud, Nor Shidrah**

*Akademi Pengajian Bahasa  
Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia.*

*Email: [norshidrah@uitm.edu.my](mailto:norshidrah@uitm.edu.my)*

**Simpson, Jantima**

*Faculty of Humanities  
Naresuan University, Thailand.*

*Email: [jantimaj@nu.ac.th](mailto:jantimaj@nu.ac.th)*

### **Bio-profiles:**

**Nurairhan Mat Daud** was the Founding Dean of the Kulliyah (Faculty) of Languages and Management, International Islamic University Malaysia. She sits on numerous committees at the national level which includes grant review panel member for the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education. She is also a member of a number of councils, and was the Chair of the Council of Language Deans of Malaysian Public Universities. She chaired the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) panel that *developed the Benchmark Standards* for Languages for Malaysian Institutions of Higher Learning.

**Nor Shidrah Mat Daud** is the Head of Center of Postgraduate Studies of Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia. She teaches courses in the English for Professional Communication program at the University. Her research activities and interests include educational assessments, critical thinking in language learning and acquisition, and technology for teaching and testing English language.

**Jantima Simpson**, a lecturer at Faculty of Humanities, Naresuan University, Phitsanulok Province, Thailand, teaches undergraduates in English Business and Essay Writing courses and supervises postgraduate students. She is the Lower-Northern representative and committee member of Thailand TESOL. Her research interest is technology in a modern TEFL classroom, classroom interaction, student-centred and project- based learning, perception and motivation in language learning.

### **Abstract**

This study reports on a comparative study on writing anxiety among English majors who are second language learners. There is little research reporting the level of writing anxiety of second language learners majoring in English. The study examines the relationship between Malaysian and Thailand undergraduates' writing anxiety and their self-perceived language ability. It also explores the relationship between students' writing apprehension and their usage frequency of online writing applications. A descriptive research design was adopted in this study. The research measures the students' level of writing anxiety using adapted Daly-Miller writing apprehension test (1975). The data was collected using questionnaire surveys from a total of 307 English majors of two public universities in Malaysia and one in Thailand. The statistical tests indicated that although the self-perceived proficiency level of the Thai students was significantly lower than the Malaysian students, there was no significant difference among the English majors in their level of writing apprehension. It was also found that there was no statistically significant difference among the students in their usage frequency of most of the online applications. However, only the usage frequency of Instagram was found to be correlated with their apprehension. The study also found no correlation between writing apprehension and the lecturer as the audience of their writing activities. Findings indicate that the technology was widely used by the students for writing. The study indicates that the students were ready to adopt changes in the mode of content delivery from face-to face to online.



**Keywords:** *writing apprehension, English major, online applications, technology integration, social media*

## **Introduction**

Language majors are usually expected to be proficient in the language of their discipline. With the high expectation, it is assumed that second language students experience a high level of anxiety in the process of learning. Studies have found that compared to first language writers, the less skilled second language writers experience a higher degree of apprehension when writing in English (Betancourt & Phinney, 1988; Al-Shboul & Huwari, 2015) and the less apprehensive students were found to perform better in writing (Erkan & Saban, 2011). However, there is hardly any study which has investigated writing apprehension experienced by second language students who are majoring in the English language. Younas et al. (2014) explored the causes of English majors' writing anxiety but the students' level of anxiety was not measured.

Apart from language skills, with advances in technology, the students are also expected to possess the relevant information technology skills for their studies and future career. Some studies found that writing apprehension among ESL & EFL students is reduced when technology is integrated in writing lessons (Challob et al., 2016; Hussin et al., 2015; Ikhsan & Halim, 2018; and Marandi & Seyyedrezaie, 2017). However, the studies focused more on language proficiency learners who were attending writing classes.

This study focuses on English majors who are second language learners of the language. It aims to examine the relationship between students' level of writing apprehension and their use of online applications for writing in English. The study was conducted at three public universities which offer English language programme at undergraduate level, namely the International Islamic University Malaysia (henceforth called Uni A), Universiti Teknologi MARA Malaysia (henceforth called Uni B) and Naresuan University, Thailand (henceforth called Uni C). English is the language of instruction at Uni A and Uni B while Thai is the language of instruction at Uni C. Outcome-based education (OBE) is adopted in both countries (Tanprasert, 2018) where language graduates are expected to have both communication and IT skills (MHESI, 2017; Malaysian Qualification Agency, 2018).

In all three universities, the native language of the country is the language of communication. Even though English is their major, the popular language used for communication is the native language which is Malay in Malaysia and Thai in Thailand.

Students in all the three universities have easy access to the Internet, and most of them own a smartphone. The teaching staff of all the three universities are encouraged to use the university's learning management system (LMS) which is on MOODLE platform. They can also use other LMSes such as Google Classroom and Edmodo. Apart from that, some are using applications which are dedicated to their discipline such as Praat for Phonetics, WordSmith for Corpus Linguistics and SPSS for Data Analysis. The use of social networks like WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram are also popular among students and staff.

The need to go for online learning is obvious during the Covid-19 pandemic. When social distancing was among the ways to reduce the possibility of contracting the coronavirus, many universities opted for an online mode of teaching. It means that more writing would be done online, and it is interesting to analyse if there is any correlation between the online applications used and students' writing apprehension.

## **Literature Review**

### *Writing Apprehension*

Writing is difficult for EFL students as they have to understand, explore, analyse and organise ideas using cognitive and affective skills in order to write in the target language with meaningful contexts; thus L2 writing is an undeniably complex process (Mohseniasl, 2014). Learners have to utilise their knowledge of the discourse structure, lexical items, and syntactical structure to develop well-crafted ideas to complete their writing tasks (Yasuda, 2011).

Writing apprehension, a noticeable affective factor, was defined by Daly and Miller (1975) as the tendency to avoid writing tasks so as to avoid evaluation during second language learning. This has a major effect on second and foreign language learners' writing performance and their language learning (Choi, 2014; Badrasawi et al., 2016). Students at all levels from beginning to advance can suffer from writing apprehension.

The causes of writing apprehension which hinder learners' writing capability can be varied; for example, lack of writing skills (Badrasawi et al., 2016), an unpleasant classroom atmosphere owing to teachers or classmates, types of essays, lack of writing process knowledge (Jawas, 2019), insufficient linguistic ability and knowledge in academic writing, learner's negative mindset on writing, and unsuccessful writing from previous situation (Huwari & Aziz, 2011; Al-Shboul & Huwari, 2015).

In comparison with the native speakers, second or foreign language learner's encounter a plurality of language barriers requiring considerable efforts in producing

a written assignment (Farhat and Dzakiria, 2017). In a non-English speaking educational context such as Thailand, students often write initially in their own language. This is then translated word by word into English resulting in a highly unsatisfactory English draft containing unnatural collocation, wrong word usage, a lack of word choices, and an overall low-quality writing. Thai culture also has a major influence on the students' writing. Thai students are trained from birth to be diplomatic and non-confrontational, and this introduces further anxiety; students may be unwilling or unable to present an idea or argue a point as this might be considered impolite (Etae et al., 2016). Similarly, living in a country that practices power distance (Sweetman, 2012), Malaysian students are generally known to be passive receivers of knowledge and less inquisitive (Nik Ahmad & Sulaiman, 2017). To question or argue with a teacher therefore, is socially unacceptable. Consequently, students are anxious to present, share and debate ideas in writing especially those that will be read and graded by their teachers. Aside from this, uncertainty avoidance which is another dimension of culture introduced by Geert Hofstede (1980), though not as seriously manifested in Malaysian's culture as power distance (Hofstede Insights, n.d.), also affects Malaysian students. Fear in making mistakes, for example in interpreting other's ideas when analysing and later synthesising the ideas in writing discourages them from engaging in writing activities especially academic writings. This psychological worry stems from their fear in receiving negative comments (Abd Rahim et al., 2016). The need to be in a safe learning environment is evident among the Malaysian English language learners. The learners need emotional support to communicate in English even outside the classroom (Zulkepli et al., 2020).

### *Writing apprehension among second language students*

One of the learning outcomes of a language programme is the ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing. In the case of the Malaysian English majors, they are expected to achieve a minimum of Band B2 of CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) to graduate (Malaysian Qualification Agency, 2018). This means that they can produce a clear and detailed text but it still lacks coherence, and the finer shades of meaning are not well-differentiated (Council of Europe, n.d.: 24). A few managed to achieve a higher level of proficiency at the end of their study. Though they are majoring in English, they are still considered a second language learner since they are yet to master the language. As they follow the programme, the students are expected to be able to acquire the appropriate writing skills for any academic or professional position they undertake in the future. However, it has been shown that writing in a non-native language can be daunting and difficult to both language

majors and non-majors, high achievers and low achievers (Jabali, 2018), and grammar, mechanics and organisation are among the aspects of writing that L2 learners found difficult (Batalla & De Vera (2019). On the other hand, it was found that students who were enthusiastic about their discipline were more motivated to do English for Academic Purposes (Li & Gong, 2019).

Writing strategies including outlining, drafting, revising and editing are customarily taught in writing classes to language students. Highly apprehensive students are usually unable to write effectively due to poor writing behavioral practices. Students who are apprehensive are normally unable to organize their thoughts, feel discouraged and unmotivated, and see the writing task as unrewarding (Westwood, 2008). The apprehensive students tend to avoid assignments that require them to write in the target language (Sundari & Febriyanti, 2017). In contrast, students with low apprehension use various writing strategies correctly and more frequently than high apprehension students (Al-Sawalha & Chow, 2012).

#### *Writing apprehension and IT applications*

With easy accessibility to the Internet, the use of technology in writing classes is becoming more prevalent. The presence of the technology calls for a change in the way writing is taught and assessed. The presence of facilities such as online grammar checker, spelling checker and dictionary make it possible for the learners to focus on the technique of writing (Yunus et al., 2013). More teachers are instructing students to submit their assignments online, and online forum is also a popular pedagogy at the university level. Using ICT has been found beneficial for high apprehensive students as it can alleviate writing nervousness (Cequeña & Gustilo, 2014) and enhance their writing skills (Nguyen, 2019). Online writing can increase interest and build positive attitudes towards writing (Ismail & Albakri, 2012).

With the rapidly unfolding and evolving digital literacies, writing using social media platforms has to some extent affected students' reservation and resistance to write. They are more willing to write especially when expressing their opinions and thoughts (Beasley, 2019). Writing which has long been dreaded and taken as boring, is now considered fun as students have actually started to write more as they update their status and use instant messages with a larger audience (El Said Abdul Fattah, 2015). The social networking sites provide space for students to write in an authentic environment (Raith, 2009). Wil et al. (2019) in their study found that social media improved students' writing.

To get students engaged in their learning experience, many educators have integrated the use of social media in teaching (Browing et al., 2011). University students are normally

active users of social media, and this facilitates a closer interaction with their teachers and peers (DeAndrea, 2012). Students who find classroom interactions intimidating may benefit from the use of social media as it allows them to share and discuss the course content anywhere anytime (Yourstone et al., 2008). In a second language setting, especially in a culture where teachers are highly respected, learners may not have the courage to ask the teachers directly in the class. Added to that, teachers may not be able to attend to all students particularly when the class size is big (Biggs, 1999; Aoumeur, 2017). The possibility of editing, and thinking before posting a question or sharing an opinion makes the social media sites a favourable tool for second language learners and teachers. In a survey conducted by Browning et al. (2011), students expressed their willingness to accept social media as a classroom tool. In a study conducted by Alshuaibi et al. (2018) on Malaysian students, the social media was found to have a positive impact on their academic performance. The active use of social media could have reduced their writing anxiety as they communicated in a meaningful context.

#### *Audience affecting writing apprehension*

As writing is a complex process involving creative, cognitive and social dimensions, teachers play an important role in facilitating and modelling students' ideas. They can assist and help students plan their outline, draft topic sentences, find and apply adequate evidence to support their ideas, guide and encourage students to think critically and creatively (Silva, 1990). A writing task is not only about accurate use of grammatical forms, but the content would also have to be meaningful and properly presented (Hyland, 2019). For most of the writing tasks, EFL college students write for a known audience, and usually the audience is their teacher and their peers. They engage and interact with them during the writing process. The lecturer will eventually evaluate their final written tasks.

The students tend to avoid risk by not being over creative and consider the writing task as an assignment to be completed solely for their grades. Without the experience of writing for a variety of audiences, students tend to not develop high levels of creative thinking as they are not aware of or cannot anticipate the appropriate language register and genre for the different audience (Wong & Moorhouse, 2018). Xiping (2016) found that integrating audience awareness of different genres by incorporating authentic communicative context into EFL writing class helped students elaborate their ideas and stimulate their interest and creativity in their writing based on their audience' needs. This also helps in creating a relationship between writer and reader. Wong and Moorhouse (2018) indicated that sharing final drafts of essays on an online blog with the necessary scaffolding strategies on how to comment as readers and how

to respond as author could enhance students’ audience awareness. The online learning environment was also found to be conducive for enhancing students’ creative writing ability (Al-Jarf, 2007). Not only these, allowing students to engage in a social context such as obtaining meaningful feedback from many sources can improve writing confidence and reduce writing apprehension (Mascle, 2013).

**Method**

Since a language programme normally involves a lot of writing, and at the same time students are expected to use a broad range of technology applications, the overarching research question in this study is, “In using the various online applications, do language students suffer from writing apprehension?” The following questions served to guide this research:

- i) Is the self-perceived language ability the same for the three university students?
- ii) Is there a significant difference among the English majors in their writing apprehension?
- iii) Is there a significant difference among the English majors in their frequency of using online applications when writing in English?
- iv) Is there a relationship between online web applications used for writing and English majors’ writing apprehension?
- vi) Is there a relationship between students’ writing audience and their writing apprehension?

*Participants*

A total of 307 students were involved in this study with 102 from Uni A, 95 from Uni B and 110 from Uni C. Of the 307 students, approximately 15% were males and 85% were females. There were 12 male and 90 female students from Uni A, 12 males and 83 females from Uni B and 22 male and 88 female students from Uni C (Table 1).

**Table 1: Population of Students who participated in the Study by Gender and Year**

Program	Year				Total
	first year	Second year	Third year	Fourth Year	

UNI A	Gender	male	2	5	1	4	12
		female	23	34	21	12	90
	Total	25	39	22	16	102	
UNI B	Gender	male	4	2	6		12
		female	20	22	41		83
	Total	24	24	47		95	
UNI C	Gender	male	5	11	6	0	22
		female	22	29	27	10	88
	Total	27	40	33	10	110	
Total	Gender	male	11	18	13	4	46
		female	65	85	89	22	261
	Total	76	103	102	26	307	

This is in fact a common scenario in language departments in Malaysia and Thailand. They are usually dominated by female students. Uni B offers a three-year programme, and this is the reason why there were no students in Year 4.

### *Survey Tool*

To answer the research questions, a survey tool was developed to obtain respondents' demographic information, level of writing apprehension, frequency of writing in English using the listed online applications and the audience for these writing activities. In order to measure students' level of writing apprehension, Daly-Miller writing apprehension test (1975) was adapted. One of the items in the Daly-Miller test was changed from "I like seeing my thoughts on paper" to "I like seeing my thoughts on screen" since the research is on writing activities conducted using their computer or smartphone. To determine if there was a significant difference among the students in their use of the various online web applications, the students

were asked how frequent did they use the different applications which the students answered using a Likert-like scale ranging from “1” which represents “Not at all” to “10” which represents “Highly frequently”. They were also asked what they felt their level of English was.

The first six items listed in *We are Special & Hootsuite* (2017) except for Youtube, were included in the list of online applications used since they were mainly used for writing. Youtube was excluded because it was predominantly utilised for downloading and uploading of videos. The items listed as the most active social media platforms used in Malaysia were Youtube 68%, Facebook 67%, Whsaap 60%, Instagram 47%, FB Messenger 45%, WeChat 42%, Twitter 41%, Google+ 41%, Linkedin 30%, Pinterest 26%, Line 25%, and Tumblr 23% . Sani (2017) reported a similar finding made by researchers from University of Malaya and Monash University Malaysia who found that Facebook was the most popular social media platform among the Malaysian university students at 38% followed by Whatsapp (35%) and Instagram (12%) (Sani, 2017). In Thailand, Facebook was popular among 65% of the population studied followed by Youtube (64%), Line (53%), FB Messenger (48%), Instagram (44%), Google+ (41%), Twitter 40%, Linkedin 23%, Wechat 20%, Pinterest 18%, Whatsapp 18% and Tmblr 15%. These results reflect that Whatsapp and Wechat were more popular in Malaysia than Thailand. Others such as MOOC, Edmodo, Google Classroom and Padlet were also included since they were among the popular applications used by academics of these universities.

### *Data Collection*

The questionnaire was administered during the 2019/2020 academic year. At Uni A, the undergraduate students were recruited by distributing the questionnaire in their class. Convenience sampling method was adopted where classes which were held at about the same time were approached. It was explained to them that they would remain anonymous. Their participation in the research was on a voluntary basis, and no incentive was given to the students. Grant was obtained from the University to conduct the research, and this entails permission to carry out this study.

At Uni B, the questionnaires were distributed to classes taught by one of the researchers who teaches at the university. Their participation was voluntary though as the lecturer did not impose it on the students. The students were also informed of their anonymity in participating in the study and no incentives were given to the students.



At Uni C, during a weekly student meeting, the English majors were informed of the study, and their cooperation was sought to fill-in the questionnaire. They were assured that they would remain anonymous. Opportunity sampling was utilised in the distribution of the questionnaire.

## Results and Discussion

To answer the first research question, which was what they felt their level of proficiency was, Uni C students were found to be significantly different from the other two universities in that they felt that they had a weaker proficiency in the English language ( $p < 0.005$ ) (Table 2):

**Table 2: Comparison of Self-Perceived Proficiency by Universities**

Dependent Variable	(I) Program	(J) Program	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Proficiency	Uni A	Uni B	.06522	.11854	.846	-.2140	.3444
		Uni C	.72664*	.11413	.000	.4578	.9955
	Uni B	Uni A	-.06522	.11854	.846	-.3444	.2140
		Uni C	.66142*	.11667	.000	.3866	.9362
	Uni C	Uni A	-.72664*	.11413	.000	-.9955	-.4578
		Uni B	-.66142*	.11667	.000	-.9362	-.3866

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

Many studies have indicated that Thai students have not been successful in learning English, resulting from insufficient practice in an authentic context, a lack of confidence in communication skills, poor reading and listening skills, and a high level of anxiety in reading and speaking English, L1 language interference during communication, and inadequate English usage in the classroom (Noom-ura, 2013; Bruner, Sinwongsuwat & Radic-Bojanic, 2015; Chumworatayee, 2017; Torudom & Taylor, 2017; Kalra & Siribud, 2020).

Compared to Thailand, Malaysian students seemed to be more fluent and confident users of English which is widely used beyond the classroom and in various contexts in Malaysia. This is shown in the overall mean band scores of IELTS Academic with Malaysian

students ranking first in Asia, with an overall score of 6.88 while Thai students scored an average of 5.98 in 2018 (*Test taker performance 2018*, n.d.).

Among the Malaysian universities, however, there are differences in how the students perceived their ability to use the English language. Table 3 shows that between Uni A and Uni B, students of Uni A were more confident of their ability to use English.

**Table 3: Comparison of Self-Perceived Proficiency among Three Universities**

University	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Uni C	107	3.5234	
Uni B	92		4.1848
Uni A	100		4.2500
Sig.		1.000	.841

The difference between Uni A and Uni B could be attributed to the fact that Uni A is an international university with students coming from many countries, whilst majority of Uni B students are of Malay ethnic origin.

Based on the above results, it is assumed that Uni A students were the least apprehensive of the three. On the contrary, Table 4 shows that Uni B students were the least apprehensive of all. This was followed by Uni A and Uni C students respectively.

**Table 4: Comparison of Writing Apprehension by Universities**

University	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05
		1
UniB	95	65.7158
UniA	102	67.0196
UniC	109	85.2844
Sig.		.453

Contrary to the findings made by most studies on second language learners (Jabali, 2018; Betancourt & Phinney, 1988; Al-Shboul & Huwari, 2015), the English majors in this

study had low levels of apprehension when writing in English. The findings corroborate the claims made by a number of researchers who investigated the relationship between writing apprehension among ESL students and the integration of technology in writing lessons (Challob et al. 2016; Hussin et al., 2015; Ikhsan & Halim, 2018; Marandi & Seyyedrezaie, 2017). The findings in this study seemed to be in line with their claim that the use of technology in writing reduced the students' writing apprehension. Though their study was on writing classes, a similar impact was observed on the second language learners who were majoring in English. As stated by Ismail and Mohd Ariff Albakri (2012), students' attitudes towards writing was more positive when writing was done online. As in Zhang's (2019) study, the students might have felt less stressed and more relaxed when the teachers used technology in and outside the classroom.

The diverse audience on social networks provides users an authentic environment to use the language. What used to be a boring activity to a language learner, is becoming part and parcel of their life. As reported by El Said Abdul Fattah (2015) students are finding writing fun with instant messages and status updates. Table 5 reflects the students' usage of the various online applications.

**Table 5: University by Frequency of Online Applications Usage**

Dependent Variable	(I) Program	(J) Program	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
LMS	Uni A	Uni B	1.858	1.400	.381	-1.44	5.15
		Uni C	4.150*	1.349	.006	.97	7.33
	UniB	UniA	-1.858	1.400	.381	-5.15	1.44
		UniC	2.292	1.375	.220	-.95	5.53
	UniC	UniA	-4.150*	1.349	.006	-7.33	-.97
		UniB	-2.292	1.375	.220	-5.53	.95
Whatsapp	UniA	UniB	-.395	.280	.337	-1.05	.26
		UniC	4.938*	.270	.000	4.30	5.57
	UniB	UniA	.395	.280	.337	-.26	1.05
		UniC	5.333*	.275	.000	4.68	5.98

	UniC	UniA	-4.938*	.270	.000	-5.57	-4.30
		UniB	-5.333*	.275	.000	-5.98	-4.68
Facebook	UniA	UniB	.380	.445	.670	-.67	1.43
		UniC	-1.812*	.429	.000	-2.82	-.80
	UniB	UniA	-.380	.445	.670	-1.43	.67
		UniC	-2.192*	.437	.000	-3.22	-1.16
	UniC	UniA	1.812*	.429	.000	.80	2.82
		UniB	2.192*	.437	.000	1.16	3.22
Instagram	UniA	UniB	.710	.399	.179	-.23	1.65
		UniC	.607	.385	.257	-.30	1.51
	UniB	UniA	-.710	.399	.179	-1.65	.23
		UniC	-.102	.392	.963	-1.03	.82
	UniC	UniA	-.607	.385	.257	-1.51	.30
		UniB	.102	.392	.963	-.82	1.03
Twitter	UniA	UniB	.453	.482	.615	-.68	1.59
		UniC	.702	.464	.286	-.39	1.80
	UniB	UniA	-.453	.482	.615	-1.59	.68
		UniC	.250	.473	.858	-.86	1.36
	UniC	UniA	-.702	.464	.286	-1.80	.39
		UniB	-.250	.473	.858	-1.36	.86
WeChat	UniA	UniB	-.260	.315	.687	-1.00	.48
		UniC	-.462	.304	.282	-1.18	.25
	UniB	UniA	.260	.315	.687	-.48	1.00
		UniB	-.202	.310	.791	-.93	.53
	UniC	UniA	.462	.304	.282	-.25	1.18
		UniB	.202	.310	.791	-.53	.93
Telegram	UniA	UniB	.104	.888	.992	-1.99	2.20
		UniC	.939	.856	.517	-1.08	2.96
	UniB	UniA	-.104	.888	.992	-2.20	1.99
		UniC	.834	.873	.605	-1.22	2.89
	UniC	UniA	-.939	.856	.517	-2.96	1.08
		UniB	-.834	.873	.605	-2.89	1.22

Edmodo	UniA	UniB	.473	.414	.488	-.50	1.45
		UniC	1.864*	.399	.000	.92	2.80
	UniB	UniA	-.473	.414	.488	-1.45	.50
		UniC	1.391*	.406	.002	.43	2.35
	UniC	UniA	-1.864*	.399	.000	-2.80	-.92
		UniB	-1.391*	.406	.002	-2.35	-.43
Padlet	UniA	UniB	-1.671	.931	.173	-3.86	.52
		UniC	-.378	.899	.907	-2.50	1.74
	UniB	UniA	1.671	.931	.173	-.52	3.86
		UniC	1.293	.916	.337	-.87	3.45
	UniC	UniA	.378	.899	.907	-1.74	2.50
		UniB	-1.293	.916	.337	-3.45	.87
MOOC	UniA	UniB	1.494	.923	.239	-.68	3.67
		UniC	2.763*	.890	.006	.67	4.86
	UniB	UniA	-1.494	.923	.239	-3.67	.68
		UniC	1.268	.907	.343	-.87	3.40
	UniC	UniA	-2.763*	.890	.006	-4.86	-.67
		UniB	-1.268	.907	.343	-3.40	.87
Google Classroom	UniA	UniB	4.193*	.921	.000	2.02	6.36
		UniC	2.777*	.888	.005	.69	4.87
	UniB	UniA	-4.193*	.921	.000	-6.36	-2.02
		UniC	-1.417	.904	.262	-3.55	.71
	UniC	UniA	-2.777*	.888	.005	-4.87	-.69
		UniB	1.417	.904	.262	-.71	3.55
Yahoo Messenger	UniA	UniB	.333	.874	.923	-1.73	2.39
		UniC	.189	.843	.973	-1.79	2.17
	UniB	UniA	-.333	.874	.923	-2.39	1.73
		UniC	-.144	.859	.985	-2.17	1.88
	UniC	UniA	-.189	.843	.973	-2.17	1.79
		UniB	.144	.859	.985	-1.88	2.17

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

When the students' frequency of writing in English using the listed online applications was analysed, it was found that there was a statistically significant difference among the English majors of the three universities ( $p < 0.05$ ). Tables 5a, 5b, 5c, 5d, 5e, and 5f show that students of Uni A and Uni B wrote more in English compared to Uni C on two of the social networks namely, Whatsapp and Facebook. They were also found to write more frequently in English on Edmodo, MOOC and Google Classroom which were commonly used for teaching. The differences here might be attributed to the fact that these applications were used more in Malaysia and among Malaysian academics than in Thailand. However, where Google Classroom was concerned, the difference between Uni A and Uni B was statistically significant ( $p < 0.005$ ) suggesting that there was a difference in their practices where this platform was concerned. Uni A students wrote in English more than Uni B and C students on Google Classroom. Their frequency of writing in English on LMS and MOOC was also found to be statistically significant when Uni A students were compared to Uni C. Uni A students wrote more in English than Uni C. Interestingly, there was no statistical difference among universities in terms of their frequency of using Telegram, WeChat, Twitter, Instagram and Yahoo Messenger.

**Table 5a: University by LMS**

Program	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
UniC	110	4.78	
UniB	95	7.07	7.07
UniA	102		8.93
Sig.		.220	.368

**Table 5b: University by Whatsapp**

Program	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
UniC	110	1.71	
UniA	102		6.65

UniB	95		7.04
Sig.		1.000	.324

**Table 5c: University by Facebook**

Program	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
UniB	95	4.33	
UniA	102	4.71	
UniC	110		6.52
Sig.		.660	1.000

**Table 5d: University by Edmodo**

Program	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
UniC	110	1.15	
UniB	95		2.54
UniA	102		3.01
Sig.		1.000	.476

**Table 5e: University by MOOC**

Program	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
UniC	110	2.10	
UniB	95	3.37	3.37
UniA	102		4.86
Sig.		.343	.227

**Table 5f: University by Google Classroom**

		1	2
UniB	95	2.61	
UniC	110	4.03	
UniA	102		6.80
Sig.		.262	1.000

Table 6 shows that there was no relationship between online applications listed and writing apprehension except on Instagram ( $p < 0.05$ ). Interestingly, the students seemed to be more anxious when writing in English on Instagram which allows users to post contents, add captions and provide meaningful comments regarding the topic of the uploaded pictures and videos.

**Table 6: Correlations between Writing Apprehension and Frequency of Writing in English on Online Applications**

		apprehension
Pearson Correlation	apprehension	1.000
	LMS	-.004
	Whatsapp	-.074
	Facebook	.004
	Instagram	-.113
	Twitter	-.085
	WeChat	-.018
	Telegram	-.013
	Edmodo	-.017
	Padlet	-.015
	MOOC	-.019
	GoogleClassroom	-.027
	YahooMessenger	-.009
Sig. (1-tailed)	apprehension	.
	LMS	.476
	Whatsapp	.099



Facebook	.470
Instagram	.024
Twitter	.070
WeChat	.380
Telegram	.409
Edmodo	.383
Padlet	.394
MOOC	.373
GoogleClassroom	.318
YahooMessenger	.435

Table 7 suggests that there was no significant correlation between students' writing apprehension and class instructors. Even when the audience was the lecturers who evaluated their writing performance, the students were not nervous about their writing. The table also indicates that the instructors used both educational applications and social networks to communicate with the students. Their use in both formal and informal contexts may have made the student-teacher interaction more relaxed.

**Table 7: Correlation between Students' Writing Audience and their Writing Apprehension**

		Instructors
Pearson Correlation	Instructors	1.000
	apprehension	-.040
	LMS	-.185
	WhatsApp	-.732
	Facebook	.213
	Instagram	-.108
	Twitter	-.114
	WeChat	.015
	Telegram	-.069
	Edmodo	-.294
	Padlet	-.047

	MOOC	-.148
	GoogleClassroom	-.076
	YahooMessenger	-.014
Sig. (1-tailed)	Instructors	.
	apprehension	.247
	LMS	.001
	Whatsapp	.000
	Facebook	.000
	Instagram	.032
	Twitter	.025
	WeChat	.400
	Telegram	.119
	Edmodo	.000
	Padlet	.210
	MOOC	.005
	Google Classroom	.095
	Yahoo Messenger	.408

## Conclusion

DeAndrea (2012) stated that university students are active users of social media, and this is observed in this study. As in Browing et al.'s (2011) findings, the results of this study indicate that the students were at ease with online delivery of content. The presence of social networks and online applications for educational purposes, and their easy access may have made writing activities more natural and meaningful to them. The students in this study wrote in English on various online platforms.

In the Malaysian and Thailand high context culture which is non-confrontational (Etae et al., 2016) the possibility of communication breakdown between students and teachers is high since the society tends to rely on implicit rather than explicit messages. It can be difficult to gauge students' understanding of a lesson in an environment where the instructors are highly respected and students are known to be passive learners. The online applications give users the option of avoiding face-to-face interaction, easing anxiety in communication.

The study reflects that although the English majors had different perceptions of their English language ability, they were similar in that they did not experience excessive writing apprehension. Findings also indicate that the technology was widely used by the students for writing. It reflects the changing scenario in the practice of writing. As more writing is done with the use of social networks, it may have given users more practise in using the language, and hence in this case they were less apprehensive when writing in the target language. Its use in English might come naturally since their curricular and co-curricular activities were conducted in English. The differences in the frequency of writing in English among the students of the three universities on the different platforms basically reflect the different practices at the universities.

Technological advances seemed to have an impact on the social and cultural practices of the society. The lack of writing apprehension among the students from both countries when writing to/for their lecturers signifies a change in the power distance relationships between the students and teachers. The use of social networks to connect with the teachers outside the classroom also reflects a change in the student-teacher relationship in this society. Out of respect, a teacher is not normally 'disturbed' outside the classroom.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

The findings of the study suggest that the learners felt less anxious when writing online using the different online applications even when writing for their teachers. The study indicates that the students are ready for a change in the delivery of content. The current situation that is brought about by the COVID 19 pandemic served to accelerate the change in curriculum delivery. The low writing anxiety makes the change a natural process to the students. To accommodate the change, the relevant online writing applications and learning management systems can be acquired by the institutions since students' choice of writing platforms seemed to relate to what is provided by the institution. Teachers would have to be ready to adopt the different online tools and platforms, and to select those that can help to improve students' writing skills with minimal scaffolding. However, their guidance is important in ensuring that the writing convention is observed and the standard form of the language is acquired even when automated feedback is provided by the online tools. They would need to engage students in meaningful ways in the writing activities. .

## References

- Abd Rahim, S., Jaganathan, P., & Sepora, T. (2016). An investigation on the effects of writing anxiety on readiness of writing among low proficiency undergraduates. *International Journal of Language Education and Applied Linguistics (IJLEAL)*, 5, 11-20.
- Al-Jarf, R. S. (2007). Online Instruction and Creative Writing by Saudi EFL Freshman Students, *Asian EFL Journal*, 22, 1-13.
- Al-Sawalha, A. M. S., & Chow, T. V. F. (2012). The effects of writing apprehension in English on the writing process of Jordanian EFL students at Yarmouk University. *International Interdisciplinary Journal of Education*, 1(1), 6-14.
- Al-Shboul, Y., & Huwari, I. (2015). The causes of writing apprehension through students' perspective. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 6 (3), 535-544.
- Alshuaibi, M., Alshuaibi, A., Shamsudin, F., & Arshad, D. (2018). Use of social media, student engagement, and academic performance of business students in Malaysia. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 32(4), 625-640.
- Aoumeur, H. (2017). The impact of class size on teaching and learning English as a foreign language: The case of the Department of English at Abdelhamid Ibnu Badis University. *Arab World English Journal*, 8(2), 349-361.
- Badrasawi, K. J. I., Zubairi, A., & Idrus, F. (2016). Exploring the relationship between writing apprehension and writing performance: A qualitative study. *International Education Studies*, 9 (8), 134-143.
- Beasley, K. (2019). *Social media effects on student writing can be positive*. Retrieved from <https://smallbusiness.yahoo.com/advisor/social-media-effects-student-writing-positive-003059758.html>
- Betancourt, F., & Phinney, M. (1988). Sources of writing block in bilingual writers. *Written communication*, 5, 461-478.
- Biggs, J. (1999). *Teaching for quality learning at university: What the student does*. Open University Press.
- Browing, L., Gerlich, R. N., & Westermann, L. (2011). The new HD classroom: A 'hyper diverse' approach to engaging with students. *Journal of Instructional Pedagogies*, 5, 1-10.
- Bruner, D. A., Sinwongsuwat, K., & Radic-Bojanic, B. (2015). EFL Oral Communication Teaching Practices: A Close Look at University Teachers and A2 Students' Perspectives in Thailand and a Critical Eye from Serbia. *English Language Teaching*, 8(1), 11-20.

- Cequeña, M., & Gustilo, L. (2014). Can weblogs reduce writing anxiety and facilitate improvement in writing skills? *Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 2, 1-23.
- Challob, A. I., Bakar, N., & Latif, H. (2016). Collaborative blended learning writing environment: Effects on EFL students' writing apprehension and writing performance. *English Language Teaching*, 9(6), 229-242
- Choi, S. (2014). Language anxiety in second language learning: Is it really a stumbling block? *Second Language Studies*, 31(2), 1-42.
- Chumworatayee, T. (2017). The Effect of Reading Strategy Instruction on Thai EFL Adult Learners' Reading Strategy Awareness, *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 10(1), 135-148.
- Council of Europe. (n.d.) *Common European Framework of Reference for languages: learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge University Press.
- Daly, J. A., & Miller, M. D. (1975). The empirical development of an instrument to measure writing apprehension. *Research in Teaching of English*, 9, 242-249.
- DeAndrea, D. C., Ellison, N. B., LaRose, R., Steinfeld, C., & Fiore, A. (2012). *Serious social media: on the use of social media for improving students' adjustment to college*. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 15, 15-23.
- El Said Abdul Fattah, S. F. (2015). The effectiveness of using WhatsApp Messenger as one of mobile learning techniques to develop students' writing skills. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6 (32), 115-127.
- Etae, S., Krish, P., & Hussin, S. (2016). Politeness strategies by Thai EFL tertiary learners in an online forum. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities*, 24, 67-80.
- Farhat, P. A., & Dzakiria, H. (2017). Pronunciation barriers and computer assisted language learning (CALL): Coping the demands of 21st century in second language learning classroom in Pakistan. *International Journal of Research in English Education*, 2(2), 53-62.
- Hofstede Insights. (n.d). <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/malaysia/>
- Hofstede, G. (1980). *Culture's consequences: International differences in work-related values*. Sage.
- Hussin, S., Abdullah, M. Y., Ismail, N., & Yoke, S. K. (2015). The effects of CMC applications on ESL writing anxiety among postgraduate students. *English Language Teaching*, 8(9), 167-172.

- Huwari, I. F., & Aziz, N. H. A. (2011). Writing apprehension in English among Jordanian postgraduate students in UUM. *Academic Research International Journal*, 1(2), 190-198.
- Hyland, K. (2019). *Second language writing* (2nd ed.) Cambridge University Press.
- Ikhsan, H., & Halim, H. A. (2018). The effect of e-feedback via Wikis on ESL students' L2 writing anxiety level. *Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Sciences*, 6(3), 30-48.
- Ismail, N., & Mohd Ariff Albakri, I. (2012). An Analysis of ESL students' attitude and interest towards learning to write essays using selected online writing links and resources. *The International Journal of Knowledge, Culture and Change Management*, 11, 187-198. 10.18848/1447-9524/CGP/v11i06/50211.
- Jabali, O. (2018). Students' attitudes towards EFL university writing: A case study at An-Najah National University, Palestine. *Heliyon*, 4(11), e00896. doi:10.1016/j.heliyon.2018.e00896
- Jawas, U. (2019). Writing anxiety among Indonesian EFL students: Factors and strategies. *International Journal of Instruction*, 12(4), 733-746.
- Kalra, R., & Siribud, S. (2020). Public Speaking Anxiety in the Thai EFL Context, *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 13(1), 195-209.
- Malaysia Qualifications Agency. (2018). *Programme Standards: Language*. Malaysian Qualification Agency.
- Marandi, S. S., & Seyyedrezaie, M. S. (2017). The multi-course comparison of the effectiveness of two EFL writing environments: Google drive versus face-to-face on Iranian EFL learners' writing performance and writing apprehension. *CALL-EJ*, 18(1), 9-21.
- Masclé, D. D. (2013). Writing self-efficacy and written communication skills. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 72(2), 216-225.
- MHESI. (2017, December 21). *TQF 1 of Bachelor in English*. Retrieved February 8, 2020, from [www.mua.go.th](http://www.mua.go.th)
- Mohseniasl, F. (2014). Examining the effect of strategy instruction on writing apprehension and writing achievement of EFL learners. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 4(4), 811-817.
- Nik Ahmad, N. N., & Sulaiman, M. (2013). Case studies in a passive learning environment: Some Malaysian evidence. *Accounting Research Journal*. 26(3), 173-196. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ARJ-10-2012-0082>

- Nguyen, T. (2019). *Using ICT to foster collaborative writing for EFL university students in Vietnam*. Retrieved from <https://ro.ecu.edu.au/theses/2212>.
- Noom-ura, S. (2013). English-Teaching Problems in Thailand and Thai Teachers' Professional Development Needs, *English Language Teaching*, 6(11), 139-147.
- Silva, T. (1990). Second language composition instruction: Developments, issues, and directions in ESL. In B. Kroll (Ed.), *Second Language Writing: Research insights for the classroom*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sundari, H., & Febriyanti, R.H. (2017). Writing apprehension in the writing class: Indonesian EFL learners context. *DEIKSIS*, 9 (1), 34-42.
- Sweetman, K. (2012). *In Asia, power gets its way*. Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2012/04/in-asia-power-gets-in-the-way>
- Test taker performance 2018. (n.d), available at: <https://www.ielts.org/teaching-and-research/test-taker-performance>. (accessed 14 April 2020).
- Torudom, K., & Taylor, P. (2017). An Investigation of Reading Attitudes, Motivation and Reading Anxiety of EFL Undergraduate Students, *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network*, 10(2), 47-70.
- We are Special & Hootsuite*. (2017). Digital in 2017: Southeast Asia regional overview, <https://wearesocial.com/special-reports/digital-southeast-asia-2017>
- Westwood, P. (2008). *What teachers need to know about reading and writing difficulties*. Australian Council for Educational Research.
- Wil, C. S. C., Yunus, M. M., & Suliman, A. (2019). The use of social media to assist writing skills among secondary pupils. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 8(3), 224–236.
- Wong, K. M., & Moorhouse, B. L. (2018). Writing for an audience: Inciting creativity among young English language bloggers through scaffolded comments. *TESOL Journal*, 9(4), 1-6.
- Xiping, L. (2016). Promoting the audience awareness of EFL writing in Chinese communicative context: A case study of “NOTICE”. *English Language Teaching*, 9(9), 64-73.
- Yasuda, S. (2011). Genre-based tasks in foreign language writing: Developing writers' genre awareness, linguistic knowledge, and writing competence. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 20(2), 111-133.

- Younas, M., Subhani, A., Arshad, S., Akram, H., Sohail, M., Hamid, M., & Farzeen, M. (2014). Exploring the causes of writing anxiety: A case of B.S. English students. *Language in India, 14* (8), 197-208.
- Yourstone, S., Kraye, H., & Albaum, G. (2008). Classroom questioning with immediate electronic response: Do clickers improve learning. *Decision Science Journal of Innovative Education, 6*(1), 75-88.
- Yunus, M. M., Nordin, N., Salehi, H., Embi, M., & Salehi, Z. (2013). The use of information and communication technology (ICT) in teaching ESL writing skills. *English Language Teaching, 6*, 1-8. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n7p1>
- Yunus, M. M., Salehi, H., Amini, M., Shojaee, M., & Wong, Y. F. (2016). Activities and suggestions for using social networking in teaching ESL writing. *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Information Technology, 84*(2), 170-182.
- Zulkepli, N., Madzlan, N. A., Kesevan, H. V., & Ahmad Tajuddin, S. N. A. (2020). L2 motivational self system as predictors of in-class and out-of-class willingness to communicate in a multicultural context, *Asian EFL Journal, 24* (4), 79-100.
- Zhang, X. (2019). Exploring the relationship between college students' writing anxiety and the pedagogical use of online resources. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education, 16*, 1-18.





## **Local and Foreign Students' Views of English-Medium Instruction (EMI) and the Use of Multiple Languages for Learning**

**Dr. Emiko Yukawa**

*Ritsumeikan University, College of Letters*

*Japan*

### **Bio-profile:**

**Dr. Emiko Yukawa** has been a professor at Ritsumeikan University, College of Letters since 2005. She is responsible for educating future secondary school English teachers in Japan. Her current research interests include teaching English to elementary school children, teacher education of both elementary and secondary school teachers, EMI and multilingual education in Campus Asia Program. Email: [eyt24310@lt.ritsumei.ac.jp](mailto:eyt24310@lt.ritsumei.ac.jp)

### **Abstract**

English-medium instruction (EMI) has been practiced in higher education world-wide especially since the turn of the century. However, there are still few studies on EMI practices conducted in Japanese universities, especially on EMI courses which are open to students in non-EMI track programs, i.e., students learning with Japanese as the main medium of instruction. Such a practice is an extra challenge but offers potential for the development of diversification and globalization of university education, and hence information on such practices should be valuable to university staff who are thinking of developing similar programs. The study addressed the following research questions: RQ 1: What are the local and foreign students' feelings toward the EMI courses they are taking? RQ 2: What are the local and foreign students' views about the use of multiple languages in classes? To answer these questions, the present paper conducted a questionnaire survey focusing on a set of EMI courses offered to foreign students, as well as any local students, who normally study in Japanese-as-the-medium-of-instruction programs. The questionnaire for the local students consisted of 19 questions, and the one for the foreign students consisted of 14 questions. The data were collected from 176 students (101 local and 75 foreign students) in the academic years 2016 and

2017. The mean scores and standard deviations of the quantifiable answers were observed and compared between the two academic years as well as between the category of students (local or foreign). Free-writing answers were categorized by opinions and then the frequencies of same opinions were counted before the same comparison was conducted. The data showed that the local students had a harder time than the foreign students in their comprehension of the talk and self-expression in class (RQ1), and that both local and foreign students had overall favorable views about their professors' or classmates' use of the local language and the use of multiple languages for their study in general (RQ2). The paper concludes with pedagogical implications and the limitations of the study.

**Keywords:** *English-Medium Instruction, globalization, Japanese higher education, L1 use*

## **Introduction**

English-medium instruction (EMI) at higher educational institutions is becoming omnipresent given the spread of English in academic fields.<sup>1)</sup> Reflecting this situation, the practice of EMI is increasing, and reports and research on various aspects of EMI practices have been published widely in recent years (e.g. Corrigan, 2015; Dimova, et al., 2015; Doiz, et al., 2013; Macaro, 2018; Murata, 2019; Vila et al., 2015).

EMI is defined here as the instruction of content courses (not English lessons) with English as the official medium of instruction in the regions where English is not used as a local language, although such a clear-cut definition is not always evident. In addition to tertiary education, EMI extends to other educational contexts and overlaps with Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), and therefore there may be some confusion as to the distinction between methodologies with similar names. (refer to Cenoz, et al., 2014 for a critical discussion of the definition of CLIL). However, the definition stated above suffices for the purpose of reporting the present study.

This paper focuses on the type of EMI implementation characterized by the participation of local students whose English may not yet be fully adequate. Colleges, departments, or majors in which all educational encounters are conducted in English (“full EMI” hereafter) typically recruit students who are linguistically ready for such a program, but EMI courses are sometimes offered to local students who enter the university expecting to learn class content in their first language (L1 hereafter). For such students, EMI courses are undoubtedly challenging, but they could be beneficial in habituating them to an English-medium environment while they are in their home country.

This study aims to uncover both local Japanese-speaking students' and foreign students' feelings toward this transitional type of EMI in Japan. It investigates undergraduate students who took liberal arts courses in one private university (K University hereafter) located in western Japan. This investigation primarily aims at the smoother running of these specific EMI liberal arts courses, but it is also hoped that these findings have some relevance to similar EMI situations in other universities.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Challenges students face in EMI courses***

This section reviews studies which refer to students' and/or professors' views as well as the challenges they face in the classroom. EMI, by definition, uses as the medium of instruction most students' (and professors') skills and knowledge of English learned as a second language (L2 hereafter), which naturally causes linguistic challenges for most people. Kang and Park's (2005) study was conducted in South Korea revealed that the degrees of difficulty students felt are related to their English proficiency. Evans and Morrison's three-year longitudinal study (2011) shows that students had difficulties in writing and understanding the terminology of certain academic fields, at least at the beginning stage. Kriukow and Galloway (2019) report the views of three PhD students specializing in education and four academics in Japan. These students expressed that their English was still insufficient to their needs. (See Li, 2013 for the specific skills and knowledge in English that EMI course takers feel in a Chinese university.)

EMI classrooms are contexts where English is used as a lingua franca, which means that many different types of English are used and need to be understood. Konakahara, Murata, and Iino (2019) explored EMI students' and professors' voices in relation to English as a lingua franca. The data were collected from students in two full EMI programs and students in one EMI course which was for students in non-EMI track programs, i.e., ordinary Japanese-medium instruction programs. Even though most students (roughly 90%) from both types of programs positively evaluated (fully or to some degree) EMI, some students mentioned the difficulty of understanding different varieties of English. Furthermore, students who had already attained a relatively high level of English proficiency during study abroad expressed negative views about the characteristics of their professors' English.

So far, this section has reviewed the potential linguistic challenges that students and professors in EMI face. Relatedly, how might problems regarding such a lack of English ability be solved? Offering English support services is one solution, although such services need to match students' specific needs (Kriukow & Galloway, 2019). Another would be the use of the

local language in some core courses rather than the universal implementation of EMI in all courses, as hinted by Arik and Arik (2018). The use of local students' L1 within an EMI course is possible if all the foreign students know the language, at least to some extent<sup>2</sup>). Im and Kim (2012) suggest the use of technology, such as online teaching as a solution. "Blending" off-line and on-line teaching may open a new space of possibilities for future EMI innovations.

Space limitation prevents a review of all the aspects of EMI practices other than what was summarized above. Interested readers are advised to refer to the aforementioned publications which include those done in various contexts, reporting analyses from multiple perspectives. In addition, how Japanese EMI started to increase (i.e., the Japanese government's initiation such as Global 30 and Top Global University) is summarized in Rose and McKinley (2018), as well as in the chapters which report EMI cases in Japanese universities, compiled in Murata (2019).

### ***"Theme Study" courses in K University***

The courses described here are known as "Theme Study" courses. The present study was conducted in K University, a private university located in western Japan. It has full EMI departments and majors, but the Theme Study courses are not among the courses that those departments/majors offer exclusively for their students. Rather, they are offered as part of "the international liberal arts courses", which are organized by an institution separate from individual college administrations and are offered to all students across colleges. As is the case with other liberal arts courses, Theme Study is elective.

Theme Study is a cover term, and subsumed within it there are various courses offered in foreign languages; in each semester, approximately 10 courses are offered in English, and one each may be offered in Chinese, Korean, German, etc. The academic disciplines of these courses vary greatly; for example, the courses offered in these two years included such themes as mass media, Japanese politics, animated films, company's social contribution, sociolinguistics, etc. The number of the courses offered depends on the availability of faculty who are willing to offer a course as "Theme Study". The enrolment in each class is limited to around 30 so that rich interaction in class will be possible. This system was created in 2016 for the enrichment of the liberal arts education. Students who are likely to select these courses include those planning to go abroad to study. The experience can be used as a primer to get used to an EMI or other-language environment. The courses are also meant for those who are simply interested in this type of academic experience and want to learn with foreign students in the same class while they are still in Japan. I chose the Theme Study courses as the research

focus because these courses are open to any student in the university though they need to meet a minimum English-ability requirement. They were judged to represent a good model of practice, and thus providing hints for further improvement/expansion of EMI programs.

For the reasons stated thus far, the present study addresses the following research questions.

RQ 1: What are the local and foreign students' feelings toward the EMI courses they are taking?

RQ 2: What are the local and foreign students' views about the use of multiple languages in/for class?

## **Method**

### ***Data***

The data consist of a questionnaire survey for students which was conducted in the academic years 2016 and 2017. The questionnaires were constructed specifically for this study by the author. Since K University employs a semester system, the data were collected at two different times in each year. Every course is completed within a semester.

The EMI courses chosen for investigation are offered under the umbrella course name called "Theme Study". Under this cover term, 12 EMI courses were offered in 2016 and 13 in 2017. Students were able to take one Theme Study course as a two-credit elective course as part of the 20-credit requirement of liberal art courses.

The questions asked of the local students (i.e., the students who were/had been enrolled in the Japanese-language based programs) in the questionnaire are shown in Table 1 (original in Japanese; the original questionnaire is available upon request).<sup>3)</sup> The main part of the questionnaire asked the local students' feelings in taking the EMI courses as well as their views toward the use of multiple languages in and outside of the EMI class.<sup>4)</sup>

**Table 1***Questions asked of the local (Japanese) students (2017 version<sup>1</sup>)*

1	College
2	Year
3	<p>Current English proficiency (Circle the number which applies to your case)</p> <p>① Can understand basic information regarding myself, family, and daily matters (Roughly around the level of STEP Pre-Second Grade)</p> <p>② Can understand the daily topics we encounter at work, school, and leisure (Roughly around the level of STEP Second Grade)</p> <p>③ Can understand the main points of complicated sentences regarding abstract or concrete topics (Roughly around the level of STEP Pre-First Grade)</p> <p>④ Can understand long sentences and their implicature in various types of text with advanced content (Roughly around the level of STEP First Grade)</p>
4	Do you have study abroad experience in an English-speaking country for 6 months or longer?
<p>Q5~Q8, Q10, Q12~Q18 provided a 5-point Likert scale (5 being the most positive) as below, and the respondents were requested to circle the appropriate number:</p> <p>1-----2-----3-----4-----5</p>	
5	Did you study as you were recommended to by the professor (e.g., preview, review, study for tests) every time?
6	To what degree do you think you understood the course content?
7	Were there any times in this class when you felt you didn't understand what the professor said?
8	Were there any times in this class when you felt you didn't understand what the students said?
9	What did you do when you felt you did not understand what the professor or the students said?
10	Did you ever feel in class you were unable to fully communicate what you wanted to express in English?
11	What did you do when you felt that you were unable to fully communicate what you wanted to express in English?
12	Do you think your English improved through this course?

13	Do you think your motivation to improve your English increased through this course?
14	Have you gained confidence to take EMI courses through this course?
15	Do you find your professor's use of Japanese (e.g., in talk, handouts and/or power point slides) helped you understand the class content?
16	Do you think it would be/would have been preferable for your professor to use Japanese (e.g., in talking, in handouts and/or power point slides) to using English only?
17	Did you use Japanese in class to check what was going on in class with your neighbor, to look up in a dictionary, or for other purposes?
18	Would you prefer this English-medium course over a corresponding Japanese-medium course if such a course were available?
19	There is an idea that, generally speaking, a person who knows more than one language should make the best use of all their language resources to learn. What do you think of this? Please share your idea and experiences.

*Note.* 1. The 2016 version asked the scores of commercial tests such as TOEFL, TOEIC, IELTS. The 2016 version asked Q7 and Q8 as a single question.

The questions asked of the foreign students (i.e., the non-Japanese students who were enrolled in the English-language based programs) in the questionnaire are shown in Table 2 (original in English). Because these students were enrolled in programs in which instruction is given entirely in English, the questions are partially different reflecting these background differences. "SKP" in Question 1 stands for the Study in Kyoto Program, which is a one-year study program at K University for foreigners.

**Table 2**

*Questions asked of the foreign students (2017 version)<sup>1</sup>*

1	College/SKP
2	Year
3	Where are you from?
4	English proficiency <input type="checkbox"/> English is my first language. <input type="checkbox"/> English is not my first language → Write the score(s) if you had a chance to take any of the tests below.

	TOEFL PBT ( ) TOEFL iBT ( ) TOEIC ( ) IELTS ( )
5	What is your Japanese proficiency level? <input type="checkbox"/> Beginner <input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate <input type="checkbox"/> Advanced
	Q6~Q8, and Q10 provided a 5-point Likert scale (5 being the most positive) as below, and the respondents were supposed to circle the appropriate number: 1-----2-----3-----4-----5 (Q6~Q11 are the same as the questions items for the local students.)
12	The questions are for the people whose professor used the Japanese language during class on whatever occasions or matters. When the professor changed the language from English to Japanese, what did you think? Circle the options that fit your view. You can choose more than one option. <input type="checkbox"/> It felt easier to understand and it was helpful when information in the two languages was combined. <input type="checkbox"/> It was beneficial because I was able to compare and contrast expressions in the two languages. <input type="checkbox"/> It felt like a waste of time because the same information was repeated. <input type="checkbox"/> It was not necessary for me but should be beneficial for other students in the class <input type="checkbox"/> Other (
13	When a student (s) used Japanese instead of English (or another language) in your class, what did you think? (If this never happened, please disregard this question.)
14	There is an idea that, generally speaking, a person who knows more than one language should make the best use of all of their language resources to learn. What do you think about this? Please share your idea and experiences.

Note. 1. The 2016 version did not include Q6; it asked Q7 and Q8 as a single question.

### ***Procedure***

The professors in these courses distributed and collected the questionnaire sheets. The data were collected in class around the end of each semester. This study uses the responses from only the students who gave their written consent that their data would be used for research purposes.



The data from two semesters in each year are summed up and they are presented as scores and descriptions separately for each year. It is hoped that by observing the students' feelings over a couple of years, the study could gain a more reliable picture than observing just a single year. The results of the items using a Likert scale are shown as means and standard deviations. The other items are presented showing either the frequency of the categories (i.e., Q3 in local students' questionnaire, and Q4 ,Q5, and Q12 in foreign students' questionnaire) or, with regards to the free-writing questions, the results are shown using the frequencies of the same types of answers after sorting the responses in each question item into types.

## Results

### *Profile of the participants*

#### *Number of the participants, years, majors, and countries*

This section reports the participants' number, years, majors, and countries. Table 3 shows the number of participants in each academic year. Table 4 shows the years of the participants. Students tend to take liberal arts courses in their initial two years, thus our participants tend to be from those years, especially in the academic year 2017.

The colleges in K University that the Japanese students belonged to were almost all represented, but in particular they came from International Relations, Humanities, and Economics. (10, 8, and 6 in 2016; 17, 10, and 9 in 2017 respectively). The foreign students mainly belonged to the Study in Kyoto Program as well as other colleges with full EMI majors.

There was a wide diversity of nationalities in foreign students. In both 2016 and 2017, students came from diverse countries in Europe, Asia-Pacific, and Africa, including English-L1 countries.

**Table 3**

#### *Numbers of participants in each academic year*

2016 (12 courses in total)			2017 (13 courses in total)		
Local Students	Foreign Students	Total (Registered Ss) (Response Rate)	Local Students	Foreign Students	Total (Registered Ss) (Response Rate)
52	33	85 (124)	49	42	91 (165)

---

---

(68.5%)

(55.2%)

---

---

**Table 4**

*Background information (year in university) on the participants.*

	2016 (n=85)			2017 (n=91)		
	Local Students	Foreign Students	Total	Local Students	Foreign Students	Total
1 <sup>st</sup>	13	4	17	20	9	29
2 <sup>nd</sup>	10	12	22	10	5	15
3 <sup>rd</sup>	19	4	23	15	2	17
4 <sup>th</sup>	9	2	11	4	2	6
SKP	-	11	11	-	24	24
Unknow	1	-	1	-	-	-
Total	52	33	85	49	42	91

*Language proficiency and experience of studying abroad*

To know their English proficiency, standardized test scores were judged to be best. Hence, the author asked for the scores of local students in 2016, but many of the students failed to provide such scores. Further, the time when their tests were taken varied widely so it was decided to rely on self-reported English proficiency, which is reported in Table 5. The STEP Test, also known as the Test in Practical English Proficiency, is created and marketed by *Nihon Eigo Kentei Kyokai (Eiken)*. It is well known in Japan. It consists of levels 5 to 1, in which Grade 1 is the highest. According to *Eiken*, Grades 1, Pre-1, 2, and Pre-2 are equivalent to the C1, B2, B1, and A2 respectively in Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).<sup>5)</sup>

As can be seen in Table 5, the proficiency of more than half of the participants' English was lower than "around Step Pre-1" (=B2 level in CEFR), namely, Levels 1 and 2 in Table 5, which may be insufficient for EMI although "sufficiency" depends on the course.

Only 13 local students (25% of the total) of the 2016 group had experience of studying abroad for 6 months or longer, and 14 of the 2017 group had such experience (28.6%).

**Table 5***Local students' self-reported English proficiency*

Level of English	2016 (n=52)		2017 (n=49)		
	Number of Ss	%	Number of Ss	%	
1 Around STEP Pre-2nd	7	13.5	6	12.2	
2 Around STEP 2nd	21	40.4	21	42.9	
3 Around STEP Pre-1st	16	30.8	18	36.7	
4 Around STEP 1st	3	5.8	1	2.0	
Unknown	5	9.6	3	6.1	
Total	52	100.0	49	100.0	<i>Note.</i> The percentages are rounded off.

As Table 6 shows, the foreign students in this study knew Japanese to some extent. They were all either learning it in K University and/or had learned it before.

**Table 6***Foreign students' self-reported Japanese proficiency*

Level of Japanese	2016 (n=33)		2017 (n=42)	
	Number of Ss	%	Number of Ss	%
1 Beginner	13	39.4	12	28.6
2 Intermediate	15	45.5	24	57.1
3 Advanced	5	15.2	4	9.5
Unknown	-	-	2	4.8
Total	33	100.0 <sup>1</sup>	42	100.0

*Note.* The percentages are rounded off.

**Results Regarding RQ 1***Local students' feelings*

RQ 1 asked: What are the local and foreign students' feelings toward the EMI courses they are taking? Table 7 shows the descriptive statistics of the results regarding the local students' feelings in 2016 and 2017. The questionnaire used a 5-point Likert scale, 5 being the

most affirmative/positive. As Table 7 shows, the answers of these participants are mostly on the positive side.

The local students' feelings are very similar over the two academic years, which hints that the participants who come to and remain in the Theme Study courses generally seem to share the feelings indicated in Table 7. Those feelings can be summarized, as follows. First, the students did their homework to some extent on a regular basis (Q5, *Mean*=3.75~3.61, *SD*=.79~.95). Their comprehension was moderate (Q6, *Mean*=3.47~3.65, *SD*=.88). In addition to Q6, three Questions, 7, 8, and 10, indicated the local students' struggles, especially in understanding the talk in class and in expressing themselves. If they had little trouble in understanding talk in English in class and expressing themselves, the mean score should be close to "1", whereas the scores for all these questions are around the middle point, "3". This issue will be discussed again later when the results of the free-writing questions are reported.

**Table 7**

*Local students' feelings toward EMI*

Question Item	2016 ( <i>n</i> =52)		2017 ( <i>n</i> =49)	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Q5. How much homework the participants do	3.75	.79	3.61	.95
Q6. How much they understand the class	3.47	.88	3.65	.88
Q7 Inability to understand professor's talk	3.00	1.30 <sup>1</sup>	2.49	1.16
Q8 Inability to understand students' talk			2.88	1.19
Q10 Inability to express oneself	3.25	1.36	3.45	1.37
Q12 Whether English has improved owing to this EMI course	3.38	.99	3.65	.86
Q13 Whether they became motivated to improve English owing to this EMI course	4.06	.98	4.39	.91
Q14 Whether they feel confidence in taking EMI courses	3.58	.98	3.70	1.02
Q18. Whether they prefer to take the course they are taking as an EMI course or a regular L1 medium course	4.19	1.12	4.15	1.12

Note. 1. The 2016 version asked Q7 and Q8 as a single question.

The scores showed a modest improvement in English (Q12,  $Mean=3.38\sim3.65$ ,  $SD=.99\sim.86$ ), whereas the respondents felt quite motivated to improve their English after this EMI experience (Q13,  $Mean=4.06\sim4.39$ ,  $SD=.98\sim.91$ ). The students' confidence in taking EMI courses was moderate (Q14,  $Mean=3.58\sim3.70$ ,  $SD=.98\sim1.02$ ). The answer to Q18 implies that the students would have quite strongly preferred to take the course that they were taking as an EMI course rather than a course conducted in their first language (L1) (Q18,  $Mean=4.19\sim4.15$ ,  $SD=1.12$ ).

Even though the descriptive statistics above seem to indicate that the results of 2016 and 2017 are quite similar, whether there was any difference between them was checked statistically. The distribution of the scores did not permit the assumption of normality in the data of any question item ( $p<.05$  in Shapiro-Wilk tests), so a Mann-Whitney U test was performed. As Table 8 shows, no item showed a statistically significant difference between the scores of these two years ( $p =.05\sim.64$ ), and the effect sizes ( $r =.05\sim.20$ ) were also minimum. Thus, we can safely say that the local students' feelings over the two years were very similar.

**Table 8**

*Difference between 2016 and 2017 in local students' feelings toward EMI*

Question Item (Same items as in Table7)	Median 2016	Median 2017	Mann-Whitney <i>U</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>
Q5	4	4	1180.50	.50	.07
Q6	3	4	1088.50	.24	.12
Q10	4	4	1067.50	.42	.08
Q12	3	4	1085.00	.18	.14
Q13	4	5	1007.00	.05	.20
Q14	3	4	1129.00	.50	.07
Q18.	5	4	1162.00	.64	.05

Note.  $\alpha = .05$ ; The 2016 version asked Q7 and Q8 as a single question. Therefore, the comparison of these items was not attempted.

### *Foreign students' feelings*

The results of the foreign students' feelings toward the EMI courses are summarized in Table 9. As was explained in the Method section, the "foreign students" in this study were all enrolled in programs in which the medium of instruction is English, which means that the students were suited to such an instructional condition. Thus, some questions that were asked of the local students (Q12, Q13, and Q14) were irrelevant to these foreign students and therefore deleted. Q6, Q7, and Q8 addressed comprehension of the course content as well as talk by their professors and peers. Q10 asked their (in)ability to express themselves in class. It is obvious from the scores in this table that they had good understanding and felt little difficulty in expressing themselves.

Here again, we conducted a statistical test to see if the results of the two years were similar. Among the four questions in Table 9, only Q10 is common between 2016 and 2017, and so the responses to this question were compared. As was the case regarding the Japanese students' feelings, it was found that the data of Q10 did not permit the assumption of normal distribution ( $p < .05$ , a Shapiro-Wilk test), and thus a Mann-Whitney's U test was used again. The  $U$  value was 635.00, the  $P$  value was .59, and the effect size  $r$  was .06, and thus there was no difference between the two years regarding the answers to Q10.

**Table 9**

#### *Foreign students' feelings toward EMI*

Question Item	2016 ( $n=33$ )		2017 ( $n=42$ )	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Q6 How much they understand the class <sup>1</sup>	-	-	4.49	.71
Q7 Inability to understand professors' talk	1.76	1.09 <sup>2</sup>	1.76	1.16
Q8 Inability to understand students' talk			1.83	.77
Q10 Inability to express oneself	1.48	.91	1.56	.90

*Note.* 1. The 2016 version did not ask Q6. 2. The 2016 version asked Q7 and Q8 as a single question.

#### *Results Regarding RQ 2*

RQ 2 asked: What are the local and foreign students' views about the use of multiple languages in/for class? This question was probed by Q15, Q16, and Q17 with regards to the local students.

As can be seen in Table 10, the local students' reactions are very similar over the two years of the investigation. Due to (at least some of) the limitations of English proficiency, the students appreciated their professors' use of L1 Japanese to some extent (Q15,  $Mean=3.85\sim3.43$ ,  $SD=1.07\sim1.57$ ). However, they did not express positive enough views to justify it as a policy (Q16,  $Mean=2.82\sim2.67$ ,  $SD=1.11\sim1.41$ ). They did use L1 themselves to some extent (Q17,  $Mean=3.31\sim3.10$ ,  $SD=1.41\sim1.43$ ).

**Table 10**

*Local students' views about use of multiple languages*

Question Item	2016 ( $n=52$ )		2017 ( $n=49$ )	
	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Q15 Whether the professors' L1 use in class was helpful or not	3.85	1.07	3.43	1.57
Q16. Professor's L1 use in EMI preferable	2.82	1.11	2.67	1.41
Q17. Whether students themselves used L1	3.31	1.41	3.10	1.43

A statistical test was performed to see if the similarity observed above indicates no difference between the two years. Because the distribution of scores in Questions 15, 16, and 17 did not permit the assumption of normality, a Mann-Whitney U test was performed. As Table 11 shows, no item showed a statistically significant difference between the scores of these two years, and the effect sizes were also extremely small.

**Table 11**

*Difference between 2016 and 2017 in local students' views about the use of multiple languages*

Question Item (Same as the items in Table10)	<i>Mann-Whiney</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>r</i>
Q15	1149.00	.38	.09
Q16.	1147.50	.47	.07
Q17.	1139.50	.44	.08

*Note. alpha=.05*

In order to answer RQ2, the survey asked the foreign students Q12 and Q13. Their responses to their professors' use of the local language (where applicable) were very favorable. In fact, there were only four students out of the total 75 students in the two years of the investigation who clearly disliked their professor's use of Japanese (Option 3. "Waste of time"). Most students took it favorably (Table 12).

**Table 12**

*Foreign students' reactions toward professor's use of multiple languages (Q12)*

Response Option <sup>1</sup>	2016 (n=33)		2017 (n=42)	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
1. Easier to understand and helpful	5	15.2	2	4.8
2. Beneficial; can compare and contrast expressions	8	24.2	5	11.9
3. Waste of time	3	9.1	1	.2.4
4. Not necessary for me but should be beneficial for some students	8	24.2	2	4.8
5. Other	1	3.0	3	7.1
Unanswered	12	36.4	29	69.0
Total Entries (Total Number of Ss)	37 (33)	-	42 (42)	-

*Note.* In some classes no Japanese was used. Multiple responses were possible.

The foreign students' feelings about the use of Japanese by other students was also quite favorable as indicated in Table 13. There were very few people, 4 out of 75 over the two years, who expressed exclusively negative reactions. There were many, however, who said that some conditions have to be met for the use of Japanese; for example, "the Japanese is translated into English afterward"; "only some Japanese words which are hard should be translated; if that gives confidence to the speaker." The distribution of opinions in 2016 appears wider than in 2017. This may have been due to the possibly of the lower rate of students making use of languages other than English in 2017. If so, the total number of students who were able to recall their reactions to such a case may have been small at the outset, leading to less variety in answers.



**Table 13***Foreign students' reactions toward students' use of multiple languages (Q13)*

Types of Response Summarized from the Freely Written Answers <sup>1</sup>	2016 (n=33)		2017 (n=42)	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
1. Favorable (fine, good, OK)	7	21.2	8	19.0
2. Favorable with conditions	6	18.2	0	0.0
3. Negative	3	9.1	1	2.4
4. Neutral and Other	9	27.3	1	2.4
5. Unanswered	8	24.2	32	76.2
Total	33	100 <sup>2</sup>	42	100

*Note.* 1. The answers were written freely and they were categorized depending on the four types shown in the table.

2. The percentages are rounded off.

One more question from the questionnaire pertains to RQ 2: Q19 for the local students and Q14 for the foreign students (comments on the use of multiple languages for learning in general). Table 14 shows a summary of the students' responses.

**Table 14***Students' ideas about the use of multiple languages in general (Q14/Q19)*

Types of Response Summarized from the Freely Written Answers <sup>1</sup>	2016 (n=85)		2017 (n=91)	
	Japanese (%)	Foreign (%)	Japanese (%)	Foreign (%)
1. Agree (with no reasons attached)	24 (46.2)	20(60.6).	13 (26.5)	21 (50.0).
2. Agree (good for the improvement and maintenance of languages)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (10.2)	0 (0.0)
3. Agree (good for learning cultures of the languages involved)	5 (9.6)	2 (6.1)	3 (6.1)	0 (0.0)
4. Agree with some conditions	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (12.2)	5 (11.9)

4. Disagree	7 (13.5)	1 (3.0)	4 (8.2)	1 (2.4)
5. Other	9 (17.3)	9 (27.3)	4 (8.2)	5 (11.9)
6. Unanswered	7 (13.5)	1 (3.0)	14 (28.6)	10 (23.8)
Total	52 (100) <sup>2</sup>	33 (100)	49 (100)	42 (100)

*Note.* 1. The answers were written freely, and they were categorized depending on the four types shown in the table.

2. The percentages are rounded off.

This question was asked in a general sense rather than specifically referring to the Theme Study courses (Table 14). However, some students expressed their opinions on learning in general while others did so specifically regarding the present EMI course they were taking.

Type 4 “Agree with some conditions” included opinions such as the following: “We should use languages depending on the situation (original in Japanese, the author’s translation).”; “Depends on what you are trying to improve. If a student wants to improve their language skills, this would be a good idea. However, if students want to have a better understanding of the topics, it would be better for them to use the language they are most comfortable with (original in Japanese, the author’s translation)”. Type 5 “Other” included opinions such as the following: “I thought that thinking in my mother tongue and translating my thoughts into the language used in the class made them logical and high-quality, but in the long run, that would not lead to much improvement of English (original in Japanese, the author’s translation)”; “I agree with that argument, but in this class, only using English is enough to take this class. We don't need to use or speak more than two or three languages (original in English).”

## **Discussion**

This section summarizes the main findings and presents the answer to the two research questions.

RQ 1 was constructed taking into account the fact that local students’ English proficiency was not yet very high and thus even the newly-created EMI courses for them were expected to be a huge challenge. In answer to RQ1, the survey (Table 7 and Table 8) clearly shows that, as we had expected, the local students were struggling. Their comprehension of the course content is poorer than that of the foreign students’. They had much more difficulty in understanding the professors’ and other students’ talk. They also experienced greater difficulty in expressing

themselves in English. Local students' struggles due to a lack of English proficiency has been frequently reported as a serious issue in EMI in other countries (e.g. Cho, 2012; Macaro, 2018).

Additionally, relating to RQ 1, despite their evident struggle with the language of instruction, the local students were positive about their EMI experiences, which is indicated by Q18, in which students expressed their preference for taking this EMI course against taking the same course in Japanese. In addition, they said that their motivation to improve their English had increased considerably, even though their self-reported English improvement per se was moderate (Q12 and Q13). Studies which investigate elective EMI classes often present similar results (e.g. Chang, 2010; Kang & Park, 2005). One of the important aims of the Theme Study program was to give local students their first experience with taking an English-medium course while still in their home country and to motivate them for further study, including study abroad. In that sense, the survey result shows that the aim was achieved.

A note of caution is in order. These results are those of students who remained in the program for the duration of the semester (and gave the author permission to use their data for research purposes). As was mentioned in the section, "4. Profile of the participants", the present study targeted all the students enrolled in the Theme Study courses rather than sampling some of the Theme Study classes. Therefore, the results reflect the views of almost all students who were still in that program, but not those who had registered but were not there at the data collection time, including dropouts. Further investigation of a qualitative nature on the process of the students' involvement and confidence is needed.

RQ2 addressed the issue of using multiple languages in learning in the case of bilinguals. The views about both the local and the foreign students were probed through multiple questions. The results showed the students' sensible and cautious stance toward it. First, the local students moderately appreciated it when the professor used (or added) some Japanese words/phrases in their talk (Table 10), albeit with a fairly large standard deviation, especially in 2017 ( $SD=1.57$ ). Even though some of them, at least, reported a strong benefit from the professors' use of the local language, on average the same local students did not want L1 use instituted as a policy, probably because they came to the EMI courses seeking an English-medium environment.

The second important point in relation to RQ2 is that foreign students were more tolerant or even welcoming toward the use of the local language (Tables 12 and 13) than the author had expected. However, a note of caution is needed for this interpretation. The results show that a large number of students did not respond to these questions (Tables 12 and 13), mostly because

in their classes no Japanese was used, since the policy is that these courses are EMI courses. Their opinions might have been different if more Japanese had been used.

The third finding as the answer to RQ2 relates to the responses to the last item in the questionnaire of both the local (Q19) and the foreign students (Q14). Namely, these questions tried to elucidate students' general views toward the use of multilingual resources in their learning, which forms the basis for taking EMI courses and is therefore relevant to RQ2. The overall responses were affirmative, and some of the answers showed their growing care in their use of multilingual learning strategies. They were cognizant of the value of plural languages and the plural cultures integrated within them as learning resources. Some said that their first languages were the best and quickest for learning issues at the highest possible level of their cognitive ability. However, some wrote that for foreign language learning, they needed to take a "detour" of learning through a weaker language that they have, which is the target foreign language they are trying to learn.

These results indicate that the students are open to the use of multiple languages as long as the maximum level/amount of learning of the content and the target language is set as the goal and is achieved.

## **Conclusion**

To fill the gap of research regarding EMI practices in Japan, especially the ones which are open to students in non-EMI track programs, the present study investigated an EMI practice called "Theme Study" in K University. The study asked: "What are the local and foreign students' feelings toward the EMI courses they are taking?" (RQ1) and "What are the local and foreign students' views about the use of multiple languages in classes?" (RQ2). The study used a questionnaire survey and obtained data from 101 local and 75 foreign students in the academic years 2016 and 2017. The results indicated that the local students had a harder time than the foreign students in class, but they considered their experience to have been favorable. Even though the opinions of the students who registered, but failed to attend (or were not there at the time of the data collection), need to be investigated in further research, it can safely be said that at least the ones who successfully navigated the program appreciated the innovation of "Theme Study" (RQ1). As for the use of the local language and the use of multiple languages for their study, both local and foreign students expressed overall favorable views (RQ2). The use of language(s) other than English in any EMI course depends on many variables, such as the English proficiency of both professors and students, the course level and goals, the policy of the university, availability of other scaffolding/supporting systems, among

other issues, but the particular finding about the students' views in this student cohort contributes a fresh perspective that should be of value to the EMI literature.

The findings above suggest the following pedagogical implications. First, based on the findings of RQ 1, the author proposes a more fine-grained screening when accepting local students, adjusting it to the necessary level of each Theme Study course (or any EMI course offered in the future). The degree of cognitive and linguistic demands would naturally differ depending on the course content and the professors' teaching styles, and so it is necessary to set the required English level accordingly. If the institution decided to accept much lower level students, it would need to either provide preparatory English lessons or make the course somewhat like a Content and Language Integrated Learning (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010) course in which not only the content goal but also some linguistic goals are set and taught.

Second, based on the findings of RQ2, the author suggests the possibility of providing extra support materials for the course written in Japanese or bilingually. Such materials could be given as a hard copy or provided as an online, on-demand format using the course tool provided by the university. If the budget allowed, employing a bilingual teaching assistant (TA) who took each course in a previous year would be ideal.

Finally, at least three limitations of the present study need to be mentioned. The first is the limited focus; namely, it concentrated on local students' linguistic deficiency and how best to address it. Conversely, the study did not deal with the opinions of students on other issues such as cross-cultural and cross-institutional differences. Especially foreign students whose English is good enough may have had different types of frustrations as well as positive experiences after coming to Japan and taking these EMI courses with local students. The second limitation is the absence of the voices of the professors and the administration. The third limitation is the lack of investigation into the actual teaching and learning processes in classes. Having built up a fairly consistent picture of the state of the affairs over these two years of data, which show a great deal of variation on some question items (large standard deviations of around 1.5 in our 5-point Likert scale), classroom research is clearly warranted. Despite these limitations, I hope that the present study may offer insights for teachers and researchers who are responsible for, or interested in, running EMI courses for students similar to those in the present study.

## Notes

- 1) This study is supported by Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research, Kiban (C) Project No.16K02863. *Daigaku no eigo kaikoo jugyoo to Campus Asia ni okeru translanguaging no*

*jittai to katsuyoo*. [Reality and practice of translanguaging in English-medium instruction and Campus Asia Programs in a university.] Principal researcher: Emiko Yukawa. I wish to express my gratitude to Dr. Miki Horie and Dr. David Coulson for their invaluable comments in the process of conducting this research and preparing the manuscript. Needless to say, any remaining errors are solely mine.

- 2) The value of L1 use in English language education and immersion situations is well attested although the situation here is different from that of EMI in higher education because in the former, all students and teachers share their L1. In the context of minority children's education, the use of L1, or any languages that they know, has been promoted based on the concept of 'translanguaging' (García & Li, 2014).
- 3) Q9 and Q11 in the questionnaires for both local and foreign students asked about the coping strategies when they are unable to comprehend or express opinions in class. Due to the limited space and because they are not so much about views but about learning strategies, the author judged that the information is more for institutional use, and thus the results are not reported here.
- 4) The author observed one session each of 8 of the 13 courses in 2017 and interviewed 7 of those instructors, but the information from these observations/interviews is not discussed due to the space limitation.
- 5) Refer to Council of Europe (2001) for information regarding CEFR, and also, refer to the following site of *Eiken* for more information on *Eiken*: <http://www.eiken.or.jp/eiken/en/grades/>

## References

- Arik, B. T., & Arik, E. (2018). English-medium instruction in Turkish higher education: The current state of English in psychology departments. *The Journal of English As an International Language*, 13(1), 20-33.
- Cenoz, J., Genesee, F., & Gorter, D. (2014). Critical analysis of CLIL: Taking stock and looking forward. *Applied Linguistics*, 35 (3), 243-262. DOI: 10.1093/applin/amt011
- Chang, Y-Y. (2010). English-medium instruction for subject courses in tertiary education: Reflections from Taiwanese undergraduate students. *Taiwan International ESP Journal*, 2(1), 55-84.
- Cho, D. W. (2012). English-Medium Instruction in the university context of Korea: Tradeoff between teaching outcomes and media-initiated university ranking. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 9(4), 135-163.

- Corrigan, P. C. (2015). Designing a pre-service teacher education course in English for the medium of instruction. *The Asian EFL Journal*, 88, 97-112.
- Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European framework of reference for languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Coyle, D., Hood, P., & Marsh, D. (2010). *Content and language integrated learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dimova, S., Hultgren, A. K., & Jensen, C. (Eds.). (2015). *English-medium instruction in European higher education: English in Europe* (Vol. 3). Boston: Walter de Gruyter.
- Doiz, A., Lasagabaster, D., & Sierra, J. M. (Eds.). (2013). *English-medium instruction at Universities: Global Challenges*. Bristol, U.K.: Multilingual Matters.
- Evans, S., & Morrison, T. (2011). The student experience of English-medium higher education in Hong Kong. *Language and Education*, 25 (2), 147-162. DOI: 10.1080/09500782.2011.553287
- García, O., & Li, W. (2014). *Translanguaging: Implications for Language, Bilingualism and Education*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Pivot.
- Im, J. H., & Kim, J. X. (2012). Use of blended learning for effective implementation of English-medium instruction in a non-English higher education context. *International Education Studies*, 8(11), 1-15. DOI: 10.5539/ies.v8n11p1
- Kang, S., & Park, H. (2015). English as the medium of instruction in Korean engineering education. *Korean Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 21(1), 155-174.
- Konakahara, M., Murata, K., & Iino, M. (2019). English-medium instruction in a Japanese university: Exploring students' lecturers' voices from ELF perspective. In K. Murata (Ed.), *English-medium instruction from an English as a lingua franca perspective: Exploring the higher education context* (pp. 157-175). New York: Routledge.
- Kriukow, J., & Galloway, N. (2019). Japanese higher education: Undertaking doctoral study in English. In K. Murata (Ed.), *English-medium instruction from an English as a lingua franca perspective: Exploring the higher education context* (pp. 137-156). New York: Routledge.
- Li, C., & Ruan, Z. (2013). Language difficulties of EAP learners at English-medium contexts: A case study of Chinese tertiary students at XJTU in mainland China. *The Asian EFL Journal*, 69, 32-50.
- Macaro, E. (2018). *English medium instruction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Murata, K. (Ed). (2019). *English-medium instruction from an English as a lingua franca perspective: Exploring the higher education context*. New York: Routledge.

- Rose, H., & McKinley, J. (2018). Japan's English-medium instruction initiatives and the globalization of higher education. *Higher Education*, 75(1), 111-129. DOI 10.1007/s10734-017-0125-1
- Vila, F. X., & Bretxa, V. (2014). *Language policy in higher education: The case of medium-size languages* (Vol. 158). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.





## **Mixed-Messages about Environmental Awareness in Disney's 2016 Finding Dory**

**Ni Komang Arie Suwastini<sup>1</sup>**

English Language Education, Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha  
[arie.suwastini@undiksha.ac.id](mailto:arie.suwastini@undiksha.ac.id)

**Wayan Lasmawan<sup>2</sup>**

Civic Education, Faculty of Law and Social Science, Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha  
[wayan.lasmawan@undiksha.ac.id](mailto:wayan.lasmawan@undiksha.ac.id)

**Ni Nyoman Artini<sup>3</sup>**

English Language Education, Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha  
[nymartini10@gmail.com](mailto:nymartini10@gmail.com)

**Ni Wayan Surya Mahayanti<sup>4</sup>**

English Language Education, Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha  
[surya.mahayanti@undiksha.ac.id](mailto:surya.mahayanti@undiksha.ac.id)

### **Bio-profiles:**

**Ni Komang Arie Suwastini** is a English literature lecturer in English language education in Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha, Bali. Finishing her Master and Doctoral in the University of Indonesia on Popular Culture and Feminism, she continues her research in the critical analysis of folklores and their popular culture representations.

**Wayan Lasmawan** is a Social Science Education professor at Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha, whose research interest links formal education with the integration of local wisdom in the constructivist paradigm.

**Ni Nyoman Artini** is a graduate student at English Language Education Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha, who works on representations of character education and gender awareness in films and books.

**Ni Wayan Surya Mahayanti** is an assistant professor in English Language Education, Ganesha University of Education. Her research interests are in English education. She is a Ph.D. candidate who focuses her study on ICT integration in English Language Education.

## **Abstract**

*Finding Dory* has been reviewed on its content on environmental awareness, but few have observed the mixed messages about the effects of human activities upon marine life in this film. By applying Peirce's semiotics, the present study aimed to reveal both the positive and negative impacts of human activities on marine life in Disney's *Finding Dory*. Through the adoption of Miles and Huberman's interactive Qualitative Data Analysis model, where the cyclic and simultaneous data collection process, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing were conducted. It was done to ensure the trustworthiness of the research. The present study revealed that while humans had been represented to have negatively impacted the ocean, the film also underlines efforts conducted for marine life conservation. However, the film still shows ambiguity in its attitude towards marine life conservation, which may reflect the ambivalent reality of humans' understanding of marine life and its effort for conservation. However, despite this ambivalence, by combining visual and linguistic elements, the film effectively sends a strong message about how nature-loving values and environmental awareness can be raised among children at the narrative and audience levels.

**Keywords:** *character education, Disney film, environmental awareness, semiotics*

## **Introduction**

We live in an environment that includes all living and non-living objects, and we use the environment resources. Since we rely on fulfilling our needs on the environment, it puts pressure on the environment, which slowly exceeds its carrying capacity. This problem leads to environmental degradation, where we may lose the resources forever (Sivamoorthy, Nalini, & Kumar, 2013). As the inhabitant of nature, human activities affect it directly. According to Tercek (2017), climate change results from the massive need for resources such as food, water, and energy, pushing nature to its limits, where, as argued Akintunde (2017), individual actions, personal consumer decisions, and the activities of small and large businesses are the reason

behind recent environmental problems. As an example, according to World Wildlife Foundation (WWF) in (“What do sea turtles eat? Unfortunately, plastic bags. | Stories | WWF, 2019), the ocean is polluted with plastic, which risks all of the sea turtles resulting in 52% of the world's turtles have eaten plastic waste. Therefore, they suggest reducing plastic pollution through recycling and reducing single-use plastic is not sufficient to end the pollution epidemic. Thus, WWF suggests that people worldwide urge government leaders to establish all-embracing legal agreements to stop plastics from leaking into the oceans.

German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (2016) reported the threat for the marine ecosystem, such as destruction in biodiverse habitats and overexploitation on global fish stock, which reached up to 90 percent of sustainability limits. German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (2016) proposed ten critical points in marine conservation and sustainable fisheries: increasing the number of marine protected areas and encouraging small-scale sustainable fisheries as some of their focus. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Regional Seas Programme has developed Action Plan for the Protection, Management, and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Northwest Pacific Region (NOWPAP Program) to protect the Pacific Ocean by engaging Japan, South Korea, China, and Russia in it, with the US government formalizing Clean Water Act to develop a waste management system and to support the attempts in preventing, reducing, and controlling water pollutants from entering the water, especially to clean The Great Pacific Garbage Patch (Azaria & Prawidya, 2014). Indonesian Minister of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries responded to this effort by announcing their commitment to participate in waste management actively, listing attempt to lessen the amount of waste from rivers to enter the ocean by installing net at the river mouth and to reducing the use of plastics, especially those used in ceremonies at the to prevent more plastic from entering the ocean (Pregiwati, 2017). Furthermore, mangroves restoration to preserve the water ecosystem are also conducted continuously (Sulanjari, 2011), while Isfarin (2012) called for sea protection from oil pollutants on Malacca Strait, the shipping route between the Far East and the Indian Ocean, where international laws are needed in terms of the prohibition on oil dumping in the ocean, prohibition on oil-contaminated ballast water, requirements for steering gear of tankers, stricter requirements for carrying of radar and collision avoidance aids, and stricter regimes for surveys and certification.

However, to make people start acting under the effort to conserve ocean life, awareness about the environment in general and specifically about ocean life needs to be raised because the key to acting responsibly toward the environment is to the awareness about the

environmental problems (Akintunde, 2017). Environmental awareness refers to general consciousness about the problems and danger facing humankind and the environment and their causes and how to solve the environment's problems by changing perception, attitudes, values, and necessary skills (Boiyo, 2014). The education sector plays a part in raising environmental awareness, which is commonly known as Environmental Education. Environmental Education, which has been demanded in the curriculum for the last four decades internationally, is one of the fundamental steps in increasing environmental awareness (Omoogun, Egbonyi, & Onnoghen, 2016), such as through the management of the usage of plastic and its disposal, alternative for plastic, toilet usage, its use in the cultivation of saplings, rainwater harvesting, and participation in environment-related programs (Sivamoorthy et al., 2013).

As early as 2010, the Indonesian Ministry of National Education included nature-loving as one of the 18 values that need to be instilled in formal education, with the demand to make explicit learning objectives related to as attitudes and actions which show efforts in preventing damage to their environment and taking care of the environment as part of the learning process. Observations and experiments on how to build environmental awareness among the students have since been conducted. Some scholars insisted that other than the learning process in the class, environmental awareness could also be raised through extracurricular activities (Al-anwari, 2014; Harlistyarintica et al., 2017; Hendriana & Jacobus, 2016; Miranti & Frijuniarsi, 2014; Sari, Fadilah, & Ali, 2013). It also can be done by making it part of the school culture where parent's reinforcement played significant roles in the implementations of nature-loving attitudes through actions like proper rubbish management, cleaning competition, recycling contest, handicraft production, waste exploration, sanitary program, outbound, tree-planting, energy-saving strategies, and inviting people to keep the environment clean and water-saving in additional to providing periodic maintenance of the cleanliness and preservation of the school environment, tools for environmental cleaning, handwashing places, bathrooms, and clean water, and proper sewage management.

As learning can also occur outside the school, environmental awareness can also be raised through the students' choice of entertainment such as films, which, with the advance of Information/Communication Technology, can be easily accessed by most children through television the internet. In this case, films from The Walt Disney Company are argued as well made, family-friendly, and entertaining (Donofrio, 2013) and enriched with values of character education. Those values include awareness about environmental awareness (Klinowski, 2017; Leek, 2016; Miranti & Frijuniarsi, 2014; Mitayani, 2010; Suwastini, Swandana, & Payani, 2017; Suwastini, Utami, & Artini, 2020; Utami, Suwastini, Artini, & Kultsum, 2020).

Focusing on character education reflected through Dory's characterizations in Disney's *Finding Dory* (2016), Utami, Suwastini, Artini, and Kultsum (2020) argued that other than showing hardworking, creative, and autonomous character, Dory's characterization also reflects nature-loving values. Produced by Pixar Animation Studios and released by Walt Disney Pictures, *Finding Dory* was directed by Andrew Stanton and Angus McLane, with Andrew Stanton and Victoria Strouse as the screenwriters. Voiced by Ellen DeGeneres, Dory now got lost while trying to find her parents. Alone, forgetful, and terrified, Dory forced herself to be more creative to remember her parents and their home, which happened in The Jewel of Morro Bay's fictional Marine Life Institute in California. In this institute, Dory gradually remembered more about her parents, about her friends, and her childhood in one of the exhibits in the Marine Life Institute. As a sequel to the much loved *Finding Nemo* (2003), where Dory, the creative fish, despite her short-term memory loss, played an essential role in helping Marlin to find Nemo, this 2016's *Finding Dory* stands as proof that Dory has more characterizations to explore, as argued by Suwastini, Utami, and Artini (2020). They explored Dory's paradoxical characterizations that brought her to her family and friends despite her disability as a fish with short-term memory loss.

When focused on how, upon arriving at the Marine Life Institute, Dory freed her whales' friends and a truck-load of other fish to be transported to Greater Cleveland Aquarium as exhibits, this film leaves the audience with a question why a movie that is supposed to be about the ocean, the fish, and their freedom should include detaining fish for aquarium exhibits. Thus, the present study will further explore these mixed messages about environmental awareness in Disney's *Finding Dory* to reveal how these messages are delivered, how language plays its role in delivering these messages, and what pedagogical implications can be derived from this film.

## **Methodology**

Purposefully taking Disney's *Finding Nemo* (2016) as the subject of this research, the present study employed McKee's (2003) textual analysis to reveal how environmental awareness messages are delivered in this movie. Adopting Miles and Huberman's (1994) model of interactive Qualitative Data Analysis combined with Pierce's Triadic Model of semiotics, the present study observed the films, identified and discussed the environmental issues as the data of the study, and drew its conclusion through a repetitive and simultaneous process of data collection, data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing to ensure its trustworthiness. Furthermore, Pierce's semiotics allow triangulations of data where visual, audio, and linguistics

data were collected to pinpoint how environmental messages in this film are represented and how these representations affect the film's pedagogical implications.

The film's narrative was broken down into sequences and subsequences, following the segmentation technique from Bordwell, Thompson, and Smith (2017) to help with the data collection during the observation where the film's streaming was closely conducted. During this segmentation, the narrative was first broken down into segments that comprised the film's main events as presented in its scenes. Afterward, each event, hence the segment, was then broken further into subsequences comprised of the said segment incidents. This segmentation allows a more critical analysis of each event representation issue and each film's incident without being trapped in storytelling. In this study, *Finding Dory's* narrative was broken down into 16 sequences with a total of 127 subsequences. From these subsequences, eleven of them were identified as containing messages about environmental issues. The analysis considers all visible and audible elements of the film as representamens. The aspects are the film's narrative (i.e., plot development), aspects of mise-en-scène (i.e., setting, costume, make up, and lighting), aspects of cinematography (i.e. tonalities, counts of frames per seconds, and the lens properties), aspects of editing (i.e., types of shots and transitions) as well as aspects of sounds (i.e., loudness, the arrangement of dialogues) (Bordwell, Thompson, & Smith, 2017). The analysis of these aspects was conducted following Pierce's triadic model where sounds, words, and images are representamens that would lead to the interpretants that result in the objects of environmental awareness in the researchers' minds as the main instrument of the study. As Pierce maintains that interpretive thoughts more often happened in a series of interpretations, where a certain representamen sensed by an individual would lead to an object (or meaning), It in turns may trigger another interpretation in a series of never-ending interpretation that he terms "ad-infinitum" (Merrel, 1997). Thus, the study would describe the interpretive process by following these series of interpretants (or process of connecting the representamen and the object or "meaning" inside the observer's mind) that would finally lead to the object of negative or positive messages about environmental awareness.

### **Critiques on Negative Impacts of Human Activities toward Marine Life**

From the close observations of the sequence and subsequences in *Finding Dory's* plot segmentation, at least seven subsequences were identified with environmental issues, with mixed messages about environmental awareness. Among these, critiques on how human has negatively affected ocean life are strongly presented in subsequence 1m, 5c, 5f, and 6a.

The first sequence in *Finding Dory* presents flashbacks that introduce Dory to the audience, her short-term memory loss, how she got her separation from her parents, and her efforts to remember and rejoin her parents. By subsequence 1m, Dory was already an adult blue tank fish, and she arrived under an off-shore oil rig. At a closer look, some metal barrels covered in sea moss are seen on the ocean floor. The oil rig and the metal barrels create an object in the audience mind that oil mining must have contributed to the scattered metal barrel on the seabed, which becomes a new representamen that human activities in that oil rig had caused those barrels to be there. Furthermore, the water's color was somewhat greyish, which creates an interpretant that the water was not clear. With this interpretant, another representamen came to view, in which no fish were seen around the oil rig. The lousy quality of the water with the absence of the fish around the oil rig becomes a new representamen that creates an object that fish must not have liked to live in water with bad quality, which in turn becomes a new representamen that the human activity in that oil rig must have negatively impacted the ecosystem around the oil rig. With this, the shot changes to frame a seabed with half-buried empty beer bottles with a couple of anxious crabs that ran away the minute Dory asked them a question. The water's color was brighter compared with the previous scene, which can be considered a representamen, which creates an object that glass bottle is less harmful to oil mining. However, the glass bottle is buried partially in the sand and covered in sea moss and becomes the representamen, leading to an object that those bottles are not degradable. In this shot, the empty beer bottles are representants that creates the object about improper disposal of beer bottles, and since human consumes beers, then, it must have been human's ignorant habit of throwing rubbish that leads to this polluted seabed. The anxious crabs can be read as representants that create an object about the impact of polluted seabed in the sea-creatures' mental life-like these two crabs. Thus, the full shot of the bottles-polluted seabed and its anxious crab dwellers is representing the impact of human humanities. This second object becomes the third representamen, which ignites the third interpretant resulting in the third object that human consumerism on bottled drink affected nature negatively due to improper waste management. The shot then change to an even grimmer, darker seabed with the body of an old bug Volkswagen and a school of anxious mackerels. Like the shot of the bottle-littered seabed and the anxious crabs, this shot too can be read as representamen that creates the object about the negative impact of human's irresponsible disposal of waste on the ocean dwellers' changed changes.

Subsequence 5c portrays another effect of humans on body nature in the form of human's household was mackerels ocean. In subsequence 5c, Dory, Marlin, and Nemo were seen in a

polluted seabed near the Jewel of Morro Bay, California. The milieu was dominated by greenish-grey color, which can act as representamen that evokes the thought that the water was dirty. Furthermore, the seabed was covered with massive waste trailer boxes, broken furniture, huge drums, dirty cups, and other kitchen appliances, emphasizing the interpretant to create an object of the very polluted ocean. As Dory was calling for her parents, she heard rushing voices that reminded her that she was there before, and the shot changes into a flashback of Baby Dory asking the crabs that hid in the household items there. This act is the representamen that evokes an understanding that place had been polluted since baby Dory first got lost and that interpretant in turn. It becomes a new representamen that evokes the meaning that there had not been any change in the effort to clean the ocean, or in the habit of throwing rubbish irresponsibly that allows the rubbish to end up in the ocean. However, there was a slight difference in the milieu color between the present and the flashback, in which the container color seemed vivid when baby Dory was there. Meanwhile, in the present situation, the waste has mostly covered in dirt. It becomes the representamen, which creates an object in the audience's mind that the waste lasted for years without being degraded. Considering that some of the household items displayed in this scene were mainly metal and plastic, which should have gone to recycling, the overall scene becomes a representamen of the lack of recycling habit or reducing plastic use among humans. With the dust covering the waste, this meaning leads to another meaning: this lack of recycling habits or reducing plastic use among humans had not improved.

As Dory moved further call louder after remembering her parents' name, Dory and her friends encountered a giant squid in subsequence 5f. Before the encounter, Dory was seen to swim near a stack of giant containers. The crabs were seen to hide in several household wastes such as in cheese grater, can, broken mug, juicer, teapot, and bell. These are representamen, which create s an object that there is more pollutant in the ocean. As the squid attacked them, Dory, Marlin, and Nemo swam fast toward the container box with scattered contents. The dim grey lighting and tense music with a fast tempo create a sense of danger in the audience's mind due to the interpretant. This feeling becomes a representamen that creates an object that Dory was in danger because of the squid and the pollution. With this interpretant going in, Dory, Marlin, and Nemo were seen to go out of the other container's other end with some cans attached to her through a six-ring plastic packaging. What is interesting is that the red cans have white, very readable letters "COLA" on it. The soda cans are representamen of the products that are massively produced due to its high daily demand. These representamen creates an object that even a simple act like consuming a can of soda may affect marine life. Moreover, the containers full of soda cans, which ended up in the ocean, act as a representamen



that creates an object that the company produced had been irresponsible about its wrecked shipment. It also acts as representamen that creates an object that the film poses a protest for specific companies that produce canned soda drinks for not handling the waste they created with their packaging and shipment.

Further reading can be conducted about the settings in subsequent 5f. The bioluminous squid that attacked Dory, Marlin, and Nemo, are supposed to live deep in the ocean, hence the needs to have luminous lights in their body so they can see and attract their preys. However, the seabeds' other inhabitant were crabs that usually live in shallow waters with ample sunshine. This contradicting habitats and their dwellers may be a simple goof, but it can also be read as a representamen that all the waste and the stacking metal containers had created dark spaces that attracted deep-sea predators like the giant squid to dwell in shallow waters, preying on sea creatures who are not accustomed to having such predators. Thus, this whole giant squid scene on shallow waters can be a representamen of how far the shallow-water ecosystem had been destroyed by the mounding dumps created by human activities and their unessential consumptions like the soda drinks.

In subsequence 6a, the transparent six-pack ring still surrounded Dory, with Nemo and Marlin stuck in it, dragging them both as Dory frantically swim to evade the giant squid. There are two crucial representamina to notice here. The first is that Nemo and Marlin were helplessly stuck in it and got dragged and making Nemo traumatically suffocated. The fast tempo background music added to this feeling of dangerously raising heartbeat because of panic and suffocation. It is a strong representamen that evokes the audience to think that the plastic six-pack packaging creates problems for the fish, incredibly weak, baby fish like Nemo. The second representamen is that Dory was hardly aware of the plastic ring, which can be read as a representamen that light, transparent six-pack ring packagings are so unsuspecting for marine life that they are not aware of it even when they are trapped in it as subsequence 6a ended as Dory encountered MLI officers who were going to rescue them. One of them caught Dory and said, “*No respect for the ocean life!*” referring to those who had caused Dory trapped in the six-pack ring. That line is the representamen creating an object that the MLI officers admitted that human activity had negatively impacted the ocean creature, such a misfortune, significantly when Dory was impacted near the Marine Life Institute, which sought to preserve the ocean life.

Those subsequences from *Finding Dory*'s narrative contain the scene of pollution from oil mining, household waste, and big industry that contrasts the idea of attempts on preserving the underwater environment as proposed by the OILPOL, Clean Water Act, and NOWPAP, as

argued by Isfarin (2012) and Azaria & Prawidya (2014). Those scenes also warn that a better and more thorough waste management is required to prevent more pollutants from entering the ocean. Another interpretation gained from subsequence 1m, 5c, 5f, and 6a is the helplessness of the ocean creatures in dealing with human waste: polluted ocean, mentally unhealthy fish and crustacean, a ruined ecosystem that brought deep-sea predators to the shallow waters, and the dangers of seemingly harmless lightweight, transparent plastic wastes. As some sea creatures are shown to survive the polluted ecosystem, these subsequences also act as representamen that some of the sea creatures may not choose a better place to live in, or how to prevent the sea from being polluted. It becomes a new representamen that creates the object that those sea creatures are forced to live within a polluted area as they have no alternatives otherwise. Thus, these scenes have incorporated representamens that send how human activities, improper waste management, and irresponsible behaviors can harm the ocean and ocean creatures, helpless against these undegradable wastes. In turns, they can also be read as representamens of the film's ideology that implore human to be more aware of the environmental issues caused by improper waste management, especially toward the quality of the ocean's ecosystem, which is yet to be realized, as argued by Boiyo (2014), Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (2016), and Pregiwati (2017).

### **Language as Medium for Incantation of Environmental Awareness**

Since language and content should be integrated into the learning process (West, 2013), learners can acquire knowledge of language aspects and content-specific knowledge through every learning process (Santos, 2013; Umiera, Haida Hashim Yunus & Hashim, 2018). Thus contents related to environmental awareness can be included in every learning process. In this film, language also plays a pivotal role in raising awareness about marine life conservations in addition to employing pictures, sounds, and nuances to send messages about the dangers brought upon marine's life due to human's activities, improper waste management, and irresponsible garbage disposal that have endangered marine life. From the plot segmentation observations, at least four subsequences can be identified as using language as a medium for raising environmental awareness in *Finding Dory*, namely subsequence 6e, 7j, 9a, and 15h.

In subsequence 6e, Dory was seen swimming toward the surface, still trapped in a six-pack plastic ring while a PA announcement was playing in the background, from which the voice of Sigourney Weaver was heard from the Marine Life Institute. Sigourney Weaver's statement went: “...won't you, please join us, as we explore the wonder of the Pacific Ocean...” which acts a representamen that Sigourney Weaver invited people to adore the

wonder of the ocean. She spoke softly and slowly, thus easily audible to visitors of the Marine Life Institute, making the audience feel welcome. Those two objects become the second representamen, which creates the idea that Sigourney Weaver is a human representative currently promoting a nature-loving activity from the Marine Life Institute. As Dory arrived on the surface, a male officer and a female officer came on a boat. The male officer scooped Dory out of the water with his hands, and said, “*‘Oh, look at this!’*” while the female responded, “*‘No respect for ocean life.’*” The exclamation *‘Oh, look at this!’* expressed by the male officer is a representamen that shows how he did not like to see fish, like Dory, suffered from plastic waste. The female officer's reply, “*‘No respect for ocean life!’*” emphasizes this sentiment by making it explicit that both officers did respect ocean life, and they condemned those who did not do so. Supported with their action, that is scooping Dory out of the water to free her from the plastic ring while stating, “*‘Let’s take her inside and see how she does.’*” the shot becomes a representamen that the two officers did not only own the awareness about marine life conservation, but they put this awareness into action.

Since the two officers wore uniforms from Marine Life Institute, it can be inferred that they were officers from the institute. Moreover, their beliefs and their actions in saving Dory become representamens that the Marine Life Institute cares about Dory's condition, which in turn becomes a new representamen that can lead to the object that human, as represented by The Marine Life Institute, cares for the ocean's life, as represented by Dory. As the officers were leaving, Sigourney Weaver's voice-over narration was heard again in the background saying, “*‘...where we believe in rescue, rehabilitate, and release.’*” It is a representamen that creates an object that Dory was rescued and would be rehabilitated tend to be released afterward. This object becomes the second representamen that creates an object that Marine Life Institute is a part of conservation acts focusing on ocean life, which becomes the third representamen creating the third object that humans can dedicate their time and energy-conserving nature.

In subsequent 7j, Marlin and Nemo were worried about Dory, who was taken by the Marine Life Institute officers. Fluke and Rudder, the sea lions, overheard the discussion between Marlin and Nemo, who wondered where Dory was taken to. Marlin was afraid that Dory was taken into a restaurant. It is a representamen creating an object that Marlin was afraid of the idea that humans would consume his friend. This object further creates a representamen that fish see humans as predators who eat fish. However, this idea was then declined by Fluke's statement, who said that Dory was taken into a fish hospital. This statement, combined with the building with “Quarantine” written on its wall, creates an object that Dory was taken into a

quarantine section of the Marine Life Institute. Marlin looked relieved for a while, which creates an object that his fear towards humans decreased. After that, Fluke said that Dory would be treated, quoting Sigourney Weaver, “*Sigourney Weaver says, rescue, rehabilitate and release,*” to which Rudder added that Dory “*would be in and out in a jiff,*” while Fluke waved his tail with a tag declaring he had been treated for the parasite, followed by Rudder who was treated for anemia. This dialogue contains important linguistic representaments that send a message about marine life conservation. The first representament is the statement that Dory would undergo “rescue, rehabilitate, and release” and that she “would be in and out in a jiff,” which can be interpreted as a trust of the sea lion toward Marine Life Institute, which is the representation of sea animal's trust toward human's efforts in marine life conservation. Together with their tail tags and their relaxed manners when referring to the “fish hospital,” the dialogue sends a distinct message that marine life conservation is appropriately conducted, marine life would trust humans, and humans can work better in conserving marine life. Of course, the fact that the sea lions are relaxing open waters, which means they had been released into the ocean, can add strengthening the message about how well the animals trust humans' efforts in conserving marine life when humans conducted the process well.

The second representament in this dialogue is that Fluke quoted Sigourney Weaver while explaining how marine life conservation worked. It can be read as an internalization of the Marine Life Institute's belief in rescuing, rehabilitating, and releasing injured or sick sea creatures back to their natural habitat, the ocean. As the sea lions had been rescued, and then rehabilitated, and released to the open waters, it can be inferred that they had been spending quite some time in the institute, with Sigourney Weaver's voice explaining the purpose of Marine Life Institute being played in the background over and over again. This understanding can be read as a representament that evokes another understanding that verbal drillings like Sigourney Weaver's statements about the purpose of Marine Life Institute can instill the concept of marine life conservations in the minds of the hearer. It means that if children hear messages about marine life conservation repeatedly, they, too, would sooner or later internalize the concept. It can act as a message sent to parents and educators among the audience that that to educate children, as in raising awareness about the environment, language plays a critical role.

This message is further incantation in subsequent 9a. In this subsequence, Dory was thrown into Destiny's pool after following her instinct to jump into a bucket that contained Destiny's meal. Shortly, Dory heard a female educator explained about the inhabitant of the pool, Destiny. The female educator described Destiny by saying, “*Our next guest has been*

*here a very long time. She's a whale shark. Her name is Destiny. You'll notice she's extremely nearsighted and has trouble navigating her environment. Oh! And here she comes now.*” The female educator's statement is a representamen that creates an object that the Marine Life Institute took care of Destiny for a long time due to her near-sighted problem. At a closer look, many children listen to the female educator. It becomes the representamen creating an object that the female educator tried to introduce marine life to the children. This object then stands as the second representamen resulting in the second object that the female educator tried to develop the children's nature-loving character by accompanying their visit to the Marine Life Institute with some useful information about the animal the exhibition. As the children were depicted as listening to the female educator, the shot can act as a representamen that the children listened to the speech spoken by the educator, which can, in turn, become a representamen that children could be learning about marine life conservation as taught by the female educator.

Another message about the environment delivered through is identified in the subsequent 15h. In this subsequence, Dory was in the truck after rescuing Marlin and Nemo. Becky came to fetch Dory with a bucket on her beak, but Dory insisted on staying and talking with Hank since Dory decided to take Hank back to the ocean with her. Dory talked fast with frowned eyebrows, representing the representamen creating an object that Dory is fully determined. Dory said that Hank was supposed to be out in the ocean, not in Cleveland's glass box. It is a representamen of the object that the animals belong to nature. After that, Dory said, “*A friend of mine, her name is Sigourney, once told me that all it takes is three simple steps: rescue, rehabilitate, and one other thing...*”. First, Dory's statement, “*A friend of mine, her name is Sigourney,*” is a linguistic representamen that creates an object that Dory believed Sigourney was her friend, although they never actually met. However, Dory had been listening to Sigourney Weaver's good things about rescuing and rehabilitating marine lives, that Dory thought she knew Sigourney well enough so she can trust her as a friend. As Dory represents the marine life, Sigourney's voice represents the human, Dory's trust in this statement becomes a new representamen that animals and marine life can trust human when human shows compassion toward the animals. The interpretant result can then become a new representamen that creates an object that human and marine life can live in harmony as long as the human is kind to marine life.

An important note to pay attention in this sequence is Dory's confidence in the Marine Life Institute's beliefs, as stated by Sigourney Weaver, that this human organization's purpose was to rescue and rehabilitate troubled marine life and then to release them back into the ocean

once they are fully healed. In this sequence, Dory was depicted to have internalized the concept of rescue, rehabilitate, and release after she had the journey inside the Marine Life Institute, where Sigourney Weaver is continuously announcing the concept through the speakers. Besides, if Dory was depicted to have been born and raised in the institute, there is a big chance that as a child, Dory had listened to Sigourney Weaver's voice repeatedly that it got to her subconscious and became internalized as a value that she firmly believed in. In this case, Dory's words to convince Hank, the septopus, to go back to the ocean since he was healthy and fully rehabilitated as a proof that not only Dory internalized the values of rescue, rehabilitate, and release held by the Marine Life Institute, it also shows that Dory disseminated this belief to her friends. It is proven in the next shot where the fish in the truck began to yell “‘*Release! Release! Release! Release! Release! Release! Release! Release!*’” as the truck, and its content began to spill into the sea, releasing the rehabilitated fish into the ocean. To see that all those fish now realized the importance of going back to the ocean as their natural habitat and made an effort to make that happen was the result of Dory's internalization of the Marine Life Institute's purpose, which was a proof that the repeated message sends by Sigourney Weaver to the children worked very well to raise environmental awareness. It implies that drilling and repeated verbal messages can be a very useful medium for raising awareness about children's environment.

### **Marine Life Institute and Its' Ambivalence about Marine Life Conservation**

From the previous analysis, it can be seen that Disney's 2016 *Finding Dory* sends messages about the negative impacts of human activities and irresponsible waste management on the ocean's life along with the efforts conducted by institutes like Marine Life Institute to help to rescue and rehabilitate injured sea creatures. However, several scenes in this film trigger ambivalent interpretations about the impacts of marine life conservations, especially when viewed from the fish's standpoint as the characters in this film. Quite expectedly, misunderstanding between fish and humans is bound to happen due to the limitation of human understanding of the fish's real conditions. Moreover, this part will highlight some of this ambivalence the presence of healthy fish exhibits in the aquarium, the trauma endured by fish in the exhibits, and the stated feelings of the rehabilitated fish in Morro Bay's Marine Life Institute.

As stated repeatedly by Sigourney Weaver about the purpose of Marine Life Institute, this film provides great scenes to see how the rehabilitations succeeded, including the rehabilitated octopus whose tentacle was amputated, as encountered by Dory in subsequent

7a, the healthy sea lions in subsequence 7j, and the healed beluga whale as explained to Dory by Destiny, the shark whale in subsequence 9d. However, in subsequence 7a, it was explained by Hank that "*Fish in here, go back to the ocean, Cleveland Fish, stay there forever,*" which means that the fish in Great Cleveland Aquarium is used as exhibit forever, which is not in line with the purpose of marine life conservation: to use fish as exhibit means that they do not live in their natural habitat, that is, the ocean. This issue is further highlighted with the numerous exhibits in Morro Bay's Marine Life Institute, where numerous fish live in exhibits, including Dory and Dory's parents, Charlie and Jenny. When triangulated with the plot's timeline, that means Dory's parents and the other fish in the Open Ocean Exhibits had been there for a long time. If the sea creatures retained, there were those undergoing rehabilitation, as was the case with Destiny, the nearsighted shark whale, and Bailey, the beluga whale who had lost his echolocation. Then it would be understandable to have them as retained exhibits. However, to retain healthy fish for a long time after rehabilitation seems counterproductive to the last part of the institute's belief: the release. This inconsistency is made worse as some rehabilitated fish were to be transported to Cleveland Great Aquarium as exhibits. It was depicted in sequence 7 when Hank explained why he wanted Dory's fin tag to go to Cleveland, sequence 13 when Dory went back to the rehabilitation center, and in sequence 15 when the truck did leave, or try to leave, for Cleveland, to transport rehabilitated fish for aquarium exhibits.

When it can be argued that exhibits are essential for education, as they become real live examples of marine life for the children to see, *Finding Dory* also interpolates the complication of exhibits issue from the part of the sea creatures being retained as exhibits. A clear example of this can be perceived in subsequence 8b, 10d, and 10e, when the film displays the "*Kids Zone*" of the Marine Life and its specific "*Touch Pool*." In subsequence 8b, Hank took Dory to the map of the Marine Life Institute. Firstly, Dory read an area called "*Kids Zone*." Upon hearing the name of the area, Hank disagreed with going there with panic. Hank furrowed his forehead and focused his eyes on Dory, which is the representamen that Hank was determined with his disagreement. Later in subsequence 10d, Hank was hysterical upon arriving in "*Kids' Zone*," nervously stating: "*No, no kids! Kids grab things.*" Hank's statement is a representamen creating an object that Hank was reluctant to be near children. Besides, Hank said, "*I am not losing another tentacle for you.*" Hank and Dory's conversation is a representamen that creates an object that Hank lost his tentacle in an unpleasant encounter with a human, especially with kids. In subsequence 10e, Dory and Hank were accidentally thrown into the Touch Pool inside the Kid Zone, which Hank tried to avoid. Dory got separated from Hank, so she began to call him. With a long shot, Dory was seen to call Hank's name while

some starfish, sea urchins, and sea cucumber moved discreetly. In this sequence, one of the sea cucumbers warned Dory by hissing, "*Hands...Hands!*", referring the kids' hands at the Touch Pool. That statement represents that the sea creatures were scared of the idea of interacting with a human. Accompanied with slow music, this creates suspense in the audience's mind, which represents a feeling of something wrong would happen soon. Dory got confused with the sea cucumber who warned her about "hands." The sea cucumber looked scared and tried to bury himself in the sand. Not long after, a hand grabbed the sea cucumber, squeezed him, and took him out of the water. The sea cucumber screamed as the hand grabbed him. It creates an object that the creatures in the touch pools were scared of the human hands, representing children and humans in general. As other hands reached into the water and began to grab other sea creatures such as the sea urchin, the starfish, as well as Dory, the Touch Pool seemed to be chaotic nightmares for the sea creatures. Combined with tense music with a fast tempo, it creates the feeling of danger in the audience's mind. During the chaos, Hank was seen to camouflage and stated, "*The plan is I'm gonna stay here forever.*" which act as the representamen that strengthened the idea that the sea creatures had some sort of trauma to interact with a human.

In contrast, from a long shot with slow and relaxing music and the children giggling, the children were seen to gather around the pool, grabbing things from the pool while the parents were nowhere to be seen. The contrast between the horror happening in the pool with the children's happiness is the representamen creating an object that there was a grave misconception about Touch Pool. It was supposed to be a media to introduce marine life to children, but at the same time, it is a torture for the sea creatures. Thus, the exhibition of sea creatures seems to go against the tagline of Marine Life Institute as repeatedly stated by Sigourney Weaver in the background sound to rescue, rehabilitate, and release that kept popping in the background. Thus, this becomes the new representamen resulting in the second object that human provides their children with entertaining education related to marine life which comes from exploiting nature, especially from marine life. That is an irony showing that an attempt to develop nature-loving value in the children makes them nature-offender. Is it a message toward the parents to teach their kids better in handling sea creatures? Or is it a reminder toward institutions like public aquariums like Marine life Institute, that there should be instructions and supervision on how the children should treat the sea creatures?

Another ambivalence raised by *Finding Dory* related to humans' effort in marine life conservation is the mystery about how the sea creatures feel. Naturally, marine scientists are working on it, but the fish's true feelings would remain a mystery. However, the film can interpret how these sea creatures feel toward marine life conservation as the film employed sea



creatures as the central characters. The film represents the positive perception and trusting attitude of some of the creatures in the Marine life institutes expressed by the sea lions in sequence 7, or by Destiny and Baileys in sequence 9. However, the film also highlights the psychological condition of the otherwise physically rehabilitated sea creatures. In Sequence 7, Dory met Hank, who insisted that he would not go back to the ocean, even though his remaining seven tentacles can function very well to support his life naturally. The officer also stated that Hank was due to be released to the ocean. As Hank stated in subsequence 7d, his reason to go to Cleveland Great Aquarium was “*Because if I stay here I'm gonna get released back to the ocean. And I have extremely unpleasant memories of that place. I just want to live in a glass box alone. That's all I want*”. Hank’s statement creates an object that Hank is an unusual octopus due to his preference to live in an aquarium. Nevertheless, as the later sequences revealed, Hank's fear of going back to the ocean was because he lost one of his tentacles, which may have been because of humans too.

Another example is the case with Destiny and Bailey; both were visually impaired. In subsequent 9d, Destiny explained to Dory that Bailey was rehabilitated in the institute because he bumped his head and lost his echolocation ability. However, according to Destiny, “*He was brought in with a head injury, he thinks he can't use his echolocation, but I've overheard the doctors, talking there's not a thing wrong with him,*” which means that the beluga whale was medically healed, but not psychologically in terms of his confidence about his echolocating ability. Later in subsequent 15c, Bailey, who had then regained his confidence in his echolocation, persuaded Destiny to jump off the pool into the sea to help Dory saving Nemo and Marlin, who got trapped in the truck transporting the rehabilitated fish to the sea. Nevertheless, Destiny hesitated, saying, “*can't, I can't, I would not make it in the ocean,*” referring to her nearsighted eyes. However, Bailey promised to be her eyes as a beluga whale with fully functioning echolocation. Bailey had now “*the world's most powerful pair of glasses,*” a representamen for his commitment to be Destiny's eyes. However, the most exciting part of taking note on is when Bailey responded to Destiny’s fear of hitting the walls: “*There are no walls in the ocean,*” which seemed to relieve Destiny from her fear of returning to the ocean: as “no walls in the ocean” would mean that she does not needfully functioning eyesight to go back to the ocean. While this turning point is essential for Dory's plot development where Destiny's newfound confidence would help Dory accomplish her goal in saving her friends, it also triggers a confusion as an interpretant: if Destiny, who was a shark whale that glides to filter food instead of swimming to hunt its preys, and hence did not need to see to survive, was

not hindered by her near sight disability since the ocean does not have walls, then why she was kept in the marine institute all this time?

The psychological trauma of Hank the Septopus, Bailey's lack of confidence, and Destiny's mixed up diagnose were representamens of how, despite human's efforts to help sea creatures, there is still a lot to learn, a long way to go, and plenty of supports needed by all parties to make an effort to conserve marine life succeed better. Even little children are invited to act kindly toward the exhibits and captured sea creatures because their naïve actions, as simple as a curious touch, can be traumatic for sea creatures.

## **Conclusion**

The analysis shows that although *Finding Dory* (2016) is a family story, this film also carries environmental messages. This study reveals that polluted ocean and ocean creatures' domestication affect nature negatively, while human activities related to marine conservancy affect underwater nature positively. Therefore, *Finding Dory* (2016) teaches us about what we can do to save the environment and our actions that affect nature badly. The authors would like to recommend this film as a medium to develop environmental awareness. This media can be developed into a teaching media in school or an educative entertainment at home to familiarize the children with environmental awareness acts. Through entertaining media such as animated film, the children are expected to acknowledge the environmental problems around them and increase their environmental awareness as the first step to saving the environment from degradation.

## **Pedagogical Implication**

Regarding the contribution to pedagogy, this research may provide an example of film as adaptable for teaching media. Clemens & Hamakawa (2010) explained that concepts related to sustainability and elaboration on the topic are effectively introduced through films. Clemens & Hamakawa suggest that the movie taken into the classroom should be related to the learning objectives and students' interests. Besides, the selection of film as the input of target language in language learning as it helps students to understand spoken language and interpret content (Kilagård, 2019), in which where the film is developed as teaching media, the teacher has access to contextualized their learning content especially on parts that are not supported in commercial materials. Thus, providing children and students with the quality film is fruitful for the development of their environmental awareness and their language learning.

## References

- Akintunde, E. A. (2017). *Theories and Concepts for Human Behavior in Environmental Preservation*. 1(2), 120–133. <https://doi.org/10.26502/JESPH.012>
- Al-anwari, A. M. (2014). Strategi Pembentukan Karakter Peduli Lingkungan Di Sekolah Adiwiyata Mandiri. *Ta'dib*, 19(02), 227–252.
- Azaria, & Prawidya, D. (2014). Perlindungan Lingkungan Laut Samudra Pasifik Dari Gugusan Sampah Plastik Berdasarkan Hukum Lingkungan Internasional. *Kumpulan Jurnal Mahasiswa Fakultas Hukum*, 0(0), 1–18.
- Boiyo, K. V. (2014). *Environmental Awareness, Attitude and Participation among secondary School Students: A Comparative Study of Kisarani and Kibera Divisions, Nairobi County, Kenya*. Kenyatta University.
- Bordwell, D., Thompson, K., & Smith, J. (2017). Film Art: Creativity, Technology, and Business. In *Film Art: An Introduction* (11th ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.
- Clemens, B. W., & Hamakawa, C. (2010). Classroom as Cinema: Using Film to Teach Sustainability. *Academy of Management Learning & Education*, 9(3), 561–563. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amle.2010.53791838>
- Donofrio, E. C. (2013). *The Wonderful World of Gender Roles : A Look at Recent Disney Children ' s Films*. Boston College University, Boston.
- Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. (2016). *Marine Conservation and Sustainable Fisheries* (November 2). Retrieved from [www.bmz.de/en%0ADetailed](http://www.bmz.de/en%0ADetailed)
- Harlistyarintica, Y., Wahyuni, H., Widiyawati, Yono, N., Sari, I. P., & Cholimah, N. (2017). Penanaman Pendidikan Karakter Cinta Lingkungan Melalui JARI KREASI SAMPAH BOCAH CILIK di Kawasan Parangtritis. *Pendidikan Anak*, 6(1), 20–30.
- Hendriana, E. C., & Jacobus, A. (2016). Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter di Sekolah Melalui Keteladanan dan Pembiasaan. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Indonesia*, 1(2), 25–29.
- Isfarin, N. N. (2012). Perlindungan Lingkungan Laut Selat Malaka dari Pencemaran Minyak Lintas Batas. *Jurnal Ilmu Hukum*, 15(2), 206–224.
- Kilagård, C. (2019). *Selection and Use of Films in Second Language Learning*. Orebro University.
- Klinowski, S. (2017). *Finding Nemo , Findng Dory , Finding Ourselves : How and Why We Teach Our Children to Think About Disability*.
- Leek, R. (2016). *Once Upon an Ecological Dream*. University of Amsterdam.
- McKee, A. (2003). *Textual Analysis: A Beginner's Guide*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Merrel, F. (1997). *Peirce, Signs, adn Meaning*. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of

Toronto Press.

- Miranti, I., & Frijuniarsi, N. (2014). Evaluasi Nilai- Nilai Pendidikan Karakter Dalam Film. *Deiksis*, 06(May), 101–114.
- Mitayani, Y. (2010). *Education Values in the "Finding Nemo" Movie*. State Islamic Studies Institute of Salatiga YUNI.
- Omoogun, A. C., Egbonyi, E. E., & Onnoghen, U. N. (2016). From Environmental Awareness to Environmental Responsibility: Towards a Stewardship Curriculum. *Journal of Education Issues*, 2(2), 60–72. <https://doi.org/10.5296/jei.v2i2.9265>
- Pregiwati, L. A. (2017). *KKP Komitmen Tangani Dampak Sampah Plastik di Wilayah Pesisir dan Laut*. Jakarta: Kementerian Kelautan dan Perikanan.
- Santos, P. (2013). Learning Through in-house Videos: how one Japanese college integrates subject content in its EAP program. *The Asian EFL Journal Special Edition CLIL in Asian Context: Emerging Trends*, 15(4), 324–329.
- Sari, N., Fadilah, & Ali, M. (2013). Pembiasaan Sikap Cinta Lingkungan pada Anak Usia 4-5 Tahun di TK Negeri Pembina Ketapang. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran*, 2(3), 1–21.
- Sivamoorthy, M., Nalini, R., & Kumar, C. S. (2013). Environmental Awareness and Practices among College Students. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, 2(8), 11–15.
- Sulanjari, L. S. (2011). *Kepedulian Nelayan dalam Ikut Serta Melestarikan Lingkungan Pesisir*. Universitas Negeri Semarang.
- Suwastini, N. K. A., Swandana, I. W., & Payani, N. L. P. D. (2018). The Identification of Character of Education Values on the Main Character of Zootopia. *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris*, 5(2),.
- Suwastini, N. K. A., Utami, I. G. . L. P., & Artini, N. N. (2020). Dory's Paradoxical Characterizations in Disney's Animated Feature Film Finding Dory (2016). *NOBEL: Journal of Literature and Language Teaching*, 11(1), 27–37. <https://doi.org/10.15642/nobel.2020.11.1.27-37>
- Tercek, M. (2017). *The Biggest Environmental Challenges of 2017*. Retrieved from [nature.org/environment2017](http://nature.org/environment2017)
- Umiera, Haida Hashim Yunus, M. M., & Hashim, H. (2018). Language Learning Strategies used by Adult Learners of Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL). *TESOL International Journal*, 13(4), 39–48.
- Utami, I. G. A. L. P., Suwastini, N. K. A., Artini, N. N., & Kultsum, U. (2020). *Values of*

*Character Education in the Characterizations of Dory in Disney's Animated Feature Finding Dory (2016).* 394(Icirad 2019), 119–126.  
<https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.200115.020>

West, L. K. (2013). A Case Study of Environmental Management & Content and Language Integrated Learning. *The Asian EFL Journal Special Edition CLIL in Asian Context : Emerging Trends*, 15(4), 339–346.

What do sea turtles eat? Unfortunately, plastic bags. | Stories | WWF. (n.d.). Retrieved August 23, 2019, from <https://www.worldwildlife.org/stories/what-do-sea-turtles-eat-unfortunately-plastic-bags#>

Yakin, H. S. M., & Totu, A. (2014). The Semiotic Perspectives of Peirce and Saussure: A Brief Comparative Study. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 155(October), 4–8.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.10.247>



## **Promoting Learning Performance and Learning Outcomes: The Case of an Indonesian School**

**<sup>1</sup>Ujang Suparman, <sup>2</sup>Ridwan Ridwan, <sup>1</sup>Hasan Hariri**

*<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Lampung*

*<sup>2</sup>SMP Negeri 3 Way Pengubuan*

*Corresponding author: <sup>1</sup>Ujang Suparman, email: [ujang.suparman@fkip.unila.ac.id](mailto:ujang.suparman@fkip.unila.ac.id)*

### **Bio-profiles:**

**Ujang Suparman** is a lecturer and researcher; his careers: since 1987 up to the present time as a lecturer at the English Study Program, University of Lampung; 2005–2016, as a lecturer on Psycholinguistics and Qualitative Research at the Masters Degree in English Education, Muhammadiyah University Prof. DR. Hamka, Jakarta; 2005 up to present, as a national book reviewer of English books for elementary school, junior and senior high schools, and vocational school (SMK) in PUSBUK DEPDIKNAS; 2005–2008. Besides, from 1989 through 2000, he once worked for Hawthorn Institute of Education, Melbourne Australia, as a lecturer of Interpreting and Translating; 1998–2000, working for Melbourne Institute of Asian Languages and Societies (MIALS), the University of Melbourne, as a lecturer on Indonesian studies. His research interests are in reading difficulties, reading strategies, reading assessment, curriculum design, translation, English for specific purposes, motivation, personality and learning styles, language acquisition, second and foreign language assessment. His email address: [ujang.suparman@fkip.unila.ac.id](mailto:ujang.suparman@fkip.unila.ac.id)

**Ridwan Ridwan** works as an English teacher for more than 25 years, active as a Central Lampung District curriculum development team, resource person at the District English Teacher Association, from 2007 to 2010 was involved in the Mainstreaming Good Practices in Basic Education project in collaboration with UNICEF and the European Union funded Ministry of Education and Culture. During the project, the writer became a Facilitator and Master Trainer to provide training assistance conducted by Regional Facilitators in Indonesia,

as an educational consultant in private schools from kindergarten, elementary, junior high and vocational/high school in Lampung Province. He can be reached at [ridwanrosidimuawi@gmail.com](mailto:ridwanrosidimuawi@gmail.com)

**Hasan Hariri** is a lecturer as a professor associate at Lampung University (1992), he began his career as an educator by teaching in high school. After graduating from S-1, he became a permanent lecturer at the Yunisla Foreign Language Academy and also taught at other institutions, including Lampung University and private universities. He was appointed as a Civil Servant (PNS) at Lampung University in 2002 with the task of providing English language training/courses especially TOEFL for the public, students, and lecturers. After completing S-3 in 2012, the writer was appointed the Chief of Staff of educator, and since 2014, he switched assignments to become a lecturer at the Master of Education Management FKIP Unila. In addition, since 2015 he has been active as a member of the Lampung University scientific work verification team and a team supporting the writing of FKIP Lampung University's scientific work. He can be reached at [hasanhariri@unila.ac.id](mailto:hasanhariri@unila.ac.id)

## **Abstract**

This classroom action research aims to find out: The significant relationship between the application of peer tutorial and the daily of learning performance assessment applied to 1) the average student academic achievement achievers, 2) students' language knowledge, 3) students' language skills, and 4) students' language skills in aggregate. The method used to answer research questions is by classroom action research (CAR) with a one-shot case study experimental approach. The data are collected through lists of the English test, and questionnaires. To measure the students' perceptions, questionnaires on 5 a Likert scale are used. All data in the form of numbers from learning outcomes were analyzed using SPSS version 23 to answer questions using correlations to determine the significance of the correlation, correlation coefficient, and relationship determination. The results showed that all correlations are significant.

**Keywords:** *learning outcomes and performance, assessment daily, and peer tutor.*

## **Introduction**

The most important goal of learning a foreign language is that the learners can communicate it in different situations to express thoughts and information. Concentrating only

on oral English is not enough, writing competence also becomes indispensable for English Foreign Language students. The students must answer questions in the form of writing assignments and many other ways. So, there is a need for them to explore and express ideas if the teacher changes strategy or applies new techniques in learning English, it can improve the performance of students' speaking English.

Speaking skill is an important part of the curriculum in language learning and the ability to speak in foreign languages is at the core of what it means to be able to use a foreign language (Biggs, 2011; Liu, 2005; Tsou, 2005; Tsui, 1992). Being able to talk with friends, colleagues, guests, and even strangers, in their language or in a language that can be understood by both speakers, is certainly the goal of many students (Luoma, 2004). Besides, the relationship between students' oral participation in class and their academic achievement is undeniable. Research has shown that when students actively participate in class, their academic performance seems to be higher than those who are passive in class (Krupa-Kwiatkowski, 1998). The importance of the ability or perception of the ability to speak should not be underestimated by teachers or students (Turner, 2010).

By contrast, in the teaching experience, students remain silent all the time in class. They don't want to speak English. They hesitate to open their mouths. Even though they knew that they had to speak English well to make themselves eligible to be competitive today, they seemed indifferent about speaking in English.

Furthermore, Adamson (2004) argues that although there are various methods of language teaching, "no consensus arises, nor will they emerge, regarding the" best "or" right "way to teach language". If this view is taken, then we are interested in consolidating language learning in a very different way, which is slightly different from general practice in language teaching. This test is used for assessment; in our experiment, they were used to replace additional ingredients. The general practice is that students are presented with language input, then they are involved in language practice, and finally, they are evaluated by all means of formative assessment. For many foreign language teachers, it is common to divide language learning into three stages, whether real or hypothetical. These stages are presentation, practice, and production (PPP). For easy reference, it can be called, the 3-P teaching model (Çetinavcı & Yavuz, 2011; Hu, Cheng, Chiu, & Paller, 2020; Ur, 2014; Zghyer, 2014).

The significance of peer tutoring and daily of assessment have a positive impact on learning performance and learning outcomes, the results of this classroom action research are worthy of inspiring teachers to develop practical learning because of these: (1) Peer tutoring has been proven to be beneficial for tutors other than tutee, with the magnitude of these



benefits varying from study to study. In some cases, tutors may benefit more from the students they are tutoring, (2) The practice of consistent assessment carried out in learning can simplify the problem or break down the complexity, and can be used as information to plan further learning.

Globalization raises the urgent need of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), so teachers need to help students develop their skills, and beliefs need to take an active role in speaking learning (M. Liu & Jackson, 2009). In this way, the students must be encouraged to work cooperatively so that they can have the opportunity to progress in achieving their academic goals (Liebscher & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009; Ma, Zheng, Ye, & Tong, 2010). Only in this situation can they share ideas and structures that are interrelated with each other.

The research on the effectiveness of peer tutorials (Tudge & Rogoff, 1999; Vygotsky, 1980) and the impacts of assessment (Bernstein, Wasserman, Thompson, & Freeman, 2017; Randel et al., 2011; VanLehn, Siler, Murray, Yamauchi, & Baggett, 2003) have been done by many researchers in various regions. However, they are hardly found in some remote areas where students come from low-income family. Therefore, the authors propose the following research questions.

Following the explanation, the authors propose questions to investigate, as follows:

- 1) What is the significance of the application of peer tutors and the daily learning performance assessments to the average-student academic in aggregate?
- 2) What is the significance of the application of peer and daily assessment of learning performance to the score of knowledge and skills on the student's final semester score?
- 3) What is the significance of the application of peer and the daily learning performance assessments to the final semester assessment?
- 4) What is the significance of the application of peer and daily assessments based on the students' perceptions of the skill scores assessments?

## **Literature Review**

### **Peer Tutor**

Providing yourself to students with one-on-one interaction with teachers is a big challenge in large class learning. Peer tutor is a source of learning other than teachers, namely peers who are better at providing learning assistance to their classmates at school. Peers as a guide in learning can be used as an alternative to help students who have difficulty if guided by their teacher (Suherman, 2003). Sometimes a student is more receptive to teaching assistance from his friend than to receive help from his teacher because with friends they are,

do not have a sense of reluctance, low self-esteem and so on to ask questions or ask for help and give help (Hoa, 2008; Ischak & Warji, 1987).

The advantages of peer tutor learning are sometimes the results are better for some students who are reluctant to ask their teacher directly. Further, tutoring strengthen the concepts that have been mastered and it is an opportunity for the students to practice skills in guiding and holding responsibilities in carrying out a task and practicing the patience, as well as strengthening relationships between fellow students.

### **Assessment**

Learning and assessment are closely related. Purpose, delivery, and assessment are the foundation of every educational effort. The purpose defines what needs to be learned; delivery, methods, and means to be determined to meet those needs; and assessment, the size of whether they have been fulfilled. Most class learning objectives can enter into one of the competencies of knowledge, skills, or attitude. The emphasis on each of these varies from class learning to other classroom learning. Meaningful assessments must be aligned with the stated objectives (Xinhua, 2008).

Assessment is a prescribed way to monitor student progress as they continue to meet classroom learning goals. A summative assessment has a strong social flavor. Here, teachers, institutions, and he community, in general, want to ensure that learning has taken place. These steps, which have a final impression of them, occur at the point specified during class learning, usually in the middle and at the end (Kibble, 2017). Other assessment categories are more tentative, where the aim is to provide feedback, encourage content mastery, sharpen skills, change attitudes, and improve student growth (S. Brown, 2005). Significantly, this is not intended to evaluate students' competencies or achievements. This assessment is often called formative, although the term does not capture full essence because both teachers and students often interpret this as only a temporary measure that leads to a real final test at the end. This might be better-called assessment for oriented learning or assessment (Carless, 2007). This series of assessments is the focus of this paper.

Kibble notes that there is a "continuum of summative assessment to formative, depending on the main purpose intended." For example, summative test results can give students instructions to improve their learning and students can see formative assessments only to do better on summative tests. All forms of assessment must enrich this learning process, and these factors are relevant to achieving assessment for learning (Kibble, 2017).

Meaningful learning can be improved significantly if students are allowed to

personalize their learning through assessment. So the quality of learning achieved by a student is significant. The means to achieve this is to have an assessment that allows students to explore important issues for them. Eisner categorizes educational objectives into two broad categories: learning and expressiveness. The former determines clearly what needs to be monitored, the later provides opportunities for students to explore problems that interest them. The quality of learning and, consequently, the assessment used to encourage learning can be enhanced by a wise balance between these two outcomes (Eisner, 1985).

## Methodology

The method used to answer research questions was classroom action research (CAR) with a one-shot case study experimental approach. This means that a group given treatment is observed by applying a cycle comprising planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting activities and then evaluating as the dependent variable. It is carried out in three basic competencies (BC): 9, 10, and 11. Learning for BC 9 was carried out in 8 meetings, BC 10 in 11 meetings, and BC 11 in 9 meetings. The research: location was in the 3 Way Pengubuan Public Junior School in grade 8. The data were collected through English tests. Data in the form of numbers from learning outcomes were analyzed using SPSS version 23 to answer questions 1, 2, 3, and 4, using correlations to determine the significance of the correlation, correlation coefficient, and relationship determination.

## Results

### Question 1

What is the significance of the application of peer tutors and the daily learning performance assessments to the average-student academic achievers in aggregate?

Table 1 Correlation between Student Perceptions and the Average-Student Academic Achievers in the Aggregate

Correlations

		Student Perception	Academic achievement
Student Perception	Pearson Correlation	1	.186
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.082
	N	88	88
Academic	Pearson Correlation	.186	1

achievement	Sig. (2-tailed)	.082	
	N	88	88

Source: Research Data Process

Score  $r = 0.186$ ,  $p = 0.082$  (2-tailed), positive direction, and to know the strength of the relationship is to refer to the correlation value ( $r$ ). Cohen suggested a guideline that the strength of a small relationship  $r = 0.10$  to  $0.29$ , while  $r = 0.30$  to  $0.49$ , and the magnitude  $r = 0.50$  to  $1.0$ .  $r = 0.186$ , so the relationship strength is small (Pallant, 2011), and  $r^2 = 3\%$ .

### Question 2

What is the significance of the application of peer tutorial and daily assessment of learning performance to the scores of knowledge and skills on the student's final semester scores?

Table 2 Correlation of Knowledge and Skills Scores for the Final Semester Assessment Score Correlations

	1	2
Final Semester Assessment	1	.760**
Average Knowledge and Skills	.760**	1

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

Source: Research Data Process

The direction of the relationship between the average scores of knowledge and skills with the end of semester assessment is positive ( $0.760$ ),  $r = 0.760$ , and  $r^2 = 5\%$ ,  $p = 0.01$  level (2-tailed).

### Question 3

What is the significance of the application of peer and the daily learning performance assessments to the Final Semester Assessment?

Table 3 Correlation of Final Assessments, Knowledge, and Skill scores Correlations

	1	2	3
Final Semester Assessment	-	.799**	.667**
Knowledge		-	.874**
Skill Score			-

---

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

Source: Research Data Process

The direction of the relationship between the average score of knowledge and skills with the end of semester assessment is positive (0.799, 0.667, and 0.874), the strength of the relationship for the three variables is large,  $r^2 = 8\%$ , and  $p = 0.01$  level (2-tailed).

#### **Question 4**

What is the significance of the application of peer tutorial and daily assessments based on the students' perceptions of the skill scores assessments?

Table 4 Correlation between Student Perceptions and Skill Score

Correlations

		Student Perception	Skill Score
Student Perception	Pearson Correlation	1	.075
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.490
	N	88	88
Skill Score	Pearson Correlation	.075	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.490	
	N	88	91

Source: Research Data Process

The relationship between student perception scores and skills with the end of semester assessment is positive, the scorer = 0.075,  $r^2 = 6\%$  and  $p = 0.490$  (2-tailed).

#### **Discussion**

This research is to examine the significance, coefficient, and determination correlation of the use of peer tutorial and daily learning performance from 1) student perceptions and the average student academic achievement in the aggregate, 2) knowledge and skills scores for the final semester assessment score, 3) knowledge and skills scores for the final semester assessment score, final assessments, knowledge, and 4) skill score, and student perception and skill score. The result shows their significances.

The four results of this action research are in line with the results of previous research and theories that have been established. Various learning theories have predicted the success of peer guidance. They attract the difference between active, constructive, and interactive

activities. Interactive activities such as peer tutorial: (where a student talks with others about the subject matter) have been shown to produce learning outcomes that are greater than activities that are only constructive or active. From a social constructivist perspective (Chi, 2009), high-level interactions in which ideas, explanations, justifications, speculations, hypothesis, and exchanged conclusions can bring changes in the cognitive structure of tutors and tutees (Tudge & Rogoff, 1999; Vygotsky, 1980).

In particular, Vygotsky believes that students can observe cognitive skills from colleagues who are more capable and in time internalize and develop them personally. Thus, more advanced tutors will be needed to design tutees and help them progress cognitively in their "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1980). However, there is evidence that tutors do not need to be more advanced than tutees. In one study, student learning was equally effective when tutors were not advised to provide explanations and feedback to students (Chi, Siler, Jeong, Yamauchi, & Hausmann, 2001).

Besides, other studies show that students with similar abilities can successfully teach each other (Jensen & Lawson, 2011; King, Staffieri, & Adelgais, 1998; Menesses & Gresham, 2009). This observation is supported by equilibration theory, where learning is stimulated when students face unequal experiences in which prior knowledge can only accommodate new information if it is reorganized and contradictions are resolved (Piaget, 1985). In support of this, research shows that tutees must meet dead ends during the tutoring session for learning to take place (VanLehn et al., 2003), something that can happen with tutors at the same level of ability.

Peer tutorial has been proved to be useful for tutees and tutors, with the magnitude of this benefit varying from study to study (Benè & Bergus, 2014; Roscoe & Chi, 2007). Peer tutors can easily provide learning to students and summarize what they already known, called "telling knowledge" (Roscoe & Chi, 2007). Interestingly, tutee behavior can affect tutor learning. The more high-level questions asked the more tutors can monitor themselves, and the more conclusions they make. If tutees ask more superficial questions, tutors tend to be involved in more superficial knowledge disclosures (Nguyen & Baldauf Jr, 2010; Roscoe & Chi, 2004, 2007).

Tutors and tutees got a benefit from tutoring; reciprocal peer guidance must be an effective and efficient model to help students learn. Students take turns filling out the roles of tutors and tutees, allowing the student-to-instructor ratio of students to be possible in any size class. It allows each student to experience both roles, but it can also produce more collaboration and understanding together when roles are blurred (Duran & Monereo, 2005).

The benefits of peer tutors that have been proven through research (Assinder, 1991) there are at least eight, namely: (1) Increased motivation. Without exception, all students appear to be more motivated, and this motivation is maintained throughout the entire course. Students seem to enjoy themselves more, are more willing to contribute, have increased concentration ranges, and engage in more spontaneous conversations than ever before. (2) Participation is increasing. Even students who were previously quite passive in class became more involved. All talk is initiated by students and, as well as the students' talk time increases rapidly, the nature of discourse changes to include more questions, more checks, more clarity, and more negotiation than in previous lessons. Students also seem to listen to each other more closely. (3) Improvement of 'real' communication longer and more meaningful discussion. I was struck by the wealth and variety of exchanges that took place - the analysis of information and the political situation; discussion of learning and the values and objectives of various task components; group organization negotiations; and discussion of the relative merits of various dictionaries. (4) Enhance deep understanding. Group negotiation seems to result in a deeper understanding of all parties. There are several mixed abilities among students; stronger students often have linguistic resources that extend to the limit when called upon to explain something, be it content or grammar, to weaker students, who, in turn, have their own threshold raised to a new level. I was impressed with the persistence of the group to ensure that each group member had reached a thorough understanding of whatever was being discussed. (5) Increased responsibility for learning and their commitment to learning. In addition to being responsible to their own group (in terms of sharing work) and being accountable to other groups (in terms of teaching), each individual is fully responsible for what, and how much, is learned. Vocabulary development, for example, is very individual, with each student isolating a number of new items every day. The students themselves choose what, and how much, to learn. (6) Increase self-confidence and respect for each other. Every student is able to excel in something (not necessarily linguistic). Able to bring their own adult knowledge and skills, increase their confidence and respect for each other. This multiplicity of roles increases self-confidence and respect for peers. (7) Increasing the number of skills and strategies that are practiced and developed. It was surprised, in lesson after lesson, by the wealth of each session in terms of the number of skills and strategies practiced, and the amount of learning that seemed to occur. (8) Increased accuracy. Students take great pride in producing worksheets that are written accurately for other groups. As a result, there is often a long debate about the main points of grammar; negotiated final products always have a much greater degree of accuracy than the written work of each individual group member.

Peer tutors succeed as learning methods because they have social aspects that are directly proportional to language and humans as social creatures. Research findings on emotional and social aspects (Wette & Furneaux, 2018) provide insight into other types of challenges for students. Immediately after accepting them in teaching activities, most students put down great stress on "tutorial participation, and communication with peer tutors" (Zhang & Mi, 2010). This pressure is often fostered by personal factors such as the ability to feel comfortable with the tutor, readiness, the distance of good habits between home tutors and tutees, which creates better social and academic support (Zghyer, 2014).

Assessment is a set way to monitor student progress as they continue to meet classroom learning goals. There are two broad categories, called summative and formative. A summative assessment has a strong social flavor. Here, teachers, institutions, and, in general, the general public want to ensure that learning has taken place. These steps, which have a final impression about them, occur at the point determined during class learning, usually in the middle and at the end, and especially the assessment of learning (Kibble, 2017). Other assessment categories are more tentative, where the aim is to provide feedback, encourage mastery of content, hone skills, change attitudes, and enhance student growth (S. Brown, 2005). Significantly, this is not intended to evaluate the competencies or achievements of such students. This assessment is often called formative, although the term does not capture the full essence because both the teacher and students often interpret this only as a temporary measure that leads to a real final test at the end. This might be better called assessment for learning or learning-oriented assessment (Carless, 2007). This series of assessments is the focus of this paper.

The authors can synthesize that assessment for meaningful learning must prepare students not only to get good grades and meet certain class learning requirements but to give them training, skills, and enthusiasm for the long term. As postsecondary and professional education transitions to a competency-based model, it is increasingly clear that simply assessing students on their achievements within a limited time frame or classroom learning is not enough. Meaningful learning and assessment mean alignment with relevant results for the next stage of student growth, whether it is a provision for further learning or survival-based learning.

This strategy is a component of classroom practice, integrating them into unity will further enhance student achievement. There are several practices that are conceptualized and operationalized (Arter, 2009; William & Thompson, 2017). In general, efforts to promote formative assessment often fail to achieve formative assessment practices that are developed substantially (Carless, 2005; Hume & Coll, 2009; James & McCormick, 2009; Jonsson,



Lundahl, & Holmgren, 2015; Marshall & Jane Drummond, 2006; Schneider & Randel, 2010; Wylie & Lyon, 2015), to the extent that student achievement improvement is obtained (Bell, Steinberg, Wiliam, & Wylie, 2008; Carless, 2005; Randel et al., 2011; Schneider & Randel, 2010).

Language Assessment also has its own characteristics included in the assessment. Components and language skills are presented through various methods and approaches in curriculum design, where various factors are integrated (Macalister & Nation, 2010). This is influenced by the philosophy of seeing language teaching or language learning (H. D. Brown, 2007; Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Typically, FL students are formally presented with language input in language classes. Materials are carefully assessed and designed, and are often based on specific organizational structures, such as grammar, functional, situational, skill-based, or task-based (Breen, 1985, 1987; Macalister & Nation, 2010; Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Richardson, 2011; White, Spada, Lightbown, & Ranta, 1991). As stated above, language input is followed by practice and ends with some type of class assessment (Hadley, Rispoli, & Hsu, 2016; Lin, Tsai, Hsu, & Chang, 2019; Mashad, 2008).

## **Conclusion**

In line with the results of the calculation of this action research data, the authors can draw the conclusions, as follows: the application of peer tutors and the daily learning performance assessments to the average student academic achievers in aggregate, the application of peer tutorial and the daily learning performance assessments to the average-student academic in aggregate, the application of peer tutorial and the daily learning performance assessments to the final semester assessment, and the application of peer tutorial and daily assessments based on the students' perceptions of the skill scores assessments are significant. Those all tell that the efforts worked well in increasing student learning performance and learning outcomes of students' English lessons. Therefore, the traces of the practice of applying peer tutorial, the point is that peer tutorial is effective and efficient. It is effective because this can be done due to the fact that both those who act as teachers and students are the students themselves. This practice results in active patterns of interaction. It is efficient because at one time it runs a learning pattern that can involve all students in the class.

## **Pedagogical Implications**

The fact is that majority of the students, especially in the remote area, tend to be passive

in learning English. However, as shown by this study the classroom atmosphere is different that the majority of the student were very active after the implementation of peer tutoring and assessment. Consequently, English teachers who want to help their students be more active in the classroom, the following pedagogical implication should be taken into consideration. First, involve the students to comment their peers' works so that they feel that they have been given responsibility to be active agents. Secondly, not only teachers but also students should be involved in assessing students' classroom activities.

### **Acknowledgment**

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency.

### **References**

- Adamson, B. (2004). *China's English: A history of English in Chinese education* (Vol. 1): Hong Kong University Press.
- Arter, J. (2009). *Classroom assessment for student learning (CASL) perspective on the JCSEE student evaluation standards*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, in the Division H symposium JCSEE National Conference on Benchmarking Student Evaluation Practices.
- Assinder, W. (1991). Peer teaching, peer learning: one model.
- Bell, C., Steinberg, J., William, D., & Wylie, C. (2008). *Formative assessment and teacher achievement: Two years of implementation of the Keeping Learning on Track Program*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Council on Measurement in Education, New York.
- Benè, K. L., & Bergus, G. (2014). When learners become teachers. *Family medicine, 46*, 783-787.
- Bernstein, D. I., Wasserman, S. I., Thompson, W. P., & Freeman, T. M. (2017). ABAI's MOC assessment of knowledge program matures: adding value with continuous learning and assessment. *The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology: In Practice, 5*(1), 80-83.
- Biggs, J. B. (2011). *Teaching for quality learning at university: What the student does*: McGraw-hill education (UK).
- Breen, M. P. (1985). The social context for language learning—a neglected situation? *Studies in second language acquisition, 7*(2), 135-158.
- Breen, M. P. (1987). Contemporary paradigms in syllabus design Part II. *Language Teaching, 20*(3), 157-174.

- Brown, H. D. (2007). Prinsip pembelajaran dan pengajaran bahasa, Edisi Kelima. *Jakarta: Kedutaan Besar Amerika Serikat di Jakarta.*
- Brown, S. (2005). Assessment for learning. *Learning and teaching in higher education*(1), 81-89.
- Carless, D. (2005). Prospects for the implementation of assessment for learning. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, 12*(1), 39-54.
- Carless, D. (2007). Learning-oriented assessment: conceptual bases and practical implications. *Innovations in education and teaching international, 44*(1), 57-66.
- Çetinavcı, U. R., & Yavuz, A. (2011). Language proficiency level of English language teacher trainees in Turkey. *The International Journal of Research in Teacher Education, 1*(4), 26-54.
- Chi, M. T., Siler, S. A., Jeong, H., Yamauchi, T., & Hausmann, R. G. (2001). Learning from human tutoring. *Cognitive science, 25*(4), 471-533.
- Duran, D., & Monereo, C. (2005). Styles and sequences of cooperative interaction in fixed and reciprocal peer tutoring. *Learning and instruction, 15*(3), 179-199.
- Eisner, E. W. (1985). Eisner, Elliot W., *The Art of Educational Evaluation: A Personal View.* London: Falmer, 1985.
- Hadley, P. A., Rispoli, M., & Hsu, N. (2016). Toddlers' verb lexicon diversity and grammatical outcomes. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 47*(1), 44-58.
- Hoa, N. T. M. (2008). Mentoring beginning EFL teachers at tertiary level in Vietnam. *The Asian EFL Journal Quarterly March 2008 Volume 10, Issue, 10*(1), 111.
- Hu, X., Cheng, L. Y., Chiu, M. H., & Paller, K. A. (2020). Promoting memory consolidation during sleep: A meta-analysis of targeted memory reactivation. *Psychological bulletin, 146*(3), 218.
- Hume, A., & Coll, R. K. (2009). Assessment of learning, for learning, and as learning: New Zealand case studies. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice, 16*(3), 269-290.
- Ischak, S., & Warji, R. (1987). Program remedial dalam proses belajar mengajar. *Yogyakarta: Liberty.*
- James, M., & McCormick, R. (2009). Teachers learning how to learn. *Teaching and Teacher education, 25*(7), 973-982.
- Jensen, J. L., & Lawson, A. (2011). Effects of collaborative group composition and inquiry instruction on reasoning gains and achievement in undergraduate biology. *CBE—Life Sciences Education, 10*(1), 64-73.

- Jonsson, A., Lundahl, C., & Holmgren, A. (2015). Evaluating a large-scale implementation of Assessment for Learning in Sweden. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 22(1), 104-121.
- Kibble, J. D. (2017). Best practices in summative assessment: American Physiological Society Bethesda, MD.
- King, A., Staffieri, A., & Adelgais, A. (1998). Mutual peer tutoring: Effects of structuring tutorial interaction to scaffold peer learning. *Journal of educational psychology*, 90(1), 134.
- Krupa-Kwiatkowski, M. (1998). You Shouldn't Have Brought Me Here!: Interaction Strategies in the Silent Period of an Inner-Directed Second Language Learner. *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 31(2), 133-175.
- Liebscher, G., & Dailey-O'Cain, J. (2009). Language attitudes in interaction 1. *Journal of sociolinguistics*, 13(2), 195-222.
- Lin, J.-W., Tsai, C.-W., Hsu, C.-C., & Chang, L.-C. (2019). Peer assessment with group awareness tools and effects on project-based learning. *Interactive Learning Environments*, 1-17.
- Liu, J. (2005). Chinese graduate teaching assistants teaching freshman composition to native English speaking students *Non-native language teachers* (pp. 155-177): Springer.
- Luoma, S. (2004). *Assessing speaking*: Ernst Klett Sprachen.
- Ma, H., Zheng, Z., Ye, F., & Tong, S. (2010). *The applied research of cloud computing in the construction of collaborative learning platform under e-learning environment*. Paper presented at the 2010 International Conference on System Science, Engineering Design and Manufacturing Informatization.
- Macalister, J., & Nation, I. (2010). Language curriculum design. *London: ISP Nation*.
- Marshall, B., & Jane Drummond, M. (2006). How teachers engage with assessment for learning: Lessons from the classroom. *Research papers in education*, 21(02), 133-149.
- Mashad, I. (2008). Another look at the C-Test: A validation study with Iranian EFL learners. *The Asian EFL Journal Quarterly March 2008 Volume 10, Issue, 10(1)*, 154.
- Menesses, K. F., & Gresham, F. M. (2009). Relative efficacy of reciprocal and nonreciprocal peer tutoring for students at-risk for academic failure. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 24(4), 266.
- Nguyen, H. T. M., & Baldauf Jr, R. B. (2010). Effective peer mentoring for EFL pre-service teachers' instructional practicum practice. *Asian EFL Journal*, 12(3), 40-61.

- Randel, B., Beesley, A. D., Apthorp, H., Clark, T. F., Wang, X., Cicchinelli, L. F., & Williams, J. M. (2011). Classroom Assessment for Student Learning: Impact on Elementary School Mathematics in the Central Region. Final Report. NCEE 2011-4005. *National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance*.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (1986). Communicative language teaching. *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. New York: Cambridge UP.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*: Cambridge university press.
- Richardson, J. T. (2011). Eta squared and partial eta squared as measures of effect size in educational research. *Educational Research Review*, 6(2), 135-147.
- Roscoe, R. D., & Chi, M. T. (2004). *The influence of the tutee in learning by peer tutoring*. Paper presented at the Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society.
- Roscoe, R. D., & Chi, M. T. (2007). Understanding tutor learning: Knowledge-building and knowledge-telling in peer tutors' explanations and questions. *Review of educational research*, 77(4), 534-574.
- Schneider, M. C., & Randel, B. (2010). Research on characteristics of effective professional development programs for enhancing educators' skills in formative assessment. *Handbook of formative assessment*, 251-276.
- Suherman, E. (2003). Strategi pembelajaran matematika kontemporer. *Bandung: Jica*.
- Tsou, W. (2005). Improving speaking skills through instruction in oral classroom participation. *Foreign Language Annals*, 38(1), 46-55.
- Tsui, C.-J. (1992). English Business Communication Skills Training Needs of Non-Native English-Speaking Managers: A Case in Taiwan. *Bulletin of the Association for Business Communication*, 55(1), 40-41.
- Tudge, J., & Rogoff, B. (1999). Peer influences on cognitive development: Piagetian and Vygotskian perspectives. *Lev Vygotsky: critical assessments*, 3, 32-56.
- Turner, D. W. (2010). Qualitative interview design: A practical guide for novice investigators. *The qualitative report*, 15(3), 754-760.
- Ur, P. (2014). Where do we go from here? Method and pedagogy in language teaching. *ExELL*, 2(1), 3-11.
- VanLehn, K., Siler, S., Murray, C., Yamauchi, T., & Baggett, W. B. (2003). Why do only some events cause learning during human tutoring? *Cognition and Instruction*, 21(3), 209-249.

- Vygotsky, L. S. (1980). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*: Harvard university press.
- Wette, R., & Furneaux, C. (2018). The academic discourse socialisation challenges and coping strategies of international graduate students entering English-medium universities. *System*, 78, 186-200.
- White, L., Spada, N., Lightbown, P. M., & Ranta, L. (1991). Input enhancement and L2 question formation. *Applied linguistics*, 12(4), 416-432.
- William, D., & Thompson, M. (2017). Integrating assessment with learning: What will it take to make it work? *The future of assessment* (pp. 53-82): Routledge.
- Wylie, E. C., & Lyon, C. J. (2015). The fidelity of formative assessment implementation: Issues of breadth and quality. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 22(1), 140-160.
- Xinhua, Z. (2008). Is Syntactic Maturity a Reliable Measurement to Investigate the Relationship Between English Speaking and Writing? *The Asian EFL Journal Quarterly March 2008 Volume 10, Issue, 10(1)*, 133.
- Zghyer, R. N. A. (2014). *Arab students' difficulties with English writing during their transition to the United States: An exploratory study*: Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.
- Zhang, Y., & Mi, Y. (2010). Another look at the language difficulties of international students. *Journal of Studies in international Education*, 14(4), 371-388.



## **Speaking Difficulties and Strategy Use of EMI Undergraduates in Mainland China**

**Ying Zhou and Juming Shen**

*Xi'an Jiaotong – Liverpool University*

### **Bio-profiles:**

**Ying Zhou** is an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) Language Lecturer at School of Languages of Xi'an Jiaotong - Liverpool University (XJTLU). She has been teaching EAP in higher education institutions for over seven years and is an Ed.D. candidate at University of Bath. Email: [ying.zhou@xjtlu.edu.cn](mailto:ying.zhou@xjtlu.edu.cn)

**Juming Shen** is a Lecturer of Educational Management at XJTLU and an experienced researcher in the fields of linguistics and higher education. He holds a Ph.D. in Higher Education from Queensland University of Technology. At present, he is designated as a director of China Association of EAP, and associate editor of Journal of Language and Semiotic Studies as well as International Journal of English for Academic Purposes. Email: [juming.shen@xjtlu.edu.cn](mailto:juming.shen@xjtlu.edu.cn)

### **Abstract**

This study employed a mixed-methods design to investigate the speaking difficulties and strategy use of Chinese undergraduates in an English-medium instruction (EMI) context. The design of the study was driven by both theoretical and methodological gaps in the researched area, i.e. a theoretical gap of EMI students' speaking difficulties and strategy choice in mainland China, and an absence of a valid quantitative instrument for assessing these students' speaking strategy use. The qualitative research findings showed that students faced four main types of speaking difficulties in EMI programmes: linguistic obstacles, negative affect, inadequate academic English speaking skills, and cognitive speech processing difficulties. Moreover, quantitative results from the established questionnaire showed that the deployed speaking strategies could be categorised as social affective strategies, compensation strategies, cognitive self-practice strategies, and expression-related problem-solving strategies. Further

inferential statistical analysis revealed that (a) the influence of gender on the strategy use was minor, (b) senior students showed a declining tendency in the use of social affective strategies, and (c) the frequency of speaking strategy use correlated positively with the students' self-perceived English speaking level. Based on these findings, pedagogical implications for EMI instructors and English language practitioners were also provided.

**Keywords:** *English-medium instruction (EMI), speaking difficulties, speaking strategies, Chinese undergraduates*

## **Introduction**

The term *English-medium instruction (EMI)* is defined as the “use of the English language to teach academic subjects (other than English itself) in countries or jurisdictions where the first language of the majority of the population is not English” (Macaro et al., 2018). As English develops into a lingua franca, adopting EMI in higher education (HE) has become considerably essential for universities to respond to educational internationalisation and globalisation. In China, the expansion of EMI programmes generally aims to achieve two goals: to enhance students' professional competence, and simultaneously, to improve their English language proficiency (Li, 2017; Xu, 2017); between which, as the British Council reports, “to learn/improve English” has been rated by Chinese EMI students as the top one reason to enrol in EMI programmes (Galloway, Kriukow & Numajiri, 2017, p.18). Surprisingly, Yang's (2017) study in an EMI programme in China revealed that approximately one-third of the research participants believed that their English language proficiency did not improve. In addition to this unexpected students' perception, many Chinese EMI instructors attributed students' ineffective learning to their insufficient English language competence (Galloway, Kriukow & Numajiri, 2017; Yang, 2017). Since the English language proficiency has been proven as a significant predictor of students' success in EMI (Rose et al., 2019; Gheyathaldin & Shishakly, 2020), to provide systematic and ongoing institutional language support has been proposed by many researchers (e.g. Soruç & Griffiths, 2018).

Nevertheless, there is a lack of attention to what students can do on language learning in EMI settings. To achieve success of second language acquisition, students can proactively deploy effective language learner strategies (Lai, 2009; Oxford, 2003). So far, few studies have investigated EMI students' strategies of English language learning. Since many researchers (e.g. Cohen, 2014; Griffiths, 2018) have stressed that a new learning context can call for students' modification of their past strategies, the change from a source language dominate



EFL (English as a Foreign Language) context to a target language dominate EMI context may lead to students' different choices of strategic devices. Hence, EMI language learners' strategy use becomes a significant topic for exploration.

This study only examines the EMI learners' speaking strategy use due to the paucity of studies in this subsystem. Most studies in the field of language learner strategies seek to understand students' general strategy choice through the most frequently used questionnaire - Oxford's (1990) Strategy Inventory of Language Learning, but little is known about its subsystems such as strategies for speaking (Griffiths, 2018; Pawlak & Oxford, 2018). The fact that learners can deploy different strategic devices depending on the learning focus (e.g. listening or speaking) should not be overlooked by strategy researchers (Lu & Liu, 2015; Nakatani, 2006). In addition, there is a lack of research instruments for measuring EMI students' speaking strategy use as the existing ones are mainly developed in EFL contexts. More importantly, Chinese students' great fear of English speaking (Wong, Dellaportas & Cooper, 2018) and inadequate oral communication proficiency make speaking strategy a significant area for study. This weakness has been reflected in Chinese IELTS test-takers' speaking results, with the average score ranking at the bottom among examinees from all of the world (IELTS, 2019). Thus, the aforementioned theoretical, methodological and practical issues all drive the needs of investigating speaking difficulties and strategy use of Chinese EMI students.

## **Literature review**

### **Definition and classifications of language learner strategies**

Though the strategy researchers have not yet reached a consensus on the definition of language learner strategies, there are four main commonly-agreed features of the notion: learner strategies must be consciously chosen; they appear in clusters rather than isolation; they have the potential for leading to learning; they are goal-directed (Cohen, 2014; Griffiths, 2018; Macaro, 2006). This study follows Cohen's (2014, p.7) definition of language learner strategies - "thoughts and actions, consciously chosen and operationalised by language learners, to assist them in carrying out a multiplicity of tasks from the very onset of learning to the most advanced levels of target-language performance" due to its comprehensiveness in covering the core features. To depict a clearer picture, learner strategies have been generally classified in three ways: (a) language learning strategies (learning-oriented) and language use strategies (practice-oriented) (Cohen, 2010; Griffiths, 2018), (b) by the skill area, i.e. listening, reading, writing, speaking, vocabulary, grammar, and translation (Cohen, 2010, 2014), and (c) by functions,

such as memory, cognitive, compensation, metacognitive, social, and affective strategies (Oxford, 1990, 2011). Though with these classifications, it is still difficult to maintain a clear-cut of the categorisation of each strategy type. For example, it seems obvious that speaking strategies should be categorised under the skill area. However, they can also be classified as language use strategies as a productive skill (e.g. Chou, 2018), or can be categorised by functions (e.g. Kawai, 2008; Prabawa, 2016). Given these complications, the next part focuses on analysing the term speaking strategies in detail.

### **Definition and classifications of speaking strategies**

By now, very few studies have attempted to provide a clear definition of speaking strategies as many scholars treat speaking strategies and communication strategies as synonyms (e.g. Larenas, 2011; Liu, 2018) and simply follow the definition of the latter. These two types of strategies are to some extent overlapped; however, communication strategies cover a broader scope including “listening, speaking, and pragmatics” (Oxford, 2017, p.296), whereas speaking strategies are more of speaking-related strategies (Kawai, 2008) and not so much concerned with the listening domain. More importantly, another distinction between these two notions lies in the adoption of different theoretical perspectives. Communication strategies mainly follow Tarone’s (1981) interactional view (i.e. dialogic interaction between speakers and negotiation of meaning), while speaking strategies are more related to Færch and Kasper’s (1984) psycholinguistic view (i.e. speaking-related problems and solutions) and should include both monologic and dialogic problem-solving methods (Cohen, 2010). The importance of monologic strategies is manifested in Levelt’s (1989) three-step speech processing model: conceptualization (determine what to say), formulation (transform the conceptualised ideas into linguistic forms), and articulation (retrieve speech chunks and produce the message), and the dialogic dimension acknowledges the social nature of learning and communication (Chang & Liu, 2016). Therefore, informed by Cohen’s (2014) definition of language learner strategies and following a psycholinguistic view, in this study, the term *speaking strategies* is defined as the monologic and dialogical thoughts and actions that are consciously selected and operationalised by target language speakers to overcome their speaking difficulties and improve speaking proficiencies.

In terms of the classifications of speaking strategies, previous studies presented two main approaches. At a dialogic level only, Nakatani (2006) categorised oral communication strategies into eight factors: “social affective strategies, fluency-oriented strategies, negotiation for meaning while speaking strategies, accuracy-oriented strategies, message reduction and

alteration strategies, nonverbal strategies while speaking, message abandonment strategies, attempt to think in English strategies” (p. 155-156). The other classification is Cohen’s (2010) speaking strategy use which incorporates both monologic and dialogic strategic devices, i.e., devices for practising speaking, engaging in conversations, and coping with word- or expression- related problems. Apparently, the distinction of these two classifications lies in the divergence of the theoretical perspectives, either interactionally or psycholinguistically.

### **Chinese undergraduates’ English speaking difficulties and strategy use**

Empirical studies of speaking problems and strategy choice among Chinese tertiary students in mainland China differ in the research contexts: EFL and EMI. For Chinese EFL students, Gan (2013) comprehensively examined five aspects of the speaking difficulties, namely, linguistic obstacles, speech processing difficulties (Levelt, 1989), affordance of English-speaking opportunities, academic and conversational skills, and negative affect by employing a theory-based 5-point Likert scale questionnaire. Gan’s (2013) findings showed that linguistic difficulties and limited access to speaking opportunities were the two foremost issues encountered by Chinese EFL learners. The observed linguistic difficulties included students’ limited knowledge in lexis, grammar, and phonology (Gan, 2013), which were believed as the three key components of speaking competence (Biber, 2007). As for the negative affect, it could be resulted from the anxieties provoked by speaking a foreign language (Horwitz, 2016) and speaking in public activities (Dwyer & Davidson, 2012). To cope with the difficulties, previous studies (e.g. Liu, 2018; Zhang & Liu, 2013), through the use of Nakatani’s (2006) Oral Communication Strategy Inventory, revealed that high-proficient Chinese EFL undergraduates tended to deploy effective speaking strategies such as fluency-oriented, meaning-negotiating, and social affective strategies more often than their low-proficient counterparts, whereas low-proficient students were more likely to use compensation strategies. Nevertheless, there were scholars (e.g. Griffiths, 2018; Pietrzykowska, 2014) holding positive attitudes towards the use of compensation strategies due to their effectiveness in communication.

In EMI contexts, Chou (2018) focused on investigating Taiwanese students’ linguistic challenges (i.e. pronunciation, generic and specific vocabulary, and grammar) and other challenges including fluency, communicating with sufficient subject-specific information, and providing appropriate responses to interlocutors. Some of these difficulties highlighted the characteristics of an EMI context such as the inevitable use of technical terms and professional content information. Adopting Cohen and Weaver’s (2006) survey of Speaking Strategy Use,

the strategies employed by the Taiwanese EMI undergraduates were concluded as paraphrasing, rehearsal, and borrowing (Chou, 2018). One limitation of Chou's study is that the reported strategies appear to be an incomprehensive coverage of students' strategy choice, which could be a result of using an existing questionnaire that is inappropriate for the research context.

The above studies all have made great contributions to their researched contexts; however, the first research gap observed here is the dearth of studies on speaking difficulties and strategy choice among EMI undergraduates in mainland China.

### **Existing instruments of speaking strategies**

Closed questionnaires are most frequently used when measuring learners' speaking strategy use. Regardless of the context, many studies (e.g. Chou, 2018; Larenas, 2011; Liu, 2018) investigated the issue by simply adopting the two existing questionnaires - Speaking Strategy Use (Cohen & Weaver, 2006) and Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (Nakatani, 2006). Though well-established, these two surveys were both developed in EFL contexts; for example, Nakatani's (2006) Inventory was developed in a Japanese EFL context. The application of these surveys into an EMI context can threaten the content validity since there is no guarantee that they can cover the new domain fairly and comprehensively (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). Not only that, applying them into a different socio-cultural group can be problematic too as different ethnical groups can make drastically divergent strategic choice (Cohen, 2014; Hsieh, 2014). Hence, the second research gap concluded here is the lack of appropriate quantitative instrument that can reliably measure the speaking strategies deployed by the EMI undergraduates in mainland China.

### **Research questions**

The above literature review suggests two research gaps: a theoretical gap of EMI students' speaking difficulties and strategy choice in mainland China, and the absence of a valid quantitative instrument for assessing these students' speaking strategy use. This study aims to fill in these theoretical and methodological gaps, and to provide pedagogical implications for the research context or even beyond. As one initial attempt to explore this area in mainland China, this study focuses on obtaining a general and broad picture of the students' speaking difficulties and strategy choice in EMI programmes by answering the following research questions:

1. What speaking difficulties do Chinese undergraduate students face in EMI programmes?

2. What speaking strategies do Chinese undergraduate students use in EMI programmes?
3. Does the students' speaking strategy use differ by gender and grade?
4. Do the students' speaking strategy use and their self-perceived speaking level correlate?

## **Methodology**

### **Research design and methods**

This research employed a mixed-methods exploratory sequential design (i.e. Qual → QUAN), with the primary intent of developing and applying the quantitative instrument, and

testing the generalisability of the qualitative results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The key advantages of developing a quantitative instrument based on the qualitative results include its closer relevance to a particular group of participants, increased validity for measuring certain features among the participants in a specific social and cultural setting (ibid), and higher reliability due to the methods triangulation (Sarantakos, 2013). The research methods chosen for collecting the qualitative data and quantitative data were open-ended questionnaires and closed questionnaires respectively. Open-ended questionnaires were used at the initial exploratory stage for its effectiveness of encouraging free expressions (Sarantakos, 2013), reducing the respondents' bias (Bryman, 2016) and obtaining a broad picture (Macaro, 2006). Also, findings from the open-ended questions can be useful for generating items for the closed questionnaires (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). As for the quantitative stage, closed questionnaires are used mainly because of its abilities to generate quantitative data, test the generalisability of the qualitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018), and allow accurate comparisons through statistical analysis (Sarantakos, 2013).

Undeniably, there are limitations in using questionnaires. One main problem is that the participants may fail to recall the strategies they have chosen (Cohen & Macaro, 2007). To ease this concern, Cohen and Macaro (2007) recommended that specific task types can be mentioned to activate the participants' memory. Thus, several types of commonly used speaking activities in EMI classrooms such as discussions, presentations, and tutorials were provided as examples in the open-ended questionnaire forms in order to trigger the participants' recall of their encountered difficulties and strategy use. Another possible issue is that participants may not fully understand the questionnaire items; therefore, the open-ended and closed questionnaires were both written in English and Chinese to facilitate the participants' interpretations.

## Participants and sampling

The participants were all undergraduates recruited from a Sino-foreign joint university in mainland China where English is the official working language. Ethical approval was obtained from the researched institution and consent forms were collected from all the research participants before data collection. To reach objective generalisations of the research findings, individuals involved in the qualitative stage need to be different from those in the quantitative stage (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This sampling triangulation can contribute to the validity, reliability, and unity of the study (Sarantakos, 2013). Hence, two different groups of research participants were recruited in this study.

In the qualitative stage, as purposeful sampling is suggested for collecting rich data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018), 80 students were thus recruited across different gender, grades, self-perceived speaking levels, and disciplines (see Table 1). For the qualitative sample size, there is no strict theoretical guideline. The data collection process stops when reaching the saturation point, which means any additional data simply repeats what the previous informants have already reported (Dörnyei, 2007).

**Table 1. Demographic information at the qualitative stage**

	Gender		Grade				Self-perceived English speaking level			Disciplinary cluster			
	Male	Female	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Low	Intermediate	High	Business	Architecture	Engineering	Others
No of participants	18	62	20	22	20	18	14	63	3	31	25	12	12

At the quantitative stage, convenience sampling had to be adopted to achieve a large enough sample size. To ensure the rigour of the quantitative data, a large sample size is required as this enables greater reliability (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018; McKinley & Rose, 2020), reduce sampling errors and provide more sophisticated statistical power (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). A suggested sample size for questionnaire surveys is that the ratio between the number of participants and the questionnaire items has to meet the threshold of 10:1 (Kline, 2011). Though there were 462 returns on 34 items, 404 of them were considered as valid after filtering the responses by the duration of completion (over 90 seconds due to the length of the

questionnaire) and the willingness to participate. Table 2 displays the demographic information.

**Table 2. Demographic information at the quantitative stage**

	Gender		Grade				Self-perceived English speaking level			Disciplinary cluster			
	Male	Female	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Low	Intermediate	High	Business	Architecture	Maths	Other
No of participants	141	263	150	13	59	61	10	272	27	144	73	70	117
				4			5						

### Instruments

At the qualitative stage, a two-question open-ended questionnaire was designed to explore the possible speaking difficulties and strategy use. As expert reviewing and piloting are both the suggested procedures for content validity check (DeVellis, 2012; Dörnyei, 2007), the questionnaire was first reviewed by two experienced Chinese researchers and two English native speaking researchers, and then piloted with a group of 22 students to identify any possible confusions or misunderstanding. After making minor changes of the wording, the questionnaire was then finalised and distributed to a different group of 80 students.

In the quantitative stage, a closed questionnaire of speaking strategies was developed based on the open-ended questionnaire data. Initially, the first author identified 40 items for the questionnaire construction. After being peer review, only 34 were considered as non-overlapped strategies, reaching an inter-rater agreement level of 85%. The 34 items were agreed after discussion and negotiation and used for the questionnaire writing. To extract the participants' self-perceptions, a six-point Likert-scale (1=Never true of me; 2=Untrue of me; 3=Generally untrue of me; 4=Generally true of me; 5=True of me; 6=Always true of me) was provided for them to rate the extent the items reflect their strategic choice. A six-point scale system was chosen as a large scale increases the data reliability (Krosnick & Presser, 2010), and avoids the participants' tendency of choosing the mid-point (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). Before administrating the closed questionnaire to a large group of research participants, it was reviewed by another four experienced researchers and piloted with around 30 students in terms of the instructions, item wording, sequencing, and layout. Major changes included the

English wording of some items and the clarity of the instructions. The finalised questionnaire with 34 items was then used for the large-scale quantitative data collection with a completely different group of research participants.

## **Data analysis**

Different methods were used to analyse different data types. The qualitative data about speaking difficulties was transcribed, translated verbatim if necessary, and entered into Nvivo for analysis. The reoccurring patterns were coded and merged into themes to categorise the speaking difficulties and strategy use. To ensure the reliability, the second author coded part of the data based on the first author's coding scheme. After comparing the codes, the inter-coder agreement reached 93%. A discussion was then carried out to negotiate the differences, and after reaching an agreement, the author continued with the coding and analysis.

For the closed questionnaire data, the item ratings were analysed through SPSS. First, exploratory factor analysis was conducted to understand the structure of the variables and to reduce the dimensions to a manageable size (Field, 2009). Each extracted factor was then checked by Cronbach's alpha coefficient regarding its internal consistency. Afterwards, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was run to ensure there was no normally distributed data so that they were suitable for non-parametric tests, e.g. medians, Mann-Whitney U, Kruskal-Wallis H tests of differences, and Spearman's rho test of correlations (Field, 2009; Griffiths, 2018).

## **Results**

### **Qualitative results**

To answer the first research question "What speaking difficulties do Chinese undergraduate students face in EMI programmes?", the coded open-ended questionnaire data were merged into four main themes, namely, linguistic obstacles, negative affect, inadequate academic oral English skills, and speech processing difficulties. The most representative quotes were provided as evidence to support the identifications of these themes.

The linguistic challenges in EMI speaking activities appeared to be a salient difficulty faced by the research participants. Concerns were expressed towards vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. In terms of vocabulary, the major challenge reported was about the use of technical words in academic speaking activities. For example, a Year 2 (Y2) student commented on her "inadequate amount of technical words", and another nine participants ranging from Y1 to Y3 reported their difficulties in using appropriate technical words. As for grammar use, opposite attitudes were held as a Y1 student mentioned that "I paid too much



attention to grammar, which affected speech fluency”, whereas a Y4 student wrote that “I didn’t pay much attention to grammar so that mistakes frequently occurred”. Thirdly, pronunciation difficulties were pointed out by five research participants across Y2 to Y4. For instance, one Y2 student stated that “I couldn’t pronounce difficult words accurately”, and a Y3 student mentioned the difficulty of pronouncing “technical words” in particular. Thus, these linguistic obstacles occurred to be the prominent challenges for Chinese EMI undergraduates.

Affective problems were the second reoccurring theme across the four grades of research participants. The quotes “I feared to communicate with others” (Y1), “I was afraid of embarrassment” (Y1), “I felt nervous” (Y3), “I lacked passion to participate” (Y2), “I worried about making mistakes” (Y4), and “I was unwilling to speak English with Chinese classmates” (Y4) all indicated that these students encounter enormous affective difficulties in EMI speaking activities.

Another prominent theme was germane to the lack of academic oral English skills, especially for presentations and group discussions. For instance, a Y2 student stated that “My presentations were not delivered fluently”, and a Y4 student expressed concerns about the over-preparation of presentations as they “didn’t sound natural but more like reciting”. As for group discussions, the main difficulties included “The discussion atmosphere was inactive” (Y1/3/4), “There was a mixture of students at different (speaking) levels” (Y1), “Teammates preferred to use Chinese” (Y3), and “When there were foreign classmates, sometimes there were unnecessary misunderstandings” (Y2).

The last type of problems identified was speech processing difficulties, or in other words, the dynamic cognitive process involved in oral English production. The issues pointed out by the participants included “I lacked thoughts” (Y4), “I spent much time thinking what and how to say” (Y1), “I thought in Chinese and then translated into English” (Y1), “I was slow in forming the language” (Y3). These all indicated the complexity of the cognitive process when the students attempted to participate in academic speaking activities.

To answer the second research question “What speaking strategies do Chinese undergraduate students use in EMI programmes?”, though there were 34 strategies extracted from the open-ended questionnaires, the generalisability of these items was yet to be verified by the quantitative results as section 4.2 shows.

## **Quantitative results**

### **Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and reliability**

A principal component analysis with Varimax rotations was performed to discover

possible components and examine the construct validity of the 34-item questionnaire. Varimax rotation was chosen as it is an orthogonal rotation method that “attempts to maximize the dispersion of loadings within factors” and generates more interpretable independent factors (Field, 2009, p. 644). Initially, with eigenvalues at greater than 1.0, there were eight factors extracted with the factor loadings being set at 0.4 or above. In order to ensure the reliability of each factor (i.e. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient > .7) (George & Mallery, 2011), only 18 items (see Appendix A) in the first four factors were tested as valid and reliable for measuring Chinese EMI undergraduates’ speaking strategy use. Table 3 shows the rotated component matrix and the results of the internal consistency reliability of each factor. Based on the item contents and informed by the past theories, the four factors were labelled as social affective strategies, compensation strategies, cognitive self-practice strategies, and expression-related problem-solving strategies. The four components accounted for 57.3% of the variance, signalling the proportion of variance explained by these factors (Field, 2009). The KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy was .888, indicating the adequacy of the sample size for carrying out EFA. In addition, the result of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity at .000 showed that these data were highly significant and appropriate for factor analysis (ibid).

**Table 3. EFA results and factor reliability**

<b>Rotated Component Matrix<sup>a</sup></b>						
<b>Factor</b>	<b>Item</b>	<b>Factor loading</b>				<b>Reliability</b>
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	
Social affective strategies	SA1	.731				0.815
	SA2	.768				
	SA3	.586				
	SA4	.702				
	SA5	.718				
Compensation strategies	Com1		.726			0.775
	Com2		.801			
	Com3		.791			
	Com4		.625			
	Com5		.406			
Cognitive self-	CS1			.704		0.712

practice strategies	CS2	.658	
	CS3	.782	
	CS4	.564	
Expression- related problem- solving strategies	EL1	.631	0.710
	EL2	.619	
	EL3	.714	
	EL4	.660	

### Normality of distribution and medians

Ratings of these 18 items were then used for both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test of normality was performed on the 18 items with a result of  $p = .000$  for each item, suggesting the appropriateness of using non-parametric analysis (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018). In terms of medians, four items received median ratings at 5, eleven items at 4, and three items at 3 (see Table 4). The following item numbers all correspond with the questionnaire items in Appendix A.

**Table 4. Overall median ratings**

<b>Social affective strategies</b>						
Item		1	2	3	4	5
N	Valid	404	404	404	404	404
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Median		4.00	4.00	3.00	4.00	4.00
<b>Compensation strategies</b>						
Item		6	7	8	9	10
N	Valid	404	404	404	404	404
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Median		5.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	4.00
<b>Cognitive self-practice strategies</b>						
Item		11	12	13	14	
N	Valid	404	404	404	404	
	Missing	0	0	0	0	
Median		4.00	4.00	3.00	3.00	

<b>Expression-related problem-solving strategies</b>					
Item		15	16	17	18
N	Valid	404	404	404	404
	Missing	0	0	0	0
Median		4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00

*Note.* 1=Never true of me; 2=Untrue of me; 3=Generally untrue of me; 4=Generally true of me; 5=True of me; 6=Always true of me.

### **Differences**

Two different tests were run to determine the differences in speaking strategy use by gender and grade. Firstly, Mann-Whitney test, a nonparametric test of difference for two independent groups, was conducted to discover any differences by gender. Among the 18 items, only two cognitive self-practice items were found significantly different ( $p < 0.05$ ) as the female respondents rated them much higher than the males (see Table 5).

**Table 5. Significant differences according to gender**

<b>Cognitive self-practice strategies</b>	<b>Item 13</b>	<b>Item 14</b>
Mann-Whitney U	15804.000	15704.000
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	.008
Mean rank (Male)	183.09	182.38
Mean rank (Female)	212.91	213.29

For several independent variables, Kruskal-Wallis test was conducted to uncover any differences by grade. In total, six items (mostly under social affective strategies) were found significantly different ( $p < 0.05$ ) as generally the higher the year of study is, the less frequent they use these strategies (see Table 6).

**Table 6. Significant differences according to grade**

Item	Social affective strategies				Compensation strategies	Cognitive self-practice strategies
	Item 2	Item 3	Item 4	Item 5	Item 9	Item 12
Kruskal-Wallis H	49.897	28.244	15.850	16.802	16.191	8.661
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.000	.001	.001	.001	.034
Mean rank (Year 1)	245.61	236.47	218.27	231.40	227.77	213.14
Mean rank (Year 2)	198.38	195.56	214.34	192.43	197.60	209.82
Mean rank (Year 3)	175.39	185.65	159.23	180.23	184.22	197.03
Mean rank (Year 4)	131.75	150.52	179.57	175.09	168.80	165.55

**Correlations**

Spearman's rho test of correlations was conducted to explore whether there was a relationship between the participants' self-perceived speaking level (i.e. low, intermediate, high) and their speaking strategy use. 17 out of 18 items (excluding Item 7) showed significantly ( $p < 0.05$ ) positive relations to the students' self-perceived speaking proficiency (see Table 7).

**Table 7. Positive correlations to students' self-perceived speaking level**

Factor	Item	Correlation Coefficient	Significance ( $p$ )
Social affective strategies	1	.408**	.000
	2	.275**	.000
	3	.297**	.000
	4	.434**	.000
	5	.334**	.000
Compensation strategies	6	.211**	.000
	8	.159**	.001
	9	.168**	.001
	10	.121*	.015
Cognitive	11	.269**	.000

self-practice	12	.279**	.000
strategies	13	.174**	.000
	14	.136**	.006
Expression-	15	.208**	.000
related	16	.206**	.000
problem-	17	.260**	.000
solving	18	.221**	.000
strategies			

Note: \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

## Discussions

### Speaking difficulties

The four main speaking difficulties identified in this study were mostly consistent with those found in Chinese EFL contexts (Gan, 2013). One main difference is that Gan's (2013) study highlighted the limited access to speaking opportunities as a salient barrier for Chinese EFL students. Conversely, none of the EMI research participants reported this as a significant difficulty, which leads to a possible inference that the affordance of English-speaking opportunities in an EMI setting is to some extent, adequate.

One of the most pressing speaking difficulties faced by the Chinese EMI students seemed to be the linguistic obstacles, especially relative to the three core elements of speaking skills - lexis, phonology, and grammar. Recent EMI studies (e.g. Goh, 2013; Macaro, 2018) have paid attention to lexis due to the complexity of vocabulary in EMI classrooms. According to Macaro's (2018, p. 351) analysis, there are at least three types of vocabulary used in an EMI lesson, namely, "technical terms, general academic vocabulary, and everyday talk". This explains why the challenges of using and pronouncing words, primarily technical words, were the main recurring sub-themes under the category of linguistic obstacles. In addition, like Chinese EFL students (Gan, 2013), grammar use was reported as part of the linguistic challenges. The dilemmatic situation faced by these students was the choice between grammatical accuracy and speech fluency as it could be very challenging for them to maintain both concurrently. In brief, insufficient language knowledge was viewed by the participants as a major speaking obstacle.

Another primary speaking difficulty associated with the negative affect that could occur during the academic speaking activities. This research finding chimes with the affective

speaking difficulties reported by Turkish EMI undergraduates (Soruç & Griffiths, 2018). The Chinese EMI students' stated fear, embarrassment, nervousness, and unwillingness all provided empirical evidence to further confirm the common perception that speaking a foreign language is an anxiety-provoking skill (Horwitz, 2016). This foreign language speaking anxiety could be intensified in an EMI context as Biber (2007) pointed out that academic speaking activities required a much deeper degree of language knowledge than what was needed for daily life conversations. Not only that, there could be public speaking anxieties (Dwyer & Davidson, 2012) caused by the constant needs of public speaking in EMI programmes, such as answering questions in large-room lectures, participating in group discussions, and delivering presentations. Since higher levels of speaking anxiety could result in lower scores in conversational tasks (Quinto & Macayan, 2020), effective pedagogical actions need to be taken.

Thirdly, the main concerns about the insufficient academic oral English skills were germane to two types of speaking activities – presentations and group discussions. For presentations, the lack of naturalness was a vital issue mentioned. Pedagogically, more practice opportunities and more instructions on presentation skills probably can enhance learners' performance. Furthermore, problems of group discussions appeared to be more complicated. The great group dynamics caused by team members' different personalities, language proficiencies, and cultural background could lead to ineffective group discussions, echoing the findings of another EMI study in China (Yang, 2017). For one thing, group discussions need to be designed with cautions as it demands highly towards the instructors' classroom management skills (Dalton-Puffer, 2011). For another, EMI students should develop a keen awareness that participating in classroom discussions and disciplinary socialisation are essential for improving their academic conversational English skills (Yang, 2017).

The fourth type of speaking difficulty was about the challenges of speech processing. The reported issues fit into Levelt's (1989) three-step speech production model: conceptualization, formulation, and articulation. Speech processing difficulties in stages of formulation and articulation were emphasised by Chinese EFL students (Gan, 2013); whereas for EMI students, empirical data in this study clearly demonstrated that they also faced tremendous conceptualizing problems, which could be caused by the higher cognitive demand when participating in academic speaking activities. Thus, EMI instructors need to be aware of these challenges and provide corresponding pedagogical support to the students in all the three stages.

## Speaking strategies

The factor analysis showed that the Chinese EMI students adopted a variety of monologic and dialogic speaking strategies. The median scores revealed that the research participants employed most of 18 speaking strategies in their EMI study. Nevertheless, three items appeared to be less popular as they received the median rating of 3, i.e. one social affective strategy (Item 3) and two cognitive self-practice strategies (Items 13 and 14). In contrast, compensation strategies, with four out of five items being rated at 5 (True of me), were the most frequently used type of speaking strategies among the all (see Table 4). Though past literature (Liu, 2018; Nakatani, 2006) claimed that compensation strategies were more frequently used by low-proficient students, it is believed that these strategies can effectively convey a message, facilitate interactions (Griffiths, 2018), and improve speaking skills (Pietrzykowska, 2014). Therefore, it can be asserted here that students in an EMI context should not be discouraged from using compensatory strategies because of the great speaking challenges they are facing. Being able to use available linguistic resources to express one's ideas clearly and maintain speech flow should be prioritised in academic oral activities.

The inferential statistics demonstrated some statistical differences by gender and grade. In terms of gender, two cognitive self-practice strategic devices (Items 13 and 14) showed statistical significance with females using them more frequently (see Table 5). Interestingly, these were two of the unpopular strategies at the median of 3. One reason could be that female students are generally more motivated to learn in EMI (Macaro & Akincioglu, 2017) and more enthusiastic about EMI (Hengsadekul, Koul & Kaewkuekool, 2014) than their male counterparts. Also, females are acknowledged as more hardworking and more disciplined when it comes to self-study activities (Griffiths, 2018). The results of this study are aligned with the past theory (Nyikos, 2008) that the influence of sex on strategy choice tends to be slight as there are only a small number of statistically significant cases.

This study also found that students at different grades used certain speaking strategies significantly different, especially the social affective strategies (see Table 6). Very surprisingly, opposite to what was found previously (e.g. Griffiths, 2018; Soruç, Dinler & Griffiths, 2018), students at higher grades, especially the fourth graders, tended to use most of the social affective strategies considerably less frequently than the freshmen and sophomores, which means the Year Four participants were less enthusiastic and less active when socialising and communicating with others. According to Macaro and Akincioglu (2017), this may be because the senior EMI students become more realistic about the opportunities that EMI can bring for their English language proficiency, and their enthusiasm towards EMI declines as the



programmes progress. Other possible reasons could be related to specific contextual and situational factors in the researched context. The Year One participants in the university only studied their subject-specific knowledge at a fundamental and introductory level. They were assisted with language support through English for Academic Purposes (EAP), whereas the Year Four students, with no extra language support, had to engage in the deeper learning of their disciplinary subjects and the completion of the final year projects. All the pressure could lead to the fourth graders' limited demonstration of social behaviours. More follow-up studies could be conducted to investigate this reduced use of social affective strategies among higher graders.

At last, almost all items were found to have positive correlations with the students' self-perceived English speaking level, except for one less effective compensation strategy (Item 7) (see Table 7). Since the correlational test does not signal any cause-and-effect relations, the statistical significance could be because the high-proficient learners utilise the effective speaking strategies more frequently than the low-proficient ones, as what was evidenced in the studies of communication strategies (Nakatani, 2006; Nakatani & Goh, 2007). Or another possibility is that more frequent use of the speaking strategies could lead to more confidence about one own's speaking proficiency. Likewise, Cohen (2014) stated that frequent use of language learner strategies can compensate for the deficits of language proficiencies. Undeniably, a possible criticism here is that the reported speaking proficiencies were dependent on the participants' self-evaluation (Young, 2005) instead of any standardised testing. To increase the data reliability, the descriptions of the three speaking levels (adapted from Common European Framework of Reference for Languages A2, B2, and C1 levels) were provided in the distributed questionnaires of this study to facilitate a more accurate self-assessment.

## **Conclusion**

The present study investigated the speaking difficulties faced by Chinese EMI undergraduates, and more importantly, the strategies employed by these students to cope with these difficulties and improve their speaking proficiencies. Based on the findings from the preliminary qualitative stage, the study successfully developed a four-factor questionnaire of speaking strategy use that is appropriate for surveying Chinese EMI undergraduates. The main findings were:

- 1) The Chinese EMI undergraduates faced four main types of speaking difficulties: linguistic obstacles, negative affect, inadequate academic English speaking skills, and cognitive

speech processing difficulties.

- 2) The Chinese EMI undergraduates mainly employed four types of speaking strategies: social affective strategies, compensation strategies, cognitive self-practice strategies, and expression-related problem-solving strategies.
- 3) Gender only had a minor impact on the frequency of speaking strategy use.
- 4) Students at higher grades showed a statistically significant declining tendency in the use of social affective speaking strategies.
- 5) There was a positive correlation between the frequency of speaking strategy use and the students' self-perceived English speaking level.

It is noticeable that there are several limitations in the study. The first issue is that the developed four-factor questionnaire may need to be further tested and refined through confirmatory factor analysis. Also, as this research was conducted in one specific EMI context in mainland China, the results could differ in other EMI contexts where the contextual and situational environment is drastically different from the research site of this study. Additionally, other exploratory research methods such as interviews or focus groups could have been adopted as complementary methods in the preliminary qualitative stage to obtain richer data. Therefore, though this research has revealed many valuable findings, they are yet to be verified and further explored by more future studies.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

Based on the research findings, it is suggested that teachers need to be aware of the speaking difficulties that the Chinese EMI students are facing and try to take actions to resolve the problems. For instance, linguistic knowledge and skills for academic speaking should be reinforced in language support programmes such as EAP or English for Specific Purposes. Moreover, considering the negative emotions and speech processing difficulties in academic speaking, it is important for the instructors to be patient and to create a supportive, friendly, and encouraging teaching and learning atmosphere (Liu, 2018).

Secondly, students could be taught with the speaking strategies both implicitly and explicitly (Zhang & Liu, 2013), and gradually develop an understanding of what strategies could help improve their speaking performance (Liu, 2018). Since previous empirical studies have indicated the effectiveness of strategy-based instructions in improving language learners' oral proficiencies (Griffiths, 2018; Syarifudin, 2019) and willingness to communicate (Vafadar & Foo, 2020), the EMI or language instructors can design some speaking materials to facilitate

the Chinese students' use of the effective speaking strategies.

At last, extra attention needs to be given to the senior EMI students. Perhaps the importance of participating in sociocultural engagement and disciplinary socialisation (Yang, 2017) need to be re-emphasised with them. Upon their graduation, oral communication abilities can be very important in not only socio-cultural environment (e.g. future workplace socialization, project team discussions) but also in academic contexts (e.g. overseas studies, conference presentations).

### **Acknowledgement:**

Sincere gratitude is extended to Dr Adem Soruç for his constructive feedback on this paper. Any potential errors are attributed to the first author of the paper.

### **References**

- Biber, D. (2007). *Discourse on the move: Using corpus analysis to describe discourse structure*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Chang, S.-Y., & Liu, Y. (2016). From problem-orientedness to goal-orientedness: Re-conceptualizing communication strategies as forms of intra-mental and inter-mental mediation. *System*, 61, 43–54. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2016.07.009>
- Chou, M.-H. (2018). Speaking anxiety and strategy use for learning English as a foreign language in full and partial English-Medium Instruction contexts. *TESOL Quarterly*, 52(3), 611–633. <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.455>
- Cohen, A. D. (2010). Focus on language learner: styles, strategies and motivation. In N. Schmitt, (Eds.), *An introduction to applied linguistics*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 161-179). London: Hodder Education.
- Cohen, A. D. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). (2014). *Strategies in learning and using a second language*. New York: Routledge.
- Cohen, A. D., & Macaro, E. (2007). *Language learner strategies: thirty years of research and practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (8<sup>th</sup> Ed.). (2018). *Research methods in education*. New York: Routledge.
- Cohen, A. D., & Weaver, S. J. (1<sup>st</sup> Ed.). (2006). *Styles and Strategies-Based Instruction: A Teachers' Guide*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition.

- Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). (2018). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Dalton-Puffer, C. (2011). Content-and-language integrated learning: From practice to principles? *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 31, 182–204.
- DeVellis, R. F. (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). (2012). *Scale development: Theory and application*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodologies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dwyer, K. K., & Davidson, M. M. (2012). Is public speaking really more feared than death? *Communication Research Reports*, 29(2), 99–107.
- Færch, C., & Kasper, G. (1984). Two ways of defining communication strategies. *Language Learning*, 34(1), 45–63.
- Field, A. P. (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). (2009). *Discovering statistics using SPSS*. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.
- Galloway, N., Kriukow, J., & Numajiri, T. (2017). Internationalisation, higher education and the growing demand for English: an investigation into the English medium of instruction (EMI) movement in China and Japan. *British Council Report*, 1-44.
- Gan, Z. (2013). Understanding English speaking difficulties: an investigation of two Chinese populations. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 34(3), 231–248. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2013.768622>.
- George, D., & Mallery, P. (11<sup>th</sup> Ed.). (2011). *SPSS for windows step by step: A simple guide and reference 18.0 update*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Gheyathaldin, L., & Shishakly, R. (2020). Impact of English language proficiency on the academic performance of business students. *The Asian ESP Journal*, 16(2.1), 245-272.
- Goh, C. C. M. (2013). ESP and Listening. In B. Paltridge & S. Starfield (Eds.), *The handbook of English for specific purposes* (pp. 55–76). Malden, Ma: John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Griffiths, C. (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). (2018). *The strategy factor in successful language learning: The tornado effect*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Hengsadeeikul, C., Koul, R., & Kaewkuekool, S. (2014). Motivational orientation and preference for English-medium programs in Thailand. *International Journal of Educational Research*. 66, 35–44.
- Horwitz, E. K. (2016). Factor structure of the foreign language classroom anxiety scale: Comment on park. *Psychological Reports*, 119(1), 71–76.

- Hsieh, A. -Y. (2014). The effect of cultural background and language proficiency on the use of oral communication strategies by second language learners of Chinese. *System*, 45, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2014.04.002>
- IELTS. (2019). *Test taker performance 2017*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ielts.org/teaching-and-research/test-taker-performance>
- Kawai, Y. (2008). Speaking and good language learners. In C. Griffiths (Eds.), *Lessons from good language learners* (pp. 218-230). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kline, R. B. (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). (2011). *Principles and practice of structural equation modeling*. New York: Guilford.
- Krosnick, J. A., & Presser, S. (2010). Question and questionnaire design. In P. V. Marsden & J. V. Wright (Eds.), *Handbook of Survey Research* (pp. 263–313). Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Ltd.
- Lai, Y. C. (2009). Language learning strategy use and English proficiency of university freshmen in Taiwan. *TESOL Quarterly*, 43(2), 255-280.
- Larenas, C. D. (2011). Exploring knowledge of English speaking strategies in 8th and 12th graders. *Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 13(2), 85-98.
- Levelt, W. (1989). *Speaking: From intention to articulation*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Li, M. (2017). Evaluation of learning outcomes in an education course: does it work? In: J. Zhao and L. Q. Dixon (Eds.), *English-medium Instruction in Chinese universities: perspectives, discourse and evaluation* (pp. 147-164). New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.
- Liu, M. (2018). Interactive effects of English-speaking anxiety and strategy use on oral English test performance of high- and low-proficient Chinese university EFL learners. *Cogent Education*, 5(1), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2018.1562410>
- Lu, Z., & Liu, M. (2015). An investigation of Chinese university EFL learner's foreign language reading anxiety, reading strategy use and reading comprehension performance. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching (SSLLT)*, 5(1), 65–85. doi:10.14746/ssllt.2015.5.1.4.
- Macaro, E. (2006). Strategies for Language Learning and for Language Use: Revising the Theoretical Framework. *The Modern Language Journal*, 90, 320–337. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.2006.00425.x>.
- Macaro, E. (2018). *English Medium Instruction: Content and language in policy and practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Macaro, E., & Akincioglu, M. (2017). Turkish university students' perceptions about English Medium Instruction: exploring year group, gender and university type as variables. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 39, 256–270. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2017.1367398>.
- Macaro, E., Curle, S., Pun, J., An, J., & Dearden, J. (2018). A systematic review of English medium instruction in higher education. *Language Teaching*, 51(1), 36–76. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444817000350>.
- McKinley, J., & Rose, H. (2020). *The Routledge handbook of research methods in applied linguistics*. UK: Routledge/ Taylor & Francis Group.
- Nakatani, Y. (2006). Developing an oral communication strategy inventory. *The Modern Language Journal*, 90(1), 151–168. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4781.2006.00390.x
- Nakatani, Y., & Goh, C. (2007). A review of oral communication strategies: Focus on interactionist and psycholinguistic perspectives. In A. D. Cohen & E. Macaro (Eds.), *Language learner strategies: Thirty years of research and practice* (pp. 207–227). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Nyikos, M. (2008). Gender and good language learners. In C. Griffiths (Eds.), *Lessons from good language learners* (pp.73-82). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Oxford, R. L. (1990). *Language learning strategies: What every teacher should know*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.
- Oxford, R. L. (2003). Language learning styles and strategies: concepts and relationships. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, 41(4), 271-278.
- Oxford, R. L. (2017). *Teaching and researching language learning strategies: self-regulation in context*. New York: Routledge.
- Pawlak, M., & Oxford, R. L. (2018). Conclusion: The future of research into language learning strategies. *Studies in Second Language Learning and Teaching*, 8(2), 525–535. <https://doi.org/10.14746/ssl.t.2018.8.2.15>
- Pietrzykowska, A. (2014). The relationship between learning strategies and speaking performance. In M. Pawlak, A. Mystkowska-Wiertelak, & J. Bielak (Eds.), *Classroom-oriented research: Achievements and challenges* (pp. 55-68). Heidelberg: Springer.
- Prabawa, W. P. (2016). Speaking strategies used by Indonesian tertiary students. *English Review: Journal of English Education*, 4(2), 231-242.
- Quinto, E. M., & Macayan, J. V. (2020). Interactive influence of anxiety and goal orientation in predicting language task performance of Filipino engineering students. *The Asian ESP Journal*, 16(2.1), 335-359.

- Rose, H., Curle, S., Aizawa, I., & Thompson, G. (2019). What drives success in English medium taught courses? The interplay between language proficiency, academic skills, and motivation. *Studies in Higher Education*, 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1590690>
- Sarantakos, S. (2013). *Social research*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Soruç, A., Dinler, A., & Griffiths, C. (2018). Listening comprehension strategies of EMI students in Turkey. In: Y. Kırkgöz & K. Dikilitaş (Eds.), *Key issues in English for specific purposes in higher education* (pp. 265-287). Cham: Springer.
- Soruç, A., & Griffiths, C. (2018). English as a medium of instruction: Students' strategies. *ELT Journal*, 72(1), 38-48.
- Syarifudin, (2019). Compensatory communication strategies employed by EFL Students in taking turns talking of a speaking class. *Asian EFL Journal*, 23(6.2), 109-131.
- Tarone, E. (1981). Some thoughts on the notion of communication strategy. *TESOL Quarterly*, 15(3), 285–295. doi: C' 10.2307/3586754
- Vafadar, H., & Foo, T. (2020). The effects of communication strategies instruction on Iranian intermediate EFL learners' willingness to communicate. *Asian EFL Journal*, 24(4), 130-173.
- Wong, G., Dellaportas, S., & Cooper, B. J. (2018). Chinese learner in a linguistically challenged environment – an exploratory study. *Asian Review of Accounting*, 26(2), 264–276. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ARA-07-2017-0123>
- Xu, H. C. (2017). College students' attitudes toward English-medium instruction and the English language. In: J. Zhao & L. Q. Dixon (Eds.), *English-medium instruction in Chinese universities: perspectives, discourse and evaluation* (pp. 59-76). New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.
- Yang, X. (2017). Balance of content and language in English-medium instruction classrooms. In: J. Zhao & L. Q. Dixon (Eds.), *English-medium Instruction in Chinese universities: perspectives, discourse and evaluation* (pp. 23-44). New York: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.
- Young, S. F. (2005). Objectivity and subjectivity in classroom assessment. In R. J. Wilson (Eds.), *Dilemmas in classroom assessment: And what to do about them* (pp. 57-64). Winnipeg: Portage & Main Press.
- Zhang, W., & Liu, M. (2013). Evaluating the impact of oral test anxiety and speaking strategy use on oral English performance. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 10(2), 115–148.

## **Appendix A Speaking Strategy Use of Chinese EMI undergraduates**

**Please read the following 18 items. For each item, choose a response that reflects your speaking strategy use.** (1=Never true of me; 2=Untrue of me; 3=Generally untrue of me; 4=Generally true of me; 5=True of me; 6=Always true of me)

### *Social affective strategies*

1. I try to lead or guide group discussions in academic classes.
2. I actively encourage myself to speak more in academic classes.
3. I try to use English when talking with local Chinese classmates.
4. I try to respond as much as possible when asked questions by my teachers or classmates.
5. I try to talk to foreign teachers or classmates as much as possible.

### *Compensation strategies*

6. I give extra explanations (e.g. examples) if the listener cannot understand what I am saying.
7. When I speak, I tend to use the words that I'm familiar with.
8. I rephrase what I'm saying when I find it hard to express myself clearly.
9. I use synonyms when I can't think of the exact word.
10. I correct myself immediately when I notice I have made mistakes in my speech.

### *Cognitive self-practice strategies*

11. I read out loud some sentences in my academic reading materials.
12. I work on English pronunciation to help myself speak more clearly.
13. I record my own speaking and do self-correction.
14. I read out loud the transcripts when listening to English news (e.g. VOA, BBC).

### *Expression-related problem-solving strategies*

15. I try to improve my speed of thinking so that I can express myself faster.
16. I try to remember the technical words that I need to use in academic speaking activities.
17. I pay attention to my teachers' expressions in class and imitate those expressions when I speak.
18. I try to remember the expressions that are frequently used in daily communication to help me express myself in academic speaking activities.





## **Teaching Pragmatic Competence in EFL Context: The Case of Saudi EFL Teachers**

**Abdulaziz Ali Al-Qahtani**

Department of English and Translation, University of Jeddah, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

[aalqahtani2@uj.edu.sa](mailto:aalqahtani2@uj.edu.sa)

### **Bio-profile:**

**Abdulaziz Al-Qahtani** is an assistant professor of English at the University of Jeddah. He received his BA degree in English from Umm Al-Qura University in 1994 and MA degree from Taif University in 2009. In 2016, he received his PhD in applied linguistics from Newcastle University, UK. At the start of his career, he taught English at Saudi secondary schools for 9 years, and then he was promoted as an English language supervisor at Taif's General Directorate of Education for 8 years. He has also worked as a teacher assistant in MA level modules such as Introduction to TESOL and Thinking Skills at Newcastle University between 2012 and 2016. From 2017 to 2019, he headed the Department of Private Language Institutes in Taif. He published several articles which addressed issues in foreign language teaching/ learning; EFL reading comprehension and critical/ creative reading; EFL teacher education; teaching methods, and creative thinking.

### **Abstract**

In the pedagogy of language education, the importance of teaching English pragmatic competence has received considerable attention lately. As an attempt to contribute to literature in this field, this study investigated the importance of teaching pragmatic competence in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. It explored the extent to which Saudi EFL teachers implement pragmatic competence features in their daily classroom practice. It also identified the difficulties they encounter during classrooms procedures and practices. In order to achieve the study objectives, a mixed-

method research design was employed. The quantitative data was obtained through administering a questionnaire to 160 Saudi EFL teachers, while the qualitative data was based on (20) classroom-unstructured observations and (10) semi-structured interviews. The quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS, while the qualitative analysis was constructed around Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan's (2012) 6Rs instructional model. The findings indicated that the Saudi teachers' awareness of the importance of integrating pragmatic competence teaching within EFL context, however, the level of implementation is not yet satisfactory. The study suggests the inclusion of adequate pragmatic features such as speech acts of instructions in teaching English practices within the daily classroom activities and providing the needed training to improve the quality of EFL teachers' teaching skills of pragmatics in EFL context.

**Keywords:** *Pragmatic competence, pragmatics teaching, EFL, interlanguage, pragmatic failure, L1, L2*

## **Introduction**

Although communication and language are two different terms, yet they overlap in research. Language is considered the integral element to achieve the objectives of communication and many studies highlighted interdependency between these two factors in shaping peoples' understanding and knowledge. However, the failure in utilizing the appropriate language functions in certain language settings and contexts will lead to pragmatic confusion and then to communication misunderstanding. In our daily communication, people exchange knowledge and information through various means. Consequently, our language, as a medium of human-tool, transmits our ideas, emotions, knowledge to achieve "cross-lingual" communication (Saadatmandi et al., 2018).

Because culture misunderstanding is one of the difficulties that both teachers and learners encounter; especially in the context of EFL (Rashidi & Ramezani, 2015), acquiring appropriate pragmatic competence is asserted to avoid pragmatic failure that leads to intercultural communication ambiguity. As Wannaruk (2008) purported that because of multi-perceptions and language interpretations, communication 'breakdown' can be initiated during cross-cultural communications. This can be challenging

specifically in settings where a language is being taught in a context of English as a Second Language (ESL) or EFL for both teachers and learners. As a result, teachers will have to equip and employ the functions and features of the first language (L1) to serve language acquisition while learners have to adapt with the new changes and implement them adequately in their long-span learning process.

Inspired by the L1 features, teachers can enhance their learners' language acquisition and performance starting from the language they are familiar with. According to this, learners should employ their L1 features to recognize the second language (L2) functions and this goes beyond identifying the language skills to more focusing upon pragmatic realization. In the context of EFL, language teachers need to focus upon teaching pragmatic competence and raise awareness of its importance within the classroom tasks to go hand in hand with language skills' teaching procedures. In the same vein, language learners should recognize these pragmatic boundaries through practical learning activities (Safont Jordà, 2004). Different studies highlighted the importance of teaching and fostering pragmatic competence's features within EFL context. Many of these studies were also conducted on comparing the use of various speech acts between L1 and L2 learners.

Thus, the fundamental assumption is the existence of a close link between pragmatics knowledge and successful communication by EFL language learners, precisely within the polite and formal interactions. For instance, requests and indirect speech acts are considered the integral mediums of applying appropriate requests particularly in Asian cultures (Khaliba & Tayehb, 2014). In the context of Saudi schools, where English language is taught as EFL, the teachers' tendency towards concentrating upon teaching and enhancing the language's pragmatic functions is questionable despite being aware of its importance.

## **Literature Review**

Studies on promoting pragmatic features to EFL learners received considerable attention. Pragmatic competence has been looming in various literature highlighting the interconnection between the cultural aspects of language and language functions as a knowledgeable combination. Consequently, pragmatic competence reflects a sense of behavior towards cultural understanding sustained by appropriate knowledge of language

skills. This certainly goes beyond teaching grammatical functions, lexical vocabulary terms and reading competency skills which consume both the majority of the teachers' teaching period and the endless effort of EFL teaching activities.

As a branch of applied linguistics, initiated in the late sixties and early seventies, pragmatics is concerned with language contextual use and the utterances' meaningful attribution. Controversial pragmatics evolved different definitions through research and history. Although Alsuhaibani (2020) claimed that there is no agreement upon a comprehensive definition of pragmatics, she referred to pragmatics as "the study of contextual meaning". This reinforced Yule's (1996) opinion of considering pragmatics as "the meaning as communicated by a speaker and interpreted by a listener". Other definitions were anticipated in different studies such as Karthik (2013) who defined pragmatics as a branch of language acquisition and as a main constituent of language awareness organization that received crucial concern by linguistic scientists. In a narrow prospective, according to Crystal (2008), pragmatics emphasizes the factors that influence our language choice in the context of social interaction and the resulted effect of these choices. This definition denotes the critical necessity of these factors to be formulated upon the social basis context. Within pragmatics, this social context may be defined as the set of assumptions that have a crucial impact on the production and perception of communicative actions (Saadatmandi et al., 2018). Therefore, pragmatics is one of the elements that elevate the communication effectiveness in L2 (Taguchi, 2009, 2011, 2015).

In the field of education, pragmatics received major concerns for both EFL and ESL. Conceptualizing whether teaching pragmatics within the content of EFL is crucial or not, research highlighted the necessity of integrating pragmatic competence teaching through daily classroom practices along with focusing upon L2 skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Mainly, EFL learners formulate their own L1 pragmatic prospective through their parents, friends and the surrounding social context. When they approach their English classes and interact with their English teachers, they have already built their pragmatic competence in instructions, requests, apologizing and other forms of speech acts but within L1. The conflict occurs when applying L2 pragmatic features; where the confusion in terms of wrong responses and inappropriate pragmatic failure

arouse within extensive daily interactions. Thus, when EFL teachers seek to elicit appropriate responses, they try to trigger their learners' interest by expanding L2 inputs and cultural aspects. Hereupon, Cutrone (2020) claimed that, in spite of having a perfect competence in L2 grammatical utterance, students usually encounter major difficulties at pragmatic level especially when they are involved in a conversation with native speakers. Sahab & Rushdi (2019) further explained that here are two forms of pragmatic failure: "pragma-linguistic" and "sociopragmatic" failure in which the former indicates the corrected mistakes by grammatical explanation while the latter denotes connections to cultural norms and settings.

To highlight the pragmatic knowledge in ELF teaching, there is a need to formulate a comprehensive understanding related to pragmatic competence concept and features where these definitions evolved through history. The term pragmatic competence was first used by Chomsky & Piattelli-Palmarini (1980: 224) to highlight the "knowledge of conditions and manner of appropriate use in conformity with various purposes". Respectively, Canale and Swain (1980: 501) integrated pragmatic competence in their model of communicative competence, and defined it as "the knowledge of contextually appropriate language use". In a later work, Canale (1988) asserted that pragmatic competence includes both "illocutionary" and "sociolinguistic" competence for utilizing language functions appropriately.

### **Teaching pragmatic competence**

"Language, whether individual as "private speech" or collaborative as "collaborative dialoguing" in sociocultural terms, has been mainly investigated in terms of its potential for language learning" (Bagherkazemi, 2020. p. 65). The necessity for teaching pragmatic aspects in the acquisition of pragmatic knowledge in FEL was illustrated in literature (Bardovi-Harlig, 2018, 1996; Hussein & Albakri, 2019; Alemi & Khanlarzadeh, 2017; Farashaiyan et al., 2017; Kwon, 2018; Cheng et al., 2017; Savvidou & Economidou-Kogetsidis, 2019a, 2019b; Bardovi-Harlig & Mahan-Taylor, 2003; Bardovi-Harlig et al., 2015).

Highlighting the teacher's role in pragmatic competence teaching, Schmidt (2012) and Bardovi-Harlig (2018) claimed that appropriate pragmatic competence of encoding

and decoding process is considered difficult to be achieved without the active intervention of the teacher. The teacher, hence, is seen as a major source of explicit language instructions which are measured carefully. As research evidence indicates that exposure to target language pragmatics will be fruitless and ineffective because students alone, in general, fail to grasp the context-based pragmatic features. By this token, EFL teachers in pragmatic competence are supposed to develop procedure to apply effective instructions without relying merely upon the exposure to language, raising awareness of the importance of the cultural aspects by assisting students as a facilitator. As Erton (2017) pointed out, teachers become the only role model since they perform a significant role in reinforcing the students' pragmatic awareness within classrooms. In the same regard, Cohen (2010) identified two fields where teachers of EFL can focus upon through teaching pragmatic competence which are pragmatic variation and pragmatic norms in the target language. The studies imply that metapragmatic knowledge of how to teach and how to assess pragmatics is a key-aspect of knowledge success. Teachers additionally should also focus upon of their students' identities, cultures, proficiency, and have to be familiar with the pragmatic-focused curriculum and the role of L2 pragmatics in educational contexts.

According to scholars of pragmatic, language teachers should involve three functions of L2 pragmatic instructions in the EFL classrooms. These functions mainly include learners' exposure to adequate pragmatic input by raising their pragmatic knowledge-awareness, learner's practice of authentic pragmatic opportunities and learners' feedback during pragmatic production (Martinez-Flor 2016; Rueda 2013). Zuskin (2015) also categorized three essential needs in pragmatic competence for EFL teachers: to provide "sufficient and contextually appropriate input", multi-practice opportunities or "output" and appropriate "feedback". Ivanova (2018) further reinforced the need to prepare EFL learners to achieve successful cross-cultural communication increased the necessity of improving their pragmatic competence. But in contrast, as a result of various factors concerning "form-focused" domination, promoting pragmatic competence is still neglected or marginalized. Glaser (2018) also stipulated that teachers are required to focus on different aspects such as vocabulary, speaking and listening, songs, games, stories, roleplaying and many procedures. From another prospective,

“teachers' backgrounds, knowledge, experiences and beliefs” play a crucial role in “what and how they teach”, for guiding their students within classroom teaching (Basturkmen, 2012). Hence, Cohen (2016) cited in Savvidou & Economidou-Kogetsidis (2019: 43) claimed that “without adequate teacher education and/or sufficient exposure to the target L2 culture, it is not surprising that some language teachers feel uncomfortable about being a source for target language pragmatics”.

To sum up, pragmatic competence teaching therefore plays an integral role in raising knowledge among EFL students and can be used by the teachers to communicate different English features properly. The frame of literature guided the researcher to manipulate and formulate the configuration of the current study in terms of domains and methods. However, this study differed in terms of focusing upon Saudi teachers' prospective and integration of pragmatic competence through their teaching EFL practices.

### **Statement of purpose**

Tracing back different Saudi studies regarding pragmatics, the researcher realized that most of these studies focused mainly on depicting pragmatics influence upon Saudi learners in general or to illustrate ways to reinforce pragmatic knowledge itself; neglecting the teachers' teaching integral part. (Alzahrani, 2018; Alsulayyi, 2016). Other studies stressed the pragmatic norms' role of native speakers and the improvement of the learner's pragmatic competence (Altheeby, 2018) or highlighted the influence of pragmatics upon learners who study abroad (Alzahrani, 2018). Even though some studies targeted teachers, they focused merely upon improving some strategies in teaching certain speech acts such as apology in (Alsulayyi, 2016), compliment responses (Salameh, 2001), direct speech acts (Alfaleh, 2019), refusal and requests speech acts (Nguyen, 2020) or making comparisons between EFL and ESL learners regarding pragmatic competence (Altheeby, 2018). intercultural exchanges grow, as a result of travel, globalization and international interactions, the potential for intercultural miscommunication through misinterpreted refusals is also growing

The aim of the current study is to research the extent of the EFL teachers' awareness of pragmatic competence in their teaching practices. Given the fact that

pragmatics is somewhat neglected in curriculum presented in textbooks, or at least not taught explicitly or brought to the foreground, this study is expected to tackle the degree of teaching pragmatic competence and anticipate the featured problems they encounter in the daily basis practice. Fundamentally speaking, it was found that EFL teachers sometimes seem to lack new method such as teaching pragmatics when trying to communicate in English language, which is their foreign language. To the best knowledge of the researcher, no study on the teachers' implementation of pragmatic competence examines the extent of its teachability in Saudi schools. Considering EFL Arab teachers and their awareness of pragmatic competence, the need for such study is strongly emphasized in Saudi schools' context and would make additions to pragmatic competence knowledge attribution.

### **Study questions**

To achieve the study purposes, the researcher formulated the following questions:

1. What is the extent to which Saudi-public schools' teachers of EFL implement pragmatic competence teaching in their daily classroom's context?
2. What are the difficulties that face the Saudi-public schools' teachers of EFL in teaching pragmatic competence features in their daily classroom's context?
3. What are the suggestions for Saudi EFL teachers to improve their pragmatic competence teachability in their classroom's context?

### **Method**

A mixed method design was implemented in the current study to meet its objectives and to gain better understanding of the pragmatic competence in the context of EFL teaching. Adopted from (Cresswell, 2009), this method, merges both the quantitative and the qualitative data by conducting the concurrent triangulation design in order to compare and interpret the study results as illustrated in figure (1).



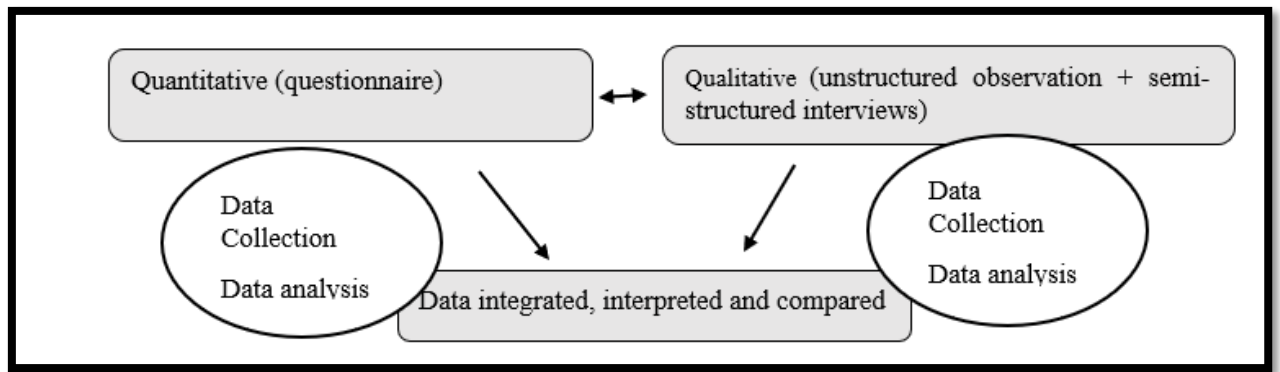


Figure 1. Concurrent triangulation design. Source: (Creswell, 2009)

Hereupon, the quantitative data, in this study, was represented by pragmatic competence questionnaire while the qualitative data was conducted via unstructured observation and semi-structured interviews. Both methods respectively collaborated to formulate deeper understanding of the research question and interpreted data to clarify the achieved results.

The study population was represented by Saudi EFL male and female English teachers in public schools in Taif city in Saudi Arabia in the first semester of the academic year 2019/2020 totaling a number of (N= 200). In the quantitative phase, the sample size reached ( $n= 160$ ) male and female EFL teachers yielding (80 %) of the study population. The participants had Bachelor or master's degrees in teaching English as a foreign language major or other related fields. All the participants worked in public schools in Taif city in Saudi Arabia. The selection of teachers was upon the basis of those who teach in high (secondary) school levels.

A questionnaire was distributed to the whole study population in a comprehensive survey method. Table (1) shows that (20 %) of the study sample was of female, while (60 %) was of male. It also shows the distribution of the study sample according gender, age, years of experience and educational qualification.

**Table 1: Sample distribution**

<b>Study variables</b>	<b>Variables categories</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Female	40	20
	Male	120	60
<b>Years of experience</b>	Less than 5 years	23	11.5
	From 5 to 10 years	52	26
	More than 10 years	125	62.5
<b>Age</b>	Less than 35 years old	120	60
	More than 35 years old	80	40
<b>Qualifications</b>	Master	59	29.5
	Bachelor	141	70

**Instruments**

The researcher developed a questionnaire comprised of integral features and principles of pragmatic competence utilized in different literature to measure the teachers' extent of teaching pragmatic competence in the context of EFL in Saudi Arabia. As a contribution to the pragmatic domain, the questionnaire was comprised of 32 statements and questions distributed into four categories related to pragmatic competence features adopted from the previous literature. These domains were based upon exploratory factor analysis and were divided into four pragmatic factors; input, output, feedback and cultural representation practice. The 32 items of the questionnaire were formed to be scored on a 5-point Likert scale: 1 never, 2 rarely, 3 moderately, 4 often, 5 always. Statistical analyses were performed with SPSS version 17.0 calculating descriptive statistics for all items, including means (M), standard deviations (SD) and frequencies.

The second instrument in the study represented the qualitative phase in term of unstructured observation using observation notes for 20 EFL classes. Due to Saudi culture reasons, a female English teacher helped in conducting these observations in the settings of female classes. Unstructured observation notes focused upon the pragmatic competence features with extensive focus upon the language functions to shape the study results.

The third instrument in the study represented the qualitative phase in term of semi-structured interviews with 10 male and female teachers of EFL. The interviews focused upon detailed questions focusing upon the pragmatic competence teaching's difficulties and suggestions with extensive focus upon the language functions to shape the study results.

For asserting the validity and the reliability of the questionnaire, the results in table (2) of the structural validity indicate that all correlation coefficients in the four domains were statistically significant considering ( $p = 0.05$ ).

**Table 2: Person Correlation Coefficients**

Domains	Person	(sig)
Pragmatic input	.791	*0.000
Pragmatic output	.842	*0.000
Pragmatic feedback	.883	*0.000
Pragmatic cultural practice	.889	*0.000

\* The correlation is statistically significant considering ( $p = 0.05$ )

Furthermore, the reliability of the questionnaire was verified by two methods as follows: First, Cronbach's Alpha method was used to measure the stability of the questionnaire. The results shown in table (3) indicate that the value of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is high for each domain ranging from (0.839, 0.901). The value of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for all the items of the questionnaire reached (0.943). This means that the coefficient stability is high and therefore statistically significant.

**Table 3: Cronbach's Alpha coefficient**

<b>Domains</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Cronbach's alpha</b>
Pragmatic input	8	0.839
Pragmatic output	8	0.788
Pragmatic feedback	8	0.845
Pragmatic cultural practice	8	0.901
All	32	0.943

The validity of unstructured observation for the qualitative was also confirmed by four different professors in the field of pragmatics from King Abdul-Aziz University. They read the note samples and added their own comments and contribution in light of their long-term experience. The researcher, as a rater, with the help of another independent rater cooperated in reading the notes to denote their reliability by applying the appropriate coding. The reliability reached (88%) of agreement denoting that they are reliable.

### **Data collection**

For collecting data, the researcher performed a pilot study to facilitate the procedures of the actual study. The questionnaire was conducted to a group of male and female English teachers sharing the same characteristics of the main study sample. The provided information supported the current study to prepare the needed changes and modification.

For the actual study, both the quantitative and qualitative data were collected in the first semester of the academic year 2019/2020 in Taif city in Saudi Arabia. First, after taking the needed official permission, the researcher performed the unstructured observations for 20 classes distributed into 10 male classes and 10 female classes. The researcher attended and observed the classes, wrote down notes and filled the observation form at the end of the class. Second, (200) questionnaires were distributed to the teachers giving them enough time to go through the whole items and questions and they were collected online. (160) questionnaires were retrieved utilizing a percentage of (92.3%). In the last phase, the researcher conducted (10) interviews with (5) male teachers and (5) other females.

## Data analysis

In this research, the required data were collected from a total of (160) questionnaires, (20) unstructured observations and (10) semi-structured interviews. The quantitative data, through the pragmatic competence questionnaire, was analyzed by using appropriate descriptive statistics mainly SPSS. The researcher calculated the means (M) and the standard deviation (SD) of all the questionnaire items. The data obtained from the unstructured observation of the classroom's sessions was analysed by adopting Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan's (2012) 6Rs instructional model. The model is a suitable pedagogic framework to provide EFL teachers with the needed tools and procedures to integrate the pragmatic instructions during their daily classroom teaching practices, settings and contexts (Cohen 2013; Martinez-Flor, 2016; Martinez-Flor & Uso-Juan 2012). This model according to Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan (2012), constitutes of six different steps; Researching, Reflecting, Receiving, Reasoning, Rehearsing and Revising. The study, by this model, elicited the implementation extent of pragmatic competence activated by EFL teachers via content analysis of the observed classroom notes. In the precoding phase, the researcher read all the observation notes repetitively to gain a general understanding and deep analysis of the pragmatic procedures and features mentioned during the classroom teaching activities. After that, the researcher applied appropriate codes for the observed features in teaching to be sorted later into the six different categories of the model. The analysis included examples of the six categories and the notes were taken as the following:

1. Teachers asked students in the classroom to express helping suggestion in their native language L1 and then the teacher asked them again to provide more examples of the suggestion functions depicted in daily L1 conversation. This phase illustrated the researching stage.
2. After that, the teacher asked the students to give examples of different forms of speech act in their L1 through activating different situation and contexts. This phase illustrated the reflecting stage.
3. The teacher taught students forms of disagreement in the English language to compare them with their equivalent in L1 and this stage represented the receiving stage.

4. After reading situational contexts, the students were asked to formulate requests related to these situations giving justification for their responses in terms of why and how and this was known as the reasoning stage.

5. Students applied role play to the situations representing the rehearsing stage. The six categories were labeled and coded allocating the frequent numbers of incidents as in the table (4) below:

**Table 4. Frequencies of pragmatics instruction**

Categories	Input				Output	Feedback
	Researching	Reflecting	Receiving	Reasoning	Rehearsing	Revising
Frequency	3	4	5	5	18	10

## Results

In order to obtain the main objectives of the study, three main research questions were formulated to be tested as follows:

Question 1: What is the extent of the teaching pragmatic competence by the EFL Saudi teachers in secondary public schools from their point of view? To answer this question, the relative arithmetic mean, relative weight analysis and T-test were used.

**Table 5: The arithmetic means and relative weight and order of each domain of the questionnaire**

Domains	Mean	Relative weight	T-test	Sig	Order
Pragmatic input	4.24	84.74	29.18	*0.000	3
Pragmatic output	4.29	85.83	31.79	*0.000	2
Pragmatic feedback	4.30	85.94	33.54	*0.000	1
Pragmatic cultural practice	4.14	82.79	23.01	*0.000	4
Total	4.24	84.82	34.01	*0.000	

The mean is statistically significant considering ( $p = 0.05$ ).

Table (5) illustrates that the arithmetic average for all fields of the questionnaire equals (4.24). Thus, the relative weight is (84.82%). The value of the T-test is (34.01) and the probability value is (0.000), This means that there is a very high level of approval of the fields of the questionnaire in general. This indicates the EFL teachers' concern to teach pragmatic instruction features through their classroom activities. Based on exploratory element analysis of the questionnaire, four factors of pragmatic input, output, feedback and cultural teaching have been identified. The descriptive statistics of the study means of confirmed that pragmatic feedback had the very best imply amongst the four other factors.

Question 2: Are there statistically significant differences at the level of significance considering ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) between the means of the study sample responses to the extent of the teacher's teaching of the pragmatic competence in EFL from their point of view according to the variables of (gender, qualification and working experience)? To answer this question, the following three hypotheses were tested: The first hypothesis:  $H_{01}$ : There are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance considering ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) between the means of the study sample responses to the extent of the teacher's teaching of the pragmatic competence in EFL from their point of view according to the variables of gender (male, female). To answer this hypothesis, T-test was used for two independent samples. The results in Table (6) show that the probability value corresponding to the T-test for two independent samples is greater than ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) level. Thus, it can be concluded that there are no statistically significant differences between the average estimates of the extent of the teacher's integration of the pragmatic competence teaching in EFL from their point of view according to the variables of gender (male, female).

The second hypothesis:  $H_{02}$ : There are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance considering ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) between the means of the study sample responses the extent of the teacher's teaching of the pragmatic competence in EFL from their point of view according to the variables of the qualifications. To answer this hypothesis, T-test was used for two independent samples. The results in Table (6) show that the probability value corresponding to the T-test for two independent samples is

greater than ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) level. Thus, it can be concluded that there are no statistically significant differences between the average estimates of the extent of the teacher's integration of the pragmatic competence in EFL from their point of view according to the variables of qualifications (Master, Bachelor).

The third hypothesis:  $H_{03}$ : There are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance considering ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) between the means of the study sample responses the extent of the teacher's teaching of the pragmatic competence in EFL from their point of view according to the variables of working experience. Table (6) shows there are statistically significant differences between the average estimates of the extent of the teacher's integration of the pragmatic competence in EFL from their point of view according to the variables of years of experience. The results in table (7) of Scheffe test to compare the average means of the study sample responses to the extent of the teacher's integration of the pragmatic competence teaching in EFL from their point of view according to the variables of years of experience. The results show that there are statistically significant differences between the average years of experience in the favor for those with 10 years of experience and more.

**Table 7: Scheffe test according to the variable years of experience**

Years of experience	Mean	Differences between variable averages		
Less than 5 years	4.03	1		
Less than 10 years	4.16	-0.128	1	
10 years and above	4.20	-0.171	-0.043	1

Table (8) below shows, the pragmatic instruction comprises the four conditions of providing input, output, feedback and culture teaching. In order to compliment the findings of the questionnaire and observation form, the researchers also employed the unstructured observation notes during the classroom observations to comprise the qualitative part of the data. The researcher observed (20) classes and wrote down all the events during 45-minute classroom instructions. At last, the researcher came up with (20) sessions of observation field notes. To examine the observation discipline notes, the



researcher tailored the Martinez-Flor and Uso-Juan (2012) academic model. The unstructured observations have been analyzed to elicit information regarding teaching pragmatics guidance via EFL teachers. By doing so, all of the commentary notes had been examined to discover the incidences of every step aforementioned. The data in table (8) indicates the frequency of each step.

**Table 8: Frequencies and percentages of pragmatics instruction**

Categories	Input				Output	Feedback
	Researching	Reflecting	Receiving	Reasoning	Rehearsing	Revising
Frequency	3	4	5	5	10	18
Percentage	7%	9 %	11%	11%	22%	40%

The resulted data from table (8) showed that the most implemented categories are revising and rehearsing under the output and feedback domains with a percent of 40% and 22% respectively. The least category under researching input domain comprises a percentage of 7%. The receiving and the reasoning stages received equal percentage with 11%.

As for semi-structured interviews, Braun and Clarke’s (2006) steps were used for employing thematic analysis since full transcriptions were produced of each interview. The aim of the analysis was to illustrate detailed description of the resulted data. In the structured interviews, the researcher familiarized the interviewee with the data through repeated reading of the interview form. Next, the transcripts were coded into themes and then to sub-themes. However, due to the study length restrictions, only themes with high recurrence among participants were discussed. Key quotations have been selected to illustrate these main themes.

## **Discussion**

In the current study, the findings of the questionnaire in response to the research’s first question, illustrated that the arithmetic average for all fields of the questionnaire

equals (4.24). Thus, the relative weight is (84.82%). The value of the T-test is (34.01) and the probability value is (0.000), This means that there is a very high level of approval of the fields of the questionnaire in general. This indicates the EFL teachers' awareness to the importance of teaching pragmatic instruction features through their classroom activities. For EFL teachers, the responsibility of implementing pragmatic features tend to be the teachers' main obligation and commitment since they need to assign roles and implement language activities, hence, they are in the direct contact with their students daily. However, teachers are still in a dare need to implement high degree of pragmatics instruction in their daily classroom practices compared to other factors of language competence such as speaking, reading, writing and listening.

Responding to the study main question, the researcher further formulated three hypotheses to reinforce the study questions' responses. The results of the first hypothesis showed that the probability value corresponding to the T-test for two independent samples is greater than ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) level. Thus, it can be concluded that there are no statistically significant differences between the average estimates of the extent of the teacher's integration of the pragmatic competence in EFL from their point of view according to the variables of gender (male, female). The study attributed this to the fact that both male and female school teachers realize the concern and responsibility based upon their shoulder in integrating pragmatic competence features through their daily classroom activities. The result, in addition, denoted no distinctions of the nature of this awareness presented by male and female teachers; sustained with all adequate capabilities applied from the educational administration. The English background of these teachers additionally supported that in terms of the education they received before in universities. The analysis of the questionnaire also showed that four factors of pragmatic input, output, feedback and cultural practice have been identified. Feedback domain had the very best result amongst the four other factors indicating the effort teachers devote to correct pragmatic failure within their classroom period-limit. However, the input domain gained the least results because, according to the researcher experience in the field of English teaching, the teachers are restricted to obey the curriculum influence which lacks explicit pragmatic instructions.

The results of the second hypothesis illustrated that the probability value corresponding to the T-test for two independent samples is greater than ( $p \leq 0.05$ ) level. Thus, it can be concluded that there are no statistically significant differences between the average estimates of the extent of the teacher's integration of the pragmatic competence teaching in EFL from their point of view according to the variables of qualifications (Master, Bachelor). The researcher attributed that to the concept in language teaching, since the daily practices of the teacher's configuration formulate the teacher's prospective. Hence, all teachers will be bounded to the same nature of classroom framework with the restricted curriculum. Further, all teachers perform teaching speculations in the same context of Arab culture so the same influence of the L2 will be obvious for all teachers despite their educational background.

The results of the third hypothesis showed that there are statistically significant differences between the average estimates of the extent of the teacher's integration of the pragmatic competence in EFL from their point of view according to the variables of years of experience. This is a questionable matter in the regard that applying pragmatic instruction features requires practical practices that can be linked to years of experience. The results also showed that there are statistically significant differences between the average years of experience in the favor for those with 10 years of experience and more. The researcher attributed that to the fact that years of experience shape the teachers' quality of teaching, precisely, in terms of pragmatic competence. This is achieved in terms of anticipating difficulties and trying to find appropriate solutions to the observed challenges. Experienced teachers can integrate pragmatic instructions and other forms of speech acts such as compliment, compliment responses and apology to name a few.

Another contribution from the researcher, is that the context of EFL in Saudi schools where most teachers are native speakers of Arabic; so, they can easily identify pragmatic failure within their students' daily utterance and can give a direct feedback in the frame of the cultural context. They can understand the nature of pragmatic failure better than nonnative teachers. For instance, a response from a student to a compliment with "I am embarrassed" is wrong and not appropriate but the teacher will understand why did the students use such reply and will correct it in terms of the L2 appropriate reply

while the nonnative teacher will be not able to form the reason of the students' wrong reply choice.

The unstructured observation notes confirmed the results of the questionnaire by highlighting the implementation of feedback pragmatic factors over inputs. Accordingly, highlighting the importance of integrating the importance of teaching pragmatics withing EFL classes, this study is in line with the results of some other studies such as (Ivanova, 2018; Hosseinpur & Nevisi, 2018; Anani Sarab & Alikhani, 2016a, 2016b). Various studies, despite being different in the nature of methods and instruments, depicted the same results in the current study. For example, Ivanova (2018) indicated that most EFL teachers do have some knowledge about teaching pragmatic competence. Teachers' knowledge of pragmatic features was demonstrated in terms of various topics and activities which they considered inappropriate in cross-cultural encounters. Respectively, Kondo (2004) illustrated that pragmatic teaching is really a dynamic process hence "correct language usage is related to cultural beliefs, circumstances, interlocutors and other variables". Saadatmandi et al. (2018) further revealed that teaching pragmatic features has a considerable effect on the Iranian high school students' performance upon request speech acts. Hosseinpur & Nevisi (2018) also illustrated that researchers were concerned with the teachability of pragmatics. Their findings indicated that "particular features of pragmatics are teachable, and instruction is both necessary and effective". Alemi & Khanlarzadeh (2017) further highlighted the importance of "socio-pragmatic and prag-malinguistic features in native and non-native teachers' pragmatic rating", which can have different implications for L2 teachers and learners. Furthermore, Alharbi (2017) maintained that Saudi EFL teachers employed four illocutionary acts out of the five: representatives, directives, expressive, and commissive.

However, the results of other studies differed from this study to a certain extent. Although Hussein & Albakri (2019) highlighted the necessity for teaching pragmatic in EFL classroom, their study illustrated that many Iraqi English teachers fail to offer pragmatic competence in their classroom as a result of lacking pragmatic knowledge. In addition, Farashaiyan et al. (2017) showed that "Iranian EFL instructors rarely implemented and practiced the features of inter-language pragmatics in their classes". Furthermore, their study showed that pragmatic output had the highest mean among the

four pragmatic factors while in this study the feedback factor surpassed the other factors. The study also differed from some Saudi studies in nature where they focused upon the effect of teaching pragmatics upon the learners' progress. Alsuhaibani (2020) for instance revealed that the Saudi students value the importance of pragmatic instruction indicating its importance.

The responses of semi-structured interviews for the second and third question of the study identified three different themes related to pragmatic teaching awareness, pragmatic teaching difficulties and enhancement suggestions. The findings of the study revealed that there is a considerable degree of awareness according to English teachers in grasping pragmatic competence configuration. However, this knowledge is limited to certain aspects of pragmatic competence which are mainly related to their teaching practices within the introduced curriculum. For some teachers, the notion of pragmatics is familiar within their educational background in English but how to apply it to L2 is the challenge. For example, teacher (1) commented:

*I have a good deal of knowledge regarding pragmatics. I gained this knowledge through my bachelor degree. However, no one taught me how to implement it within my teaching activities.*

Some responses illustrated the effect of teachers' experience that helped them through improving their pragmatic teachings as teacher (2) clarified:

*I have been teaching for more than 10 years, I realized that students can build better understanding of language skills if they know much about culture. Therefore, I used to present stories and forms of role play regarding L2 culture.*

Regarding pragmatic teaching difficulties, the responses varied in case of personal experience and other general difficulties related to approaches of teaching and facilities. According to teacher (3):

*There are lots of approaches that can support my teaching of pragmatics, I know, but the problem is which one is most beneficial and will not waste my time as well as my students' effort?*

In the same regard, some teachers denote that the problem isn't innate in their teaching itself, but the problem lies within their teaching boundaries represented in huge teaching loads and lack of facilities as teacher (4) asserted that:

A full-size book with lots of activities which I have to cover within 45minutes including the four skills in each lesson; how am I supposed to tell about L2 culture? The focus on the grammatical aspects of the language takes the major concern of some other teachers with a belief that the success of grammar and other skills will lead to easier integration of L2 pragmatic competence. In this regard teacher (5) clarified that:

*In my opinion, it is all about grammar when it comes to teaching pragmatics. Teaching grammar would enhance using certain aspects related to pragmatics such as identifying certain grammatical structures related to questions, statements and using requests and modal verbs forms.*

It is a need to highlight that there were some considerable differences in terms of the difficulties that face male and female teachers as teacher (6) illustrated that:

*I think cultural norms impose female students to be bounded to certain responses when entrancing with L2 pragmatic features. this is so obvious in responding to compliment and apology forms.*

Although this observation doesn't affect the study main results, it is in line with Alsulayyi's (2016) findings which revealed that gender plays a significant role in the use of apology strategies. For example, Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) strategy and the upgrader strategy are less used by females than males, whereas males use the downgrading responsibility (DR) strategy less than females.

Lack of adequate facilities constitute a barrier for integrating pragmatic teaching within EFL. In this regard teacher (7) indicated that:

*If we need to bring L2 culture to our classes, this means we need to be supported with stories and videotapes to help us but, unfortunately, it not applicable in all public schools.*

According to studies related the challenges face EFL teachers in teaching pragmatics, Tan & Farashaiyan (2016) reinforced the need to provide teachers with sufficient inputs and appropriate facilities in teaching and give an extensive focus to pragmatics in terms of teacher training. Some other teachers' responses reflected their opinions for integrating pragmatic teaching enhancement in terms of increasing work development and training as teacher (8) commented:

*I took crucial trainings when I started teaching, but mainly regarding reinforcing language skills and how to communicate the texts' functions. There is a shortage of training regarding pragmatics in specific. What we have studied in university represents the general knowledge but in real class we need more training.*

Some other suggestions reflected the need to integrate pragmatic instructions explicitly within the curriculum and the taught syllables as teacher (9) reflected:

*The text book should help in teaching pragmatics instead of forcing much pressure upon our teaching. My students get excited when telling them how people greet each other and utter replies to compliant and it goes more fun with role play; but wait I can't do that all the time.*

In this regard, Tran & Yeh (2020) and Limberg (2016) emphasized the power of textbooks in sustaining teachers in teaching pragmatic competence; reflecting the need to improve EFL textbooks. This improvement should include the integration of authentic texts and social contexts. The outcome results are also in line with different studies which are similar to the research nature such as (Savvidou & Economidou-Koetsidis, 2019a, 2019b). Hassan (2018) concluded that exposing the learners to natural environment and authentic materials greatly enhance their pragmatic awareness. In case of EFL, these conditions cannot be completely applicable within classrooms, so students may need special training.

To sum up, despite realizing the importance of teaching pragmatics within EFL classroom and despite their willingness to integrate its features in terms of feedback and outputs, the Saudi EFL teachers are still encountering difficulties to ensure the quality of this implementation.

## **Conclusion**

The present study aimed to gain quantitative and qualitative insight to the extent of EFL teachers' integration of pragmatic competence in their teaching practices. It also investigated the difficulties they encounter to formulate outstanding recommendations. Overall, the study highlighted three main findings. Firstly, in relation to the teacher's teachability of pragmatic competence within EFL context' the quantitative data revealed noticeable implementation of teaching pragmatics in Saudi teachers' classroom. The

study indicated that there is a high implementation of pragmatic competence in the form of giving considerable feedback and outputs factors but there was a gap in integrating adequate inputs factors. The results of the unstructured observation notes supported these findings. The results also showed that teachers formulate intuitive knowledge of pragmatic knowledge from their EFL teaching experiences. Consequently, teachers can gain better prospective into the implications of pragmatic features in teaching and appreciate the important role of intercultural awareness. Second, EFL teachers, through their teaching pragmatics, encounter different challenges and constraints related to lack of authentic pragmatic materials exhibited in the taught textbook within a short-period of teaching lessons, shortage of facilities depicting cultural aspects of L2 such as video-audio instruments. Third, EFL teachers reiterate the need for different specialized training programs that can enhance their pragmatic competence teaching within the classroom activities.

This study also has some limitations. For instance, a salient issue is the difficulty of reaching teachers in different areas in Saudi Arabia due to time and place pressure. Another limitation is the ability to reach female schools and interpret data directly because of cultural norms that do not permit male teachers to do observation sessions in female classes directly and hence the researcher was assisted by the help of an English female teacher who was trained specifically to conduct the unstructured observation.

This study makes outstanding recommendations for future research into pragmatic teaching in Saudi Arabia, where such studies have been very scarce. The theoretical frame and the methodology in the current study can enhance literature by exploring different approaches and proposing future teaching models to support pragmatic competence teaching. Furthermore, the study promotes conducting future comparative studies between native and nonnative teachers in the field of pragmatics.

### **Pedagogical Implication**

While this study is a small-scale mixed method, the obtained results may have strong pedagogical implications for the role of pragmatics in teacher preparation programs and published further materials. The results clearly illustrate the need to include



pragmatics in teacher development and training programs and to incorporate adequate facilities of language and culture into EFL teaching.

## References

- Alemi, M., & Motamedi, M. (2019). Pragmatic Criteria in the Holistic and Analytic Rating of the Disagreement Speech Act of Iranian EFL Learners by Non-native English-Speaking Teachers. *Journal of Teaching Language Skills*, 38(1), 1-36. <https://doi.org/10.22099/JTLS.2020.34820.2738>.
- Alemi, M., & Khanlarzadeh, N. (2017). Native and non-native teachers' pragmatic criteria for rating request speech act: The case of American and Iranian EFL teachers. *Applied Research on English Language*, 6(1), 67-84. <https://doi.org/10.22108/ARE.2017.21326>.
- Alharbi, R. B. (2017). A Pragmatic Analysis of Pragmatics of Speech Acts in English Language Classrooms at Imam Mohammed Ibn Saud Islamic University. College of Languages and Translation, Al-Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, KSA (Master Thesis). *Arab World English Journal*. 1-50. <https://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awej/th.217>
- Alikhani, M. (2017). Role Play and Iranian Male and Female EFL Learners' Pragmatic Competence. *IJEFL*, 1(2). <http://dx.doi.org/10.21462/ijefl.v1i2.10> .
- Alfaleh, S. A. (2019). Direct Speech Act in Communication between Saudi Arabian Family Members. <https://doi.org/10.30845/ijll.v6n1p12>.
- Alsuhailani, Z. (2020). Developing EFL students' pragmatic competence: The case of compliment responses. *Language Teaching Research*, 1362168820913539.
- Alsulayyi, M. N. (2016). Apology strategies employed by Saudi EFL teachers. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 7(6), 70-83. <http://dx.doi.org/10.7575/aiac.all.v.7n.6p.70>
- Altheeby, M. (2018). Differences in the pragmatic competence of Saudi EFL and ESL learners (Doctoral dissertation, Cardiff University).
- Alzahrani, F. A. (2018). Pragmatic Developmental Pathways by Saudi Learners of English During Study Abroad. The University of Memphis.

- Anani Sarab, M. R., & Alikhani, S. (2016a). Pragmatics instruction in EFL context: A focus on requests. *International Journal of Research Studies in Language Learning*, 5(1), 29-42. <https://doi.org/10.5861/ijrsl.2015.1083> .
- Anani Sarab, M. R., & Alikhani, S. (2016b). The Efficacy of Pragmatic Instruction in EFL Context: The Case of Persian Learners of English. *English Teaching & Learning*, 40(1). <https://doi.org/10.6330/ETL.2016.40.1.0>.
- Bagherkazemi, M. (2020). A Comparative Study of Individual and Collaborative Oral Linguaging for L2 Speech Act Production. *TESOL international Journal*. 15(1). 65-91.
- Bardovi-Harlig, K. (2018). Teaching of Pragmatics. The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching, 17. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118784235.eelt0924>.
- Bardovi-Harlig, K. 1996. Pragmatics and Language Teaching: Bringing Pragmatics and Pedagogy Together. In L.F. Buton (ed.), *Pragmatics and Language Learning*, 7, 21-39.
- Bardovi-Harlig, K., & Mahan-Taylor, R. (2003). *Teaching pragmatics*. Washington, DC: United States Department of State.
- Bardovi-Harlig, K., Mossman, S., & Vellenga, H.E. (2015). The effect of instruction on pragmatic routines in academic discussion. *Language Teaching Research*, 19, 324–350.
- Basturkmen, H. (2012). Review of research into the correspondence between language teachers' stated beliefs and practices. *System*, 40(2), 282-295.
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3 (2), 77-101.
- Cheng, K. W., Wang, Y., & Yan, H. M. (2017). Study of Relation between EFL Students' Cognitive Style and Pragmatic Competence. *Journal of Electronic Science and Technology*, 15(1), 41-47. <https://doi.org/10.11989/JEST.1674-862X.6070610>.
- Chomsky, N., & Piattelli-Palmarini, M. (1980). *Language and learning: the debate between Jean Piaget and Noam Chomsky*. Harvard Univ Pr.
- Cohen, A.D. (2013). Strategies for learning and performing L2 speech acts. *Intercultural Pragmatics*. 2(3),275-301.

- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. Upper Saddle River: New Jersey.
- Crystal, D. (2008). *A dictionary of linguistics and phonetics* (4th ed.). Cambridge: Blackwell.
- Cutrone, P. (2020). How Does Short-Term Study Abroad Impact Japanese EFL Learners' Willingness to Communicate and Intercultural Communication Competence? *多文化社会研究*, 6(1), 18.
- Economidou-Koetsidis, M., Soteriadou, L., & Taxitari, L. (2019). Developing Pragmatic Competence in an Instructed Setting: The Effectiveness of Pedagogical Intervention in Greek EFL Learners' Request Production. *L2 Journal*, d1o0(3).10.5070/L210333950
- Erton, İ. (2017). Raising EFL Students' Awareness of Pragmatic Conventions In Forming Intercultural Competence. *Studies in Linguistics, Culture, and FLT*, 2(1), 169-183.
- Farashaiyan, A., Tan, K. H., Muthusamy, P., & Sahragard, R. (2017). The Praxis of Interlanguage Pragmatics Instruction in an EFL Context. *3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature®*, 23(4).
- Glaser, K. (2018). Enhancing the role of pragmatics in primary English teacher training. *Glottodidactica. An International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 45(2), 119-131. <https://doi.org/10.14746/gl.2018.45.2.06>.
- Hassan, S. A. (2018). Exploring the Challenges of Teaching Pragmatic Competence in EFL Classes. *Basic Education College Magazine For Educational and Humanities Sciences*, (39), 1707-1714.
- Hosseinpur, R. M., & Nevisi, R. B. (2018). L1-based Instruction: Does It Work for Learning Pragmatics in the EFL Context?. *Journal of Asia TEFL*, 15(1), 233. <https://doi.org/10.18823/asiatefl.2018.15.1.18.233>.
- Hussein, N. O., & Albakri, I. S. M. A. (2019). The Essential Role of Teaching Pragmatic in the Iraqi EFL Classroom. *practice*, 10(4). <https://doi.org/10.7176/JEP>.
- Ivanova, I. N. (2018). Teachers' Perceptions of The Role of Pragmatics In The EFL Classroom. *Studies in Linguistics, Culture, and FLT*, 3(1), 27-44.
- Karthik, D. S. (2013). Pragmatics and language communication. *The Criterion* 4.3, 1-9.

- Khaliba, F., & Tayehb, A. (2014). Indirectness in English requests among Malay university students. *Social and Behavioral Sciences* 134, 44-52. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.04.223>.
- Kondo, S. (2004). Raising pragmatic awareness in the EFL context. *Sophia junior college faculty bulletin*, 24, 49-72.
- Kwon, E. (2018). The Improvement of Interlanguage Pragmatics of Young Korean EFL Learners. *현대영미어문학*, 36(4), 331-357. <https://doi.org/10.21084/jmball.2018.11.36.4.331>.
- Limberg, H. (2016). Teaching how to apologize: EFL textbooks and pragmatic input. *Language Teaching Research*, 20(6), 700-718. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168815590695>.
- Martinez-Flor, A. & Uso-Juan, E. (2012). A comprehensive pedagogical framework to develop pragmatics in the foreign language classroom. The 6Rs approach. *Applied language Learning*. 16, 39-64.
- Martinez-Flor, A. (2016). Teaching apology formulas at the discourse level: Are instructional effects maintained over time? *ELIA*. Vol. 16, 13-48.
- Nguyen, T. M. P. (2020). Cross-cultural pragmatics: Refusals of requests by Australian native speakers of English and Vietnamese learners of English. *Asian EFL Journal*, 24(2).
- Rashidi, N., Hoomanfard, M. H., & Ramezani, S. (2015). Rhetorical Structure of Book Reviews: A Cross-Linguistic and Cross-Disciplinary Study. *Modern Journal of Language Teaching Methods*, 5(4), 373.
- Rueda, Y. T. (2013). Developing pragmatic competence in a foreign language. *Colombian Applied Linguistics Journal*. 8, 169-182.
- Saadatmandi, M., Khiabani, S. M., & Pourdana, N. (2018). Teaching English pragmatic features in EFL context: A focus on request speech acts. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 8(7), 829-835. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.0807.14>.
- Safont Jordà, M. P. (2004). An analysis on EAP learners' pragmatic production: a focus on request forms. *IBÉRICA* 8, 23-39.

- Sahab, M. M., & Rushdi, A. E. (2019). Pragmatic Failure of Homonyms in EFL Iraqi Learners. *Journal Of Al-Frahedis Arts*, 1(27). <https://doi.org/10.25130/art.v1i27.101>.
- Salameh, A. (2001). Compliment responses in American English, Saudi Arabic and the English of Saudi EFL learners. UK: University of Leicester.
- Savvidou, C., & Economidou-Kogetsidis, M. (2019). Teaching pragmatics: Nonnative-speaker teachers' knowledge, beliefs and reported practices. *Intercultural Communication Education*, 2(1), 39-58.
- Savvidou, C., & Economidou-Kogetsidis, M. (2019). Teaching pragmatics: Nonnative-speaker teachers' knowledge, beliefs and reported practices. *Intercultural Communication Education*, 2(1), 39-58. <https://doi.org/10.29140/ice.v2n1.124>.
- Schmidt, R. (2012). Attention, awareness, and individual differences in language learning. *Perspectives on individual characteristics and foreign language education*, 6, 27.
- Taguchi, N. (2015). Instructed pragmatics at a glance: Where instructional studies were, are, and should be going. *Language Teaching*, 48, 1–50.
- Taguchi, N. (Ed.). (2009). *Pragmatic competence: Volume 5*. Germany: Walter de Gruyter
- Taguchi, N. (2011). Teaching pragmatics: Trends and issues. *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, 31, 289-310. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190511000018>.
- Tran, T. M. T., & Yeh, A. (2020). Keeping it Real: Vietnamese-English Pragmatic Representations in EFL Textbook. *International Journal of Language and Literary Studies*, 2(1), 1-20.: <https://doi.org/10.36892/ijlls.v2i1.105>.
- Wannaruk, A. (2008). Pragmatic transfer in Thai EFL refusals. *RELC journal*, 39(3), 318-337. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688208096844>.
- Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Zuskin, R. D. (2015). Assessing L2 sociolinguistic competence: In search of support from pragmatic theories. *Pragmatics and Language Learning*. 4, 166-182



## **L2 Reading Anxiety and Reading Comprehension among Undergraduates: A Correlative Study**

**Abdulhameed Abdulhadi Alhuwaydi**

Department of English and Translation, College of Arabic and Social Studies

Qassim University, Saudi Arabia

[a.alhuwaydi@qu.edu.sa](mailto:a.alhuwaydi@qu.edu.sa)

### **Bio-profile:**

**Abdulhameed Alhuwaydi** is an assistant professor of applied linguistics at Qassim University, Saudi Arabia. He has been teaching English courses to high school and university students since 2003. His research interests include writing assessment, second language reading, second language acquisition, sociolinguistics, descriptive grammar, and computer-assisted language learning/teaching. ORCID Identifier: 0000-0001-5299-5343

### **Abstract**

Being an increasingly independent area of research in the past two decades, reading anxiety in the context of English as a foreign language (EFL) is extremely important as it is correlated with many other reading-related aspects for learners, such as strategies, proficiency, attitudes, motivation, and comprehension. The aim of this study was to investigate reading anxiety in the EFL context (referred to as EFLRA) in a sample of male undergraduate students (N = 42) enrolled in an EFL reading course at a university and majoring in English language and literature. It sought to examine the relationship between reading-anxiety levels and high and low levels of learners' reading comprehension performance in EFL reading skills. A quantitative research design was used to examine students' EFLRA scale scores and final exam scores. Results of the descriptive analysis showed students' reading-anxiety levels in EFL as "medium." Also,

“remembering words when writing summaries” and “pronouncing difficult words” were both highly ranked in provoking anxiety, whereas “inability to remember what to read” and “funny letters and symbols” were the least. In addition, an insignificantly negative relationship was shown to exist between EFLRA levels and reading-comprehension performance in the EFL context: High achievers experienced low levels of EFLRA, and low achievers had high levels of EFLRA. In the light of the findings, it is recommended that teachers implement remedial plans to overcome reading anxiety in the EFL context.

***Keywords:** comprehension, correlation, EFL reading, foreign language learning, reading anxiety*

## **Introduction**

Learning English as a foreign language (EFL) is a complex process involving many variables that may affect a learner’s success. One particular variable, anxiety, has been extensively studied and may provide evidence of anxiety’s effects on learners’ motivation, attitudes, proficiency, and performance. However, very limited research on anxiety and reading skills in L2 context (e.g. Saudi), even less is known about EFL learners’ reading anxiety at the university level and the influence this anxiety may have on their EFL reading-comprehension. The significance of this study is that it identifies EFL learners’ reading-anxiety levels as well as the factors that exacerbate this anxiety the most and the least. More importantly, the current study investigates the correlation between EFL reading anxiety and reading-comprehension performance.

## **Literature Review**

### *L2 Reading Anxiety*

Anxiety in the foreign language learning context is defined by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) as “a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behavior related to language learning arising from the uniqueness of the (foreign) language learning process” (p. 128). In other words, a foreign language learner’s inner experiences, opinions, emotions, and actions may serve as hindrances to the language-learning process in association with communication, proficiency, comprehension, etc. In the foreign

language context, the term “anxiety” refers to the type that learners experience in reading comprehension when faced with unknown vocabulary, unknown culture, and unfamiliar texts (Saito et al., 1999). Zbornik (as cited in Jalongo & Hirsh, 2010) defined anxiety in foreign language reading as “a specific, situational phobia toward the act of reading that has physical and cognitive reactions” (p. 434). Physical reactions refer to concrete symptoms (e.g., shallow breathing, feelings of faintness, tension aches) whereas cognitive reactions refer to feelings such as fear, disrespect, helplessness, and dread that learners experience when attempting to comprehend texts.

Having been extensively examined, anxiety in the EFL reading context has been proven to have a connection with several other provoking areas of anxiety (Ahmad et al., 2013; Aisyah, 2017; Al Faruq, 2019; Kuru-Gonen, 2009), learning strategies (Alharbi, 2019; Chow et al., 2018; Khatib & Jannati, 2015; Sari, 2017), gender (Al-Sohbani, 2018; Um et al., 2014), reading-comprehension performance (Baharloo, 2011; Bahmani & Farvardin, 2017; Bektas-Cetinkaya, 2011; Hassani, 2016; Jafarigohar & Behrooznia, 2012; Marzec-Stawiarska, 2013; Mohammadpur & Ghafournia, 2015; Song, 2018; Um et al., 2014; Wu, 2011), proficiency (Matsumura, 2001; Shariati & Bordbar, 2011), and use of L2 language in in\formal contexts (Boun, 2017). The areas that evoked the most EFL reading anxiety (referred to as EFLRA) were explored and found to be associated with personality, culture, textbooks, and classrooms (among others). To illustrate this point, unknown vocabulary, unfamiliar topics, unfamiliar culture, fear of making an error, and concern about reading were all areas reported as most anxiety-provoking (Ahmad et al., 2013; Aisyah (2017; Al Faruq, 2019). Also, Kuru-Gonen (2009) showed that the main sources of reading anxiety were using strategies, comprehension fear, and lack of motivation; unknown vocabulary, and complicated structures; and the book, classroom environment, and compulsory reading.

### *L2 Reading Anxiety and Comprehension*

Several researchers have explored the connections between EFLRA and reading comprehension, showing that learners’ anxiety is closely associated with their reading comprehension ability. Particularly, the less anxious learners are, the better they perform in reading-comprehension tasks (Baharloo, 2011; Bahmani & Farvardin, 2017; Bektas-



Cetinkaya, 2011; Jafarigohar & Behrooznia, 2012; Hassani, 2016; Mohammadpur & Ghafournia, 2015; Roustaei, 2015; Song, 2018; Wu, 2011).

Bektas-Cetinkaya (2011) reported that new passages and unknown words increased the reading-anxiety levels of Turkish EFL undergraduates, thus disrupting their text comprehension. In the same year, Baharloo (2011) found that Iranian university students worried more about comprehending texts than about post-reading written and oral questions, and that students with higher anxiety levels earned lower scores on post reading questions. Also, in Taiwan, Wu (2011) reported on the connection between language anxiety and reading anxiety and the negative correlation to performance: Lower anxiety levels meant higher performance levels. However, gender had no significance. Similarly, Jafarigohar and Behrooznia (2012) claimed that reading anxiety was negatively correlated with reading comprehension. Age was found to be related to anxiety and female students experienced higher levels of anxiety than male students did. Later, Roustaei, (2015) suggested that learners who experienced less anxiety in L2 reading, gained better scores on comprehension tests. Gender had no effect on students' L2 proficiency and strategy use.

One year later, Hassani (2016) found that the most impactful factors in Iranian students' EFL reading comprehension were anxiety and vocabulary, grammar, and reading Persian texts. Text difficulty, as reported by Bahmani and Farvardin (2017), could improve EFL learners' reading comprehension at the school although it increased anxiety levels for participants who had more difficult texts. Further, Chow et al. (2018) assessed 306 Chinese college students' foreign English anxiety levels in reading and speaking in conjunction with learning strategies, motivation, and performance and found that students with higher levels of anxiety scored lower marks on tests and were less motivated in EFL reading. Finally, in Korea, Song (2018) provided evidence that learners' attention and strategy use is associated with their reading comprehension: Learners with less anxiety tended to employ more global strategies, which led to higher reading comprehension scores.

### *Reading Anxiety in L2 Context*

Most studies on anxiety in the Saudi context have been focused on its relationship to other variables such as proficiency and factors causing anxiety in the EFL context in general (Al-Saraj, 2011; Alsaleem, 2020; Alsowat, 2016; Balla, 2017). Saudi EFL students are considered to have moderate to high anxiety for three major variables, including learners, language teacher, and the language-teaching process. Additionally, Saudi EFL learners have low levels of language proficiency (Al-Khairi, 2013; Alqahtani, 2011); low perceived self-esteem and shy and reluctant personalities (Hamouda, 2013); a lack of motivation (Alzayid, 2012; Khan, 2011); and a lack of peer-group membership as well as erroneous and unrealistic beliefs about learning a foreign language (Alrabai, 2014). Language teaching approaches in Saudi Arabia are still teacher-centered and inclusive of grammar-translation methods, operating in formal, strict learning environments that increase students' likelihood of making mistakes and set evaluation accordingly, thus killing the spirit of learning in the classroom (Tanveer, 2007). In terms of actual EFL reading skills, very little research, if any, has been conducted on the construct of EFL reading anxiety in conjunction with reading-comprehension performance in the Gulf countries. Examining 204 university students' anxiety levels and their preferred reading strategies, Alharbi (2019) found that participants had lower anxiety levels and often used problem-solving as a reading strategy. Alharbi further found that there was no relationship between anxiety and reading-strategy preferences.

Considering previous research, this study was designed to address the issue of EFLRA in conjunction with reading-comprehension performance in Saudi Arabia. Unlike previous studies, the participants' responses to the EFLRA scale will be correlated with their high scores and low scores to check the anxiety levels of each group based on reading-comprehension performance. The following research questions guided this inquiry:

1. What is the level of reading anxiety among Saudi undergraduates in EFL reading context?
2. What are the learners' most and least reading anxiety- provoking areas in the EFL reading context?

3. Is there any correlation between learners' EFLRA and high and low reading comprehension performance levels?

## **Method**

This study followed a quantitative exploratory research design in which the data were collected from the participants via a questionnaire and a test was correlated for any differences between learners' high and low comprehension performance and responses to EFLRA.

### *Participants*

Study participants were students enrolled in the English Language and Translation program in the Department of English at Qassim University. A sample of 42 male students out of 90 students taking a reading course (Academic Reading: ENG 237) was randomly drawn based on the participants' voluntary agreement to participate in the study. The participants shared several common characteristics, such as gender (male), age (averaged 19 years), first language (Arabic), English (their foreign language), nationality (Saudi), major (English Language and Translation), and level of study (Year 2, Level 3).

### *Data Collection*

The study followed a quantitative design in which a questionnaire on foreign language reading anxiety and a reading-comprehension performance test were used to collect the data. The data collected were specifically to explore the students' level of EFLRA (research question 1) and the most and least evoking areas of EFL reading anxiety (research question 2). Also, questionnaire data were correlated to the participants' high and low reading-comprehension performance test scores (research question 3).

The EFLRA questionnaire is an adapted version of Saito et al.'s (1999) foreign language reading anxiety (FLRA) questionnaire. To adapt the questionnaire, the researcher considered the variables of the study's context (the Saudi context), the text being read, and English as a foreign language (EFL). The EFLRA scale consisted of 25 items classified under three main dimensions: attitudes to EFL reading (7 items), factors of reading anxiety (12 items), and fear of negative evaluation (6 items). A 5-point Likert-

type scale was used and featuring “strongly disagree,” “disagree,” “neutral,” “agree,” and “strongly agree”. The EFLRA scale was designed using Google Forms, and the participants were invited to complete the form via e-mail. The EFLRA scale was applied after participants completed the exam. To ensure that participants understood the items on the questionnaire, two versions were provided (one in English and one in Arabic) after having checked the versions using translation and back translation technique by two professional translators

In terms of the test, participants’ scores on the final examination for the EFL reading course were used to assess their reading-comprehension performance. The participants were assured that the questionnaire would not affect their final examination scores. The minimum passing grade in the course (60%) was considered as the basis for splitting the participants’ grades into two groups: high performers and low performers. Therefore, the passing mark (11.5 out of 20) was the borderline between the two groups. More clearly, participants who scored 11.5 and above ( $n = 26$ ) were placed in the “high performers” group, and those who scored lower than 11.5 were placed in the “low performers” group ( $n = 16$ ). Taking into consideration the development of a reliable test that represents the reading-subject content based on a table of specifications, the reading-comprehension test was e-mailed to a group of judges whose suggestions and directions were considered, resulting in 30 items comprising the final version of the test. The descriptive and correlational analyses of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) were utilized to extract means, standard deviations, and significances.

The study instruments (i.e., reading-comprehension performance test, EFLRA questionnaire) were piloted among 20 students to check for internal consistency. (These students were excluded from the main study.) The Kuder-Richardson reliability coefficient (20) was calculated (.85). The coefficients of the questionnaire reliability scored (.91). At the level of the three dimensions, attitudes to EFL reading dimension scored (.83), anxiety provoking areas dimension (.87), and fear of negative evaluation dimension (.80). The following table shows the reliability coefficients of EFLRA.

Table 1. EFLRA Questionnaire Reliability

Domain	Number of Items (N = 25)	Cronbach's $\alpha$
Attitudes to EFL reading	7	.83
Anxiety-provoking areas	12	.87
Fear of negative evaluation	6	.80
EFLRA (total)	25	.91

## Results

Research Question 1: *What is the level of reading anxiety among Saudi undergraduates in EFL reading context?*

The following figure (Figure 1) presents the descriptive statistics of participants' responses to the EFLRA questionnaire to identify their anxiety levels in terms of *M*s and *SD*s.

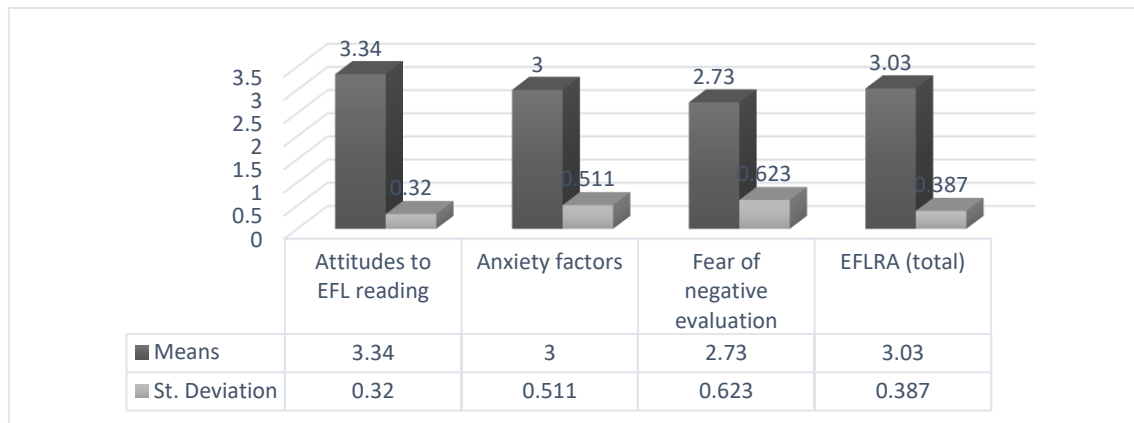


Figure 1. EFLRA Questionnaire Descriptive Statistics

The figure shows the respondents' EFLRA levels as medium ( $M = 3.03$ ,  $SD = .387$ ). Their attitudes toward EFL reading topped all three domains ( $M = 3.34$ ,  $SD = .320$ ), followed by the anxiety-provoking areas domain ( $M = 3.00$ ,  $SD = .511$ ). Fear of negative evaluation came last ( $M = 2.73$ ,  $SD = .623$ ).

Research Question 2: *What are the learners' most and least reading anxiety-provoking areas in the EFL reading context?*

Table 2 displays the respondents' reading anxiety-provoking areas where learners have experienced anxiety in terms of *Ms* and *SDs*.

Table 2. Respondents' Most and Least Anxiety-Provoking Areas

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Anxiety-Provoking Areas	3.00	0.511
I am anxious when I am reading an English passage and cannot quite understand what the author is saying.	2.83	1.208
When I am reading in English, I get so confused that I cannot remember what I am reading.	2.29	1.066
I am nervous when I am reading a passage in English and not familiar with the topic.	3.00	1.104
I get upset whenever I encounter unknown grammar when I am reading in English.	3.00	1.169
When I am reading in English, I get nervous and confused when I do not understand every word.	3.00	1.148
It bothers me to encounter words I cannot pronounce while I am reading in English.	3.76	1.100
I am upset when I cannot remember the right word when summarizing a passage in English.	3.88	0.772
I feel nervous when I cannot use new words in sentences in English.	2.93	1.113
By the time I get past the funny letters and symbols in English, it is hard to remember what I am reading about.	2.36	0.850
I am worried about all the new symbols I have to learn in order to read in English.	2.57	0.859
I am worried about the consequences of failing my reading course.	3.45	1.292
I feel very uncomfortable when I have to read in English aloud.	2.90	1.322

According to Table 2, respondents scored at the medium level in the domain of EFL reading anxiety-provoking areas ( $M = 3.00$ ,  $SD = 0.511$ ). They experienced the highest levels of anxiety in remembering the right words in writing summary ( $M = 3.88$ ,

$SD = 0.772$ ) and encountering words that were difficult to pronounce while reading in English ( $M = 3.76, SD = 1.100$ ). The lowest areas of anxiety were confusion when they could not remember what they were reading ( $M = 2.29, SD = 1.066$ ) and the funny letters and symbols that make it hard to remember what they were reading ( $M = 2.36, SD = 0.850$ ).

Research Question 3: *Is there any correlation between the learners' EFLRA and high and low reading-comprehension performance levels?*

The participants' responses ( $N = 42$ ) to the EFLRA questionnaire and reading-comprehension performance test were correlated using Pearson Correlation. As shown in the Table 4, there is an insignificantly negative correlation between EFLRA scale score and performance test in total (.495).

Table 4. Correlation between Participants' Responses to EFLRA and Reading-Comprehension Test

Domain		Overall Test Results	High performers Test Results	Low Performers Test Results
Attitudes toward EFL reading	Pearson Correlation	-.255	-.286	-.243
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.104	.157	.364
	N	42	26	16
EFL reading-anxiety areas	Pearson Correlation	-.009	-.301	.030
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.954	.136	.911
	N	42	26	16
Fear of negative evaluation	Pearson Correlation	-.113	-.297	-.398
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.478	.140	.127
	N	42	26	16
EFLRA questionnaire	Pearson Correlation	-.108	-.367	-.202
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.495	.065	.454
	N	42	26	16

In addition, the table shows a negative (but insignificant) correlation between high performers' (n = 26) responses to the scale and test results (.065). Also, low performers' (n = 16) responses and results were negatively correlated (.454). The negative correlation between the EFLRA scale score and reading-comprehension performance test score is also reflected in the sub-dimensions of EFLRA scale.

## **Findings and Discussion**

The findings of the current study suggest that students' EFL reading-anxiety levels were "medium." Students experienced high anxiety in remembering words when writing summaries and pronouncing difficult words when reading in English. Inability to remember what to read and the funny letters and symbols were the areas that provoked the least anxiety. Also, EFLRA was found to negatively affect students' reading-comprehension performance; however, this finding was insignificant. This means that the lower students' EFLRA levels, the higher their reading-comprehension performance levels and vice versa.

The current study shows that students' anxiety levels were medium, which is in contrast to previous research. Baharloo (2011) revealed that foreign language students felt highly anxious about foreign language reading. Also, in the general EFL context, Alrabai (2014) indicated that Saudi students experienced high levels of anxiety in the classroom as attributed to three major variables: learners, teachers, and teaching methods.

Another interesting finding pertained to the most anxiety-provoking areas, remembering words when writing summaries and pronouncing difficult words while reading in English while inability to remember what to read and the funny letters and symbols were the areas that least provoked anxiety. This finding accords partially with studies such as Bektas-Cetinkaya (2011), who showed that unfamiliar vocabulary or contexts elevated reading anxiety, thus disrupting reading comprehension. Opposite of the study finding, Baharloo (2011) reported that students' actual process of foreign language reading, written recall tasks, reading aloud, and answering oral questions were the most anxiety-inducing areas. According to Bahmani and Farvardin (2017), a text's level of difficulty played a major role in the increase and decrease of learners' anxiety levels. Justification of these contrasting findings could be attributed to variation of the



study context, the texts being read, teaching methods, and/or participants' levels of English proficiency.

The most interesting finding was that the negative correlation between learners' EFLRA levels and reading-comprehension performance is strongly proven in the literature. Wu (2011) identified a general link between lower reading anxiety levels and higher reading-comprehension performance. The findings also reflect those of Baharloo (2011), who revealed a negative correlation between learners' anxiety levels and their performance on reading tasks. In addition, the findings corroborate the ideas of Chow et al. (2018), who suggested that students' EFL performance and motivation in using learning strategies predicted reading and listening anxiety areas. Consistently, Song (2018) argued that reading anxiety and global learning strategies contributed to the prediction of reading comprehension where students who had less anxiety and used more global strategies achieved better results in reading comprehension.

## **Conclusion**

This study further highlights the negative link between the constructs of EFLRA and reading-comprehension performance in the EFL reading context. It also exhibits some of the most anxiety-provoking areas for EFL learners. Taken together, the findings of this study suggest that working to lower students' anxiety levels should be a high priority because of its direct relationship with student' reading comprehension. Teachers are encouraged to assist students in overcoming anxiety using a number of strategies, as suggested by Oxford (1990), such as relaxing, taking deep breaths, meditating, listening to music, and engaging in laughter. The small number of participants limits the generalizability of the study findings. Also, this study is exploratory in nature—no actual experiment that may lead to the emergence of causal explanations of EFLRA and reading-comprehension performance was applied. Finally, the study is limited by the absence of female students due to sex-based segregation in the Saudi education system. Future researchers could experimentally focus on the application of anxiety-reduction training and assess students' post-program levels of reading comprehension. Also, a qualitative study using the “think aloud” method that could uncover the actual causes of and remedies for reading anxiety is highly recommended.

## **Pedagogical Implications**

The study findings implicate for the importance of handling the issue of EFLRA in EFL reading context. The study reported a negative correlation between the level of EFLRA and reading comprehension performance. That is to say, the more the students' level of EFLRA increases, the more their reading comprehension decreases. Therefore, the students' level of EFLRA can be considered as a predictor of their reading comprehension performance. Consequently, it is highly important to employ strategies that reduce the level of EFLRA in EFL reading as it contributes directly to the students' reading comprehension.

## **References**

- Ahmad, I. S., Al-Shboul, M. M., Nordin, M. S., Rahman, Z. A., Burhan, M., & Madarsha, K. B. (2013). The Potential Sources of Foreign Language Reading Anxiety in a Jordanian EFL Context: A Theoretical Framework. *English Language Teaching*, 6(11), 89–110. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n11p89>
- Aisyah, J. (2017). Students' Reading Anxiety in English Foreign Language Classroom. *Journal of English and Education*, 5(1), 56–63.
- Al Faruq, A. Z. (2019). Reading anxiety in English as a Foreign Language for Undergraduate Students in Indonesia. *Teaching and Learning English in Multicultural Contexts*, 3(2), 88–95.
- Alharbi, S. O. (2019). The relationship between EFL Learners' Reading Rnxiety and their Reading Strategy Preference. *Electronic Interdisciplinary Miscellaneous Journal*, 16, 1–38.
- Al-Khairy, M. H. (2013). English as a Foreign Language Learning Demotivational Factors as Perceived by Saudi Undergraduates. *European Scientific Journal*, 9, 365–382. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v6n6p1>
- Alqahtani, M. (2011). *An Investigation of the Language Needs of Saudi Students Studying in British Postgraduates Programmes and the Cultural Differences Impacting on them* (Unpublished PhD thesis). University of Southampton.
- Arabai, F. (2014). A Model of Foreign Language Anxiety in the Saudi EFL Context. *English Language Teaching*, 7(7), 82–101. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v7n7p82>

- Alsaleem, A. A. (2020). Review of Foreign Language Anxiety Relationship with Language Achievement of EFL Students in Saudi Arabia. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 10(1), 305–313. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v10n1p305>
- Al-Saraj, T. M. (2011). *Exploring Foreign Language Anxiety in Saudi Arabia: A Study of Female English as Foreign Language College Students* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). Institute of Education, University of London.
- Al-Sohbani, Y. A. Y. (2018). Foreign Language Reading Anxiety among Yemeni Secondary School Students. *International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies*, 6(1), 57–65. <https://doi.org/10.12785/jtte/030103>
- Alsowat, H. H. (2016). Foreign Language Anxiety in Higher Education: A Practical Framework for Reducing FLA. *European Scientific Journal*, 12(7), 193–220. <https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2016.v12n7p193>
- Alzayid, A. (2012). *The Role of Motivation in the L2 Acquisition of English by Saudi Students: A Dynamic Perspective* (Unpublished master's thesis). Southern Illinois University Carbondale.
- Baharloo, A. (2011). The Anxiety about L2 Reading Tasks. *The Iranian EFL Journal*, 85(386), 100–116.
- Bahmani, R., & Farvardin, M. T. (2017). Effects of Different Text Difficulty Levels on EFL Learners' Foreign Language Reading Anxiety and Reading Comprehension. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 29(2), 185–202.
- Balla, A. A. S. (2017). Foreign Language Anxiety in Saudi Classroom: A Case Study of Saudi Tertiary Female Students in Prince Sattam University. *English Language Teaching*, 10(5), 28–36. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v10n5p28>
- Bektas-Cetinkaya, Y. (2011). Foreign Language Reading Anxiety: A Turkish Case. *The Journal of Language Learning and Teaching*, 1(2), 44–56.
- Boun, S. (2017). Social Psychological Impacts on Language Use: Anxiety among Cambodian University Students. *TESOL International Journal*, 12(2), 16–31.
- Chow, B. W., Chiu, H. T., & Wong, S. W. (2018). Anxiety in Reading and Listening English as a Foreign Language in Chinese Undergraduate Students. *Language Teaching Research*, 22, 719–738. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168817702159>

- Hamouda, A. (2013). An Exploration of Causes of Saudi Students' Reluctance to Participate in the English Language Classroom. *International Journal of English Language Education*, 1, 17–34. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijele.v1i1.2652>
- Hassani, S. (2016). *Effects of Reading Anxiety, First Language Reading and English as Foreign Language Proficiency on English Reading Comprehension*. (Doctoral dissertation).Universiti Teknologi Malaysia.
- Jafarigohar, M., & Behrooznia, S. (2012). The Effect of Anxiety on Reading Comprehension among Distance EFL Learners. *International Education Studies*, 5(2), 159–174.
- Jalongo, M. R., & Hirsh, R. A. (2010). Understanding Reading Anxiety: New Insights from Neuroscience. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 37(6), 431–435. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v5n2p159>
- Khan, I. (2011). Learning Difficulties in English: Diagnosis and Pedagogy in Saudi Arabia. *Educational Research*, 2, 1248-1257.
- Khatib, M., & Jannati, S. (2015). Comprehension Strategy Instruction and Iranian High School EFL Learners' Reading Anxiety and Reading Comprehension. *Issues in Language Teaching*, 4(2), 79–57.
- Kuru-Gonen, I. (2009). The Sources of Foreign Language Reading Anxiety of Students in a Turkish EFL Context. Paper presented at the *5th WSEAS/IASME International Conference on EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES* (EDUTE' 09), Spain.
- Marzec-Stawiarska, M. (2013). Foreign Language Reading Anxiety among Advanced Students of English—a Pilot Study. *Acta Neophilologica*, 1(15), 89–102.
- Matsumura, Y. (2001). An Inquiry into Foreign Language Reading Anxiety among Japanese EFL Learners. *Eibeibunka: Studies in English Language, Literature and Culture*, 31, 23–38.
- Mohammadpur, B., & Ghafournia, N. (2015). An Elaboration on the Effect of Reading Anxiety on Reading Achievement. *English Language Teaching*, 8(7), 206–215. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v8n7p206>
- Oxford, R. L. (1990). *Language Learning Strategies: What every Teacher should Know*. Heinle and Heinle.

- Rajab, A., Zakaria, W. Z. W., Rahman, H. A., Hosni, A. D., & Hassani, S. (2012). Reading Anxiety among Second Language Learners. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 66, 362–369. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.11.279>
- Roustaei, M. (2015). Reading Anxiety and its Relation to Reading Proficiency, Reading Strategy, and Gender: The Case of Iranian EFL Learners. *Asian EFL Journal*, 94, 4–32.
- Saito, Y., Garza, T. J., & Horwitz, E. K. (1999). Foreign Language Reading Anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 83(2), 202–218. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0026-7902.00016>
- Sari, W. P. (2017). The Relationship between Reading Anxiety and Reading Strategy Used by EFL Student Teachers. *Edukasi: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran*, 4(2), 1–9.
- Shariati, M., & Bordbar, A. (2011). Interrelationship among Foreign Language Reading Anxiety, Reading Proficiency and Text Feature Awareness in the University Context. *Iranian Journal of Applied Language Studies*, 1(2), 179–206.
- Song, J. (2018). Relationships among Reading Anxiety, Reading Processing, and Reading Comprehension. *Foreign Languages Education*, 25(2), 83–113. <https://doi.org/10.15334/fle.2018.25.2.83>
- Tanveer, M. (2007). *Investigation of the Factors that Cause Language Anxiety for ESL/EFL Learners in Learning Speaking Skills and the Influence it Casts on Communication in the Target Language* (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Glasgow.
- Um, S., Tubsree, C., & Surasin, J. (2014). Perception on English Reading Comprehension Anxiety of Third Year EFL Students at the Institute of Foreign Languages, Cambodia. *HRD Journal*, 4(1), 34–46.
- Wu, H. J. (2011). Anxiety and Reading Comprehension Performance in English as a Foreign Language. *Asian EFL Journal*, 13(2), 273–307.



## **The Impact of Integrating Digital Technologies with Learners' Multiple Intelligences to Facilitate Learning English as a Foreign Language**

**Wafa' A. Hazaymeh**

Al-Ain University, Al Ain, United Arab Emirates

[wafa.hazaymeh@aau.ac.ae](mailto:wafa.hazaymeh@aau.ac.ae)

### **Bio-profile:**

**Dr. Wafa' A. Hazaymeh** is an Assistant Professor in the Curriculum and Teaching Methods of English Language (Sub Major: Applied Linguistics) at Al-Ain University, UAE. Her research interests mainly lie in the areas of Curriculum and Pedagogy, Innovative English Language Teaching Methods and Instructional Technology, E-learning and English Language Acquisition and Applied Linguistics. She published several research in the concerned field.

### **Abstract**

This study aimed to investigate the impact of integrating digital technologies with learners' multiple intelligences to increase learners' performance in reading, grammar, vocabulary and listening skills via two digital resources. 37 undergraduate students participated in this study with four tools applied to get the results: McKenzie's MI Inventory Survey was conducted to measure the participants' intelligence types, Oxford Online English Test was used as pre-test and post-test to assess the participants' language proficiency development, Pearson correlation analysis to find out the relationships between the learners' achievements in English skills and intelligence types and a form filled by the participants compromising of the digital technologies used to stimulate their dominant MI and foster their English language skills. Data analysis revealed a very strong positive correlation between overall MI and participants scores in vocabulary and grammar which can be considered of a large effect, a medium positive correlation

between reading and overall MI, but no significant correlation between overall MI and listening comprehension. The findings showed statistically significant differences between the pre- and post-tests in favour of the post-test which indicated using digital technologies were successfully enhanced EFL participants' skills. The study also suggested various digital technologies that could foster learners' English language proficiency.

**Keywords:** *Digital Technologies, Multiple Intelligences, Learning English as a Foreign Language*

## **Introduction**

Learning abilities are varied among students based on their preferences and intelligence; therefore, in 1983, the constructivist, Howard Gardner listed in his book “Frames of the Mind” nine bits of intelligence and called it the “Theory of Multiple Intelligence (MI)” which applied to all ages, to explain how human beings learn in different ways. He described human nature from a cognitive perspective that is people have their learning styles and the desirable teaching strategies. According to MI theory, these MI are verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical-rhythmic, intrapersonal, interpersonal, environmental-naturalist and existential. Gardner also stated that all human beings own all MI but in different amounts which can be encouraged, reinforced or weakened. Educators can improve students' MI through various teaching strategies. Simply speaking, instructional technology is a form of technology that supports better instruction, teaching and learning (Gardner, 1983). The digital forums and platforms used currently to facilitate education are a fine example of instruction technology. Using digital technology in education can provide teachers and students with amazing resources and opportunities for new learning methods. Via digital technologies, roles are changed as well, teachers guide the learning process and learners become more responsible for their learning.

In general, technology has affected all aspects of life including education. Therefore, when technology is being involved in the education process, opportunities for communication, interaction and collaboration among learners shall be increased. In this

era, students are known as digital students or digital generations because they use different digital technologies to communicate and access information from multiple resources that help to facilitate the teaching process effectively and driving them to be more active in the class. So using technology in the educational field could be beneficial for all learners. They can access all electronic sources of information such as databases, websites, virtual libraries, e-books, and repositories. They also can follow their instructors' bloggers, chat directly using special platforms or via e-mails, attend audio or video conferences, share their projects, wikis and documents with groups. Moreover, the integration of audio-visual aids with content delivery has changed the way of teaching and learning various subjects. For instance, the audio-visual teaching method has made it possible for EFL teachers to illustrate English language concepts through the use of images and videos that improve comprehension and retention and motivate students to learn appropriately (Ashaver & Igyuve, 2013; Oyesola, 2014; Ho& Intai, 2017).

Furthermore, students of the 21st century are named as digital generations who have engaged in digital environments to communicate and access information from multiple technological resources. When integrating technology into the curriculum, learning improvements will be achieved successfully. Besides, digital students are studying in innovative learning strategies which requires effective and collaborative creators of digital media (Himmelsbach, 2019).

Besides, utilizing an encouraging environment can improve their performance and achievements in learning English language skills. Putting in mind that applying digital technologies in education is the major change that has occurred in the learning and teaching process. It can empower educators and students to be successfully engaged more in pedagogy to “maximize students’ learning potential” (Aliweh, 2011).

However, Shelly et al, 2013 stated that educators and learners should gain three levels of computer literacy needed for the accomplishment of digital learning: Computer literacy to focus on current knowledge and understanding of technology uses; Information literacy to find, analyze, use and communicate information effectively; Integration literacy to combine technologies with a variety of teaching and learning strategies to enhance students’ learning. Therefore, learning environments are important for adapting and



organizing a system comprises applicable software to enable educators and students to access their courses and other educational resources easily without any cost.

To develop EFL learners' skill, educators have to think of the effective use of integrating an understanding of students' MI with developing an awareness of digital technologies. Learning more about MI can help learners understand their strengths to achieve more confidence and success. Moreover, educators need to think carefully about the efficiency of digital tools to be used as an instructional strategy to help EFL learners develop their language literacy purposefully. Therefore, selecting technological tools should be depending on students MI with their learning style to create a variety of choices for students' learning and interaction; otherwise, technology will be impractical. Gardner (2005) defines intelligence as "a biopsychological information-processing ability" that helps people to solve problems in daily life. Therefore, when educators diagnose their students' MI, they can use the various methods to teach English skills effectively. Once teachers apply MI in teaching English, it can help their students to develop an understanding of their strength which support them to choose the favourite method for demonstrating language learning and being a guide for teachers to develop lesson plans based on the learners' needs (Derakhshan & Faribi, 2015). Armstrong (2009) stated that creative teachers are always combining MI in their instructional methods moving from linguistic to visual to musical and so on.

Therefore, this study aimed to explore participants' MI types and the relationship between and English language skills performance and then to investigate the impact of digital technologies including online resources, websites, applications and e-activities on developing participants' language proficiency based on their types of MI. To study tried to answer

1. What types of multiple intelligences do participants have?
2. Do digital technologies and e-activities have a significant impact on developing undergraduate EFL participants' English language proficiency?
3. Is there any association between participants' dominant MI and English language skills?
4. What types of digital technologies can stimulate participants' dominant of intelligence and enhance their English language skills?

## **Theoretical Background**

Several studies have identified the relationship between MI and EFL performance in reading, word recognition, grammar and listening skills. Since it came as an alternative approach to traditional teaching, MI has been embraced by educators looking for what it offers: a variety of teaching strategies and reaching more learners. Researchers proved that MI-based instruction had positive effects in achieving the learning outcomes and improving students' language skills (Armstrong, 2009; Madkour & Mohammed, 2016). Sulaiman et al (2011) study revealed that integrating MI with instructional technology into an English classroom is considered "a vital learning environment for students". Therefore, educators should realize its importance in encouraging students to depend on their abilities to control their learning.

Various studies focus on the relationships between MI and EFL learners' performance and learning styles. For example, a research conducted by Bas & Beyhan (2010) to explore the effect of MI-based instruction on increasing English language proficiency resulted in optimistic outcomes in which students were highly motivated to learn English successfully. Mankad (2015) also added that there is an affirmative impact of integrating MI by using instructional technologies on students learning styles.

Zarei & Afshar (2014) study revealed that some MI types such as musical, interpersonal, kinesthetic and logical were predictors of reading comprehension while musical, visual, kinesthetic and natural MI were predictors of vocabulary knowledge.

Vongkrahchang & Chinwonno (2016) investigated the impact of personal intelligence reading instruction on students' English reading ability and engagement. The findings of the study showed that there is a close correlation between reading skill improvement and reading teaching strategies which foster their confidence and reading ability. It also revealed that the students displayed a preference for intrapersonal and interpersonal with reading strategies through understanding the writers' ideas and then sharing these ideas with their peers to discuss and analyze the reading text freely.

Sogutlu (2018) showed that there was no relationship between intelligent types and students' scores in reading skill but a low positive correlation between vocabulary and logical intelligence and low negative correlation with bodily and interpersonal intelligence. Besides, the study revealed there was a significant but negative relationship

between students' success in grammar and bodily and interpersonal intelligence. A second study by Sogutlu & Coşkun (2018) showed that only kinesthetic and interpersonal MI correlated negatively with students' grammar success. However, the findings also displayed that there is no correlation between any type of learners' MI and vocabulary and writing performance.

Another study by Celik (2019) indicated that reading comprehension skills were significantly developed and there was a considerable correlation between intelligence activities and students' reading performance. Besides MI profiles displayed a quick development in reading skills among EFL students.

Xhomara & Shkemi (2020) stated that there is an association between MI and students' learning styles. The findings of their study indicated that there is a connection between most of MI types such as verbal, visual, logical, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, naturalist and kinesthetic MI with learning styles, story-telling, studying, problem-solving and listening skills.

### **MI Theory and Language Learning**

Nowadays, learning languages has become of great significance in a variety of fields because the world, which involves many cultures of different origins, is increasingly globalized and interconnected. As a result, the language learning process and skills are given great emphasis to facilitate language proficiency for learners with different cognitive skills. Learners are influenced by numerous psychological and social factors therefore; psychologists concentrate on how people learn rather what to learn. Besides, digital technology, application and software activities could be of great value to motivate and fulfil learners need. The Theory of Multiple Intelligence revolutionized education by suggesting "several other ways in which the material might be presented to facilitate effective learning" (Armstrong, 2009).

Learners are effectively influenced by Multiple Intelligence theory in which students can learn in many ways to discover their strengths and weaknesses that could help to facilitate and control their learning process. (Gardner, 2006).

Furthermore, Gardner (1983) has outlined a new theory of MI which suggests that all humans possess various types of intelligence and that the classical traditional notion

of intelligence is too limited. According to what Gardener reported, there are various types of intelligence. Gardener presented in 1983 seven MI, increased them to nine in 1999 as follows:

1. Verbal-linguistic Intelligence: the ability to create using spoken or written language. People with high verbal-linguistic intelligence are efficient at reading, writing, and telling stories (Gardner, 1983).
2. Logical-mathematical Intelligence: the ability to deal with logic, abstractions, reasoning and numbers, i.e. the ability to manipulate and understanding and reasoning effectively (Gardner, 1983).
3. Interpersonal Intelligence: Human ability to communicate effectively in diverse social and cultural settings; i.e. the ability to perceive the moods, motivations, and emotions (Gardner, 1983).
4. Intrapersonal Intelligence: refers to self-reflective capacities, having a deep understanding of the self, its strengths and weaknesses, and to be able to predict one's reactions and emotions; i.e. having a positive self-concept and life direction which exists intrinsically to help people having competency in knowing themselves and acting to modify their errors based on self-knowledge (Gardner, 1983).
5. Musical-rhythmic Intelligence: the ability and sensitivity to deal with sounds, rhythms, tones, and music, and the ability to appreciate, distinguish, compose, and perform various musical forms (Gardner, 1983).
6. Visual-spatial Intelligence: the human ability to do activities which require spatial judgment. People with a high level of Visual-spatial Intelligence can visualize with the mind's eye. Thus, visual-spatial intelligence is characterized by being able to see an image or a situation and assess the areas that can be modified to transform their appearance (Gardner, 1983)
7. Bodily-kinesthetic Intelligence: the ability to use one's bodily motions and the capacity to handle objects skillfully; i.e., the proficiency of using the entire body to express ideas and feelings (Gardner, 1983).
8. Existential Intelligence: the ability to contemplate phenomena or questions beyond sensory data, such as the infinite; the appreciation of spirituality and understanding questions about life and the universe (Gardner, 1999).

9. Naturalistic Intelligence: the ability to understand nature and to interact with natural surroundings such as classifying creature species, and identifying natural phenomena; and using such knowledge in developing skills in real life (Gardner, 1999).

Mackenzy (2005) also grouped these MI into three domains: the interactive, analytic, and introspective to concentrate on the interaction of the various MI in the classroom.

1. The interactive domain consists of verbal, interpersonal, and kinesthetic MI. Learners typically employ these MI to express themselves and explore their environment.
2. The analytic domain consists of the musical, logical, and naturalist MI, which promote learner's analysis of data and knowledge.
3. The introspective domain consists of the existential, intrapersonal. and visual MI. These MI have a distinctly affective component.

Consequently, this theory has drawn considerable attention toward the possibility of applying different techniques to effectively present the material to the learners taking into account their MI to enhance learning efficacy (Armstrong, 2003). This approach can be applied to teach the four language skills which are reading, writing, listening and speaking by using a variety of suitable activities to facilitate and control the learning process for learners depending on their dominant types of intelligence. Moreover, technological improvements, computers, technological applications, and software programs can be used to deliver activities to teach language skills efficiently.

Depending on Gardener's theory, people tend to create and use their methods to learn a foreign language that is effective to meet their needs as learners with specific MI. For instance, for learning vocabulary, some learners prefer to memorize the words as they are, while others like to use the words in meaningful sentences to make sense and learn easier. However, some students prefer to divide the words into their syllables and memorize each part. Others try to create a mental image of the meaning of the word to remember it easily. Moreover, some students adopt mnemonics to facilitate the process (Palmberg, 2009). Thus, the language teaching process will also be affected as the teacher have to change their presentation style for the information from one intelligent to another,

to meet the needs and improve the weaknesses of each student. In this case, technology can play a major role in directing this process easily and efficiently.

### **Integrating Digital Technologies with MI**

Integrating instructional technology with MI has worked wonders for the students of various MI groups (Gardner, 2004). Incorporating technology in the learning/ teaching process is essential to improve the learners' language skills like reading, speaking, listening, and writing and enhance their fluency (Wang, 2005). Nowadays, there are many technologies, websites and apps that can help learners all around the world learn easily. Learners must know what method of learning is effective for learning easily based on their MI. The main benefits of digital resources can be:

1. To provide participants with opportunities to discover the style they prefer to learn with.
2. To support interaction with a teacher or peer- to- peer discussion outside the class to enhance their communication skills, critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills and ultimately English language skills through exchanging ideas and debates.
3. To enable learners practising learning the English language continuously after the class in their free time.
4. To allow direct contact with learners outside the class and give teachers effective feedback about their lesson.
5. To assess the course learning outcomes directly by asking learners, for example, to use certain concepts to suggest a solution or watch a video contains a dialogue between two native speakers and fill the missing statements with the correct expressions.

Walter McKenzie (2010) shows that instructional technology can be the ideal tool to apply MI theory to the EFL classroom through a wide range of activities gathered as follows:

1. Verbal Linguistic Intelligence: Keyboards, electronic mail, speech recognition devices, text bridges.
2. Logical-Mathematical Intelligence: Graphing calculators, FTP clients, gophers, search engines.

3. Visual Special Intelligence: Monitors, digital cameras, camcorders, scanners.
4. Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence: Mousses, joysticks, assistive technologies.
5. Musical Intelligence: Speakers, CD-ROM discs, CD-ROM players.
6. Intrapersonal Intelligence: Online forms, real-time projects.
7. Interpersonal Intelligence: Chats, message boards, instant messengers.
8. Naturalistic Intelligence: Floppy drives, file managers, semantic mapping tools.
9. Existential Intelligence: MUVES, virtual reality, virtual communities, blogs, wikis, simulations.

Moreover, Christensen et al. (2018) stated that to enhance students' success in learning is not to focus on the technology itself but rather to focus on the instructional goals. Therefore, educators should be aware of incorporating technology with various theories such as MI theory to reinforce learners' abilities.

### **Participants and Procedures**

The participants of this study were 90 undergraduates EFL learners in their first year. They were between 18 and 20 years old registering English course during the Second Semester of the academic 2020. In this semester, educational institutions around the world have been forced to adopt online learning because of COVID-19 Pandemic. Consequently, the researcher depends on education technology to enable online education to be more accessible and manageable. To measure the participants' MI types, McKenzie's MI Inventory survey (1999) was conducted in the first week of the study. It comprises of 10 items for each type of MI and a total of 90 statements related to nine different MI proposed by Gardner. Respondents were required to complete the inventory which was a Likert-scale from 0-5 with 0 for totally disagree and 5 for totally agree. The participants' scores in reading, grammar, vocabulary and listening obtained by means Oxford Online English Test (<https://www.oxfordonlineenglish.com/english-level-test>). It was used as a pre-test and post-test to examine the participants' language proficiency development. It covers reading, grammar, vocabulary and listening comprehension. Oxford Online proficiency test is designed to measure learners' proficiency in basic language skills. It consists of 124 multiple-choice items including reading comprehension (20 questions), grammar (40 questions), vocabulary (40 questions) and listening

comprehension (24 questions). The test has shown its reliability and validity in various EFL studies. These skills have been conducted online and the test was difficulty adjusted according to the participants' responses to make it more interesting, shorter, and give a more accurate measurement than traditional proficiency tests. Regarding the listening level test, participants were listening to 6 sound files. Each file has a short conversation followed by four questions to be answered. To get a precise result, participants are allowed to listen only once. Results are obtained after completing all questions. Participants total scores of reading, vocabulary, grammar and listening skills were calculated immediately after the test while the relationship between participants' intelligence types and their scores in each skill was analyzed by (SPSS) Pearson correlation test. Finally, participants filled a form about the types of digital technologies they use to stimulate their dominant MI and foster their English language skills.

### **The Instrument**

The course was completely delivered via digital platforms where students can access and review their recording lessons at their convenience. Using digital platforms can allow learners to participate, interact and communicate either individually or in small-group discussions. Thus, the researcher used various digital resources in this study to enhance participants' motivation and concentration during activities and discussions for improving and facilitating their learning skills. The digital technologies were including online resources, websites, applications and e-activities based on participants' types of MI that can improve their language proficiency through word recognition, reading, writing, listening and speaking comprehension skills and increase their motivation to solve their problems in learning the English language. These digital technologies can also make a quick change in their English to use in studying, working, or talking freely with native speakers.

Digital resources can be valuable tools to let students master language skills rather than memorize it. For example, Duolingo as a digital resource was used to develop participants' English language skills which address many MI such as: Verbal, Visual, Musical, Intrapersonal and Interpersonal. Duolingo is a free language learning platform including online translation service. It was created by Ahn and Hacker in 2009 with a lot



of features available in Web version which can be easily downloaded and used to increase participants' language skills such as listening to conversations, speaking, reading and writing full sentences through providing numerous videos and effective for MI types such as verbal, logical, musical, and the visual. In an interview with The Guardian (2014), Ahn stated that Duolingo was created as "the way to learn languages for free". It provides learners with a schedule to be used daily or weekly depending on their language level. Information is given utilizing exercises centered on new vocabularies through pictures or stories. For example, it is used to help learners choose the English sounding word out of a series of words, master the correct pronunciation and meaning of the given words, write 1-2 sentences describing the provided picture, then followed by a direct quiz to assess their understanding of the lesson. Duolingo is "scientifically proven" because it trumps university-level language learning (Vasselinov and Grego, 2012).

Duolingo is beneficial for undergraduate learners to support their learning process, communicate, interact and compete with others. Besides, it offers personalized tasks for each learner to recover their low-ability in any skill and develop self-improvement. If the learners missed their classes, it reminds them with a notification to achieve their daily goals. When they accomplished their tasks, it surprises them with a reward such as a sound or a picture. According to Duolingo learning plan [www.duolingo.com](http://www.duolingo.com), each lesson covers a variety of reading, listening, speaking, translation and multiple-choice challenges. Besides, lessons comprise a various category of exercises such as translation exercises to translate from one language to another; matching exercises to match photos with the word given; paring exercises to pair equivalent words of two languages; listening exercises to listen to short phrases and write it correctly; speaking exercises to repeat what they hear successfully; grammar exercises to let them deduce the rules till they reach the correct answer through trial and error. Then, it gives a correction to their mistakes and allows them to repeat the lesson whenever they want (Nushi & Eqbali, 2017; Karjo & Andreani, 2018; Luke et al, 2018).

Wattpad was also used as an application which has millions of free and interesting stories. It also allows users to express their talent through writing anonymously where millions of people would read them and give constructive criticism which motivates them

and gets them excited about language and literature. Therefore, it can be great for those who have linguistic, intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence.

It could improve learners' reading comprehension and practicing creative writing. It is also useful for improving learners' speaking skill by focusing on different patterns of a language in terms of grammar use or appropriateness of language. Intrapersonal intelligence implies the desire to know oneself. learners who own this would be able to comprehend their thoughts and feelings, motivations, fears, aspirations, self-disciplines and identify the strengths and flaws they have. This platform may increase learners' motivation for studying something they are good at and be more confident to express themselves well in writing skill and problem-solving. Interpersonal intelligence which focuses mainly on personal social skills and how to interact with others effectively, understand them and respond to them appropriately. It helps learners to develop the quality of their listening, speaking and writing skills through communicating with their colleagues who can offer support and encouragement. It also allows constructive criticism and communication about their interests in writing. The various test was also used as free practice tests ([www.examenglish.com](http://www.examenglish.com)) for learners of English to train participants on online practice tests during the course.

### **Data Analysis**

This study aims to investigate the impact of integrating instructional technologies with MI activities on developing learners' language proficiency. The descriptive statistics of the study were accomplished by analyzing participants' intelligence types and their scores in reading, grammar, vocabulary and listening using SPSS. Then, the correlation between the EFL participants scores in English language proficiency test and their MI were analyzed by Pearson correlation analysis.

### **Findings and Discussion**

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of participants' intelligence type in descending order in which verbal intelligence participants' mean scores are the highest and existential intelligence participants' mean score is the lowest.

The descriptive analysis as shown in Table 1 revealed that the leading intelligence was verbal linguistics intelligence (M=2.92), followed by interpersonal intelligence (M= 2.73), intrapersonal intelligence (M= 2.51), musical-rhythmic intelligence (M= 2.43) and visual-spatial intelligence (M= 2.30).

Whereas, logical-mathematical and bodily-kinesthetic were slightly less common (M= 2.22) and (M= 2.19) respectively. However, naturalistic and existential were scored the lowest with respective means of (M= 2.11) and (M= 2.08). The intelligence with the highest standard deviation was among participants who tended the two highest common MI: interpersonal and musical-rhythmic with the value of (SD= 1.63) and the moderated bodily-kinesthetic intelligence (SD= 1.60). However, intelligence with the lowest variation among participants was naturalistic intelligence (SD= 1.10).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Participants' Intelligence Types

<b>Intelligence Type</b>	<b>No.</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Verbal-Linguistics	37	2.92	1.34
Interpersonal	37	2.73	1.63
Intrapersonal	37	2.51	1.24
Musical-rhythmic	37	2.43	1.63
Visual-Spatial	37	2.30	1.13
Logical-Mathematical	37	2.22	1.18
Bodily-Kinesthetic	37	2.19	1.60
Naturalistic	37	2.11	1.10
Existential	37	2.08	1.34

To answer the second question of the study about the impact of digital technologies on developing EFL participants' language proficiency, Oxford Online English Test used as the pretest and posttest, then analyzed to show their success in reading, grammar, vocabulary and listening skills as displayed in Table 2.

Table 2: Participants' Scores in the Pre-test and Post-test

<b>Pre-test</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Lowest score</b>	<b>Highest score</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Std. Error Mean</b>
	Reading (20)	37	9	16	11.97	2.55	0.42
	Grammar (40)	37	17	30	21.49	4.41	0.73
	Vocabulary (40)	37	16	33	22	4.84	0.80
	Listening (24)	37	8	15	11.43	2.38	0.39
<b>Post-test</b>	Reading (20)	37	13	18	15.40	1.89	0.31
	Grammar (40)	37	19	35	26.81	4.10	0.67
	Vocabulary (40)	37	22	37	26.46	4.44	0.73
	Listening (24)	37	13	22	16.32	2.69	0.44

Moreover, to calculate if there is a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores, paired-samples t-test was used as shown in Table 3. The descriptive statistics indicated that the mean score of post-test was higher than that of the pre-test in each skill. The result revealed that digital technologies were positive in developing EFL participants' reading, grammar, vocabulary and listening skills.

Table 3. Paired Samples Statistics between Participants' Scores of Pre- and Post-Tests

<b>Paired Samples Statistics</b>					
		<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Std. Error Mean</b>
<b>Pair 1</b>	Reading Pretest	37	11.97	2.55	0.42
	Reading Posttest	37	15.40	1.89	0.31
<b>Pair 2</b>	Grammar Pretest	37	21.49	4.41	0.73
	Grammar Posttest	37	26.81	4.10	0.67
<b>Pair 3</b>	Vocabulary Pretest	37	22	4.84	0.80
	Vocabulary Posttest	37	26.46	4.44	0.73
<b>Pair 4</b>	Listening Pretest	37	11.43	2.38	0.39

	Listening Posttest	37	16.32	2.69	0.44
--	--------------------	----	-------	------	------

Then again, a paired sample t-test was also conducted in Table 4 to investigate if there are statistically significant differences between the results of both tests.

Table 4. The Differences between the Mean Scores of Participants Pre- and Post-Tests

<b>Paired Samples Test</b>										
		<b>Paired Differences</b>					<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Person Correlation</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>
		<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Std. Error Mean</b>	<b>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</b>					
					<b>Lower</b>	<b>Upper</b>				
<b>Pair 1</b>	Reading Pre-test- Reading Post-test	3.43	2.53	0.42	1.53	8.39	8.24	36	0.38	0.001
<b>Pair 2</b>	Grammar Pre-test- Grammar Post-test	5.32	3.38	0.55	1.30	11.94	9.60	36	0.69	0.004
<b>Pair 3</b>	Vocabulary Pre-test- Vocabulary Post-test	4.46	2.49	0.41	0.42	9.34	10.89	36	0.86	0.003
<b>Pair 4</b>	Listening Pre-test- Listening Post-test	4.90	3.40	0.56	1.76	11.56	8.69	36	0.09	0.000

The paired samples test in Table 4 showed that there are statistically significant differences between the pre- and post-tests in each skill. The results revealed that there was a statically significant difference ( $p < .005$ ) between the two tests in favour of the post-test which indicated that using digital technologies were successfully enhanced EFL participants' reading, grammar, vocabulary and listening skills. This result is in line with

previous studies as (Beyhan, 2010; Sogutlu, 2018; Celik,2019) that resulted in a positive effect to develop learners' English language proficiency.

To answer the third question which was attempted to explore if there is an association between participants' main intelligence and English language skills, Pearson correlation coefficient analysis was conducted to examine the degree of the relationships among reading, grammar, vocabulary and listening comprehension scores and overall MI as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Pearson Correlations among Reading, Grammar, Vocabulary and Listening Comprehension Scores and Overall MI

<b>Overall MI</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Person correlation</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>
Reading	37	0.38	0.001
Grammar	37	0.69	0.004
Vocabulary	37	0.86	0.003
Listening	37	0.09	0.000

The results revealed that there was a very strong positive correlation between overall MI and participants scores in vocabulary ( $r=0.86$ ,  $p<. 0.28$ ) and grammar ( $r=0.69$ ,  $p<. 0.65$ ), which can be considered of a large effect. However, reading scores showed a medium positive correlation with overall MI ( $r=0.38$ ,  $p<. 0.00$ ). Whereas there was no significant correlation between overall MI and listening comprehension ( $r=0.09$ ,  $p<. 0.22$ ). This result is in agreement with Xhomara & Shkemi (2020) which showed a constructive association between MI and listening skills.

Again, to analyze the relationships among reading, grammar, vocabulary and listening comprehension scores and each type of MI, a correlation analysis was used as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Pearson Correlations among Reading, Grammar, Vocabulary and Listening Comprehension Scores and MI

	Reading	Grammar	Vocabulary	Listening	Verbal	Logical	Visual	Kinesthetic	Musical	Intrapersonal	Interpersonal	Naturalist	Existential
Reading	1.00												
Grammar	0.13	1.00											
Vocabulary	-0.06	0.85	1.00										
Listening	0.50	0.05	-0.14	1.00									
Verbal	-0.06	-0.02	-0.01	0.26	1.00								
Logical	-0.24	-0.16	-0.08	-0.01	0.57	1.00							
Visual	-0.10	-0.07	-0.03	0.09	0.71	0.66	1.00						
Kinesthetic	0.04	-0.08	-0.04	0.20	0.34	0.21	0.11	1.00					
Musical	-0.15	-0.13	-0.09	0.02	0.59	0.56	0.70	0.02	1.00				
Intrapersonal	0.04	-0.11	-0.08	0.11	0.64	0.72	0.56	0.46	0.58	1.00			
Interpersonal	-0.11	-0.12	-0.09	0.13	0.73	0.64	0.65	0.21	0.82	0.71	1.00		
Naturalist	0.09	-0.11	-0.02	0.13	0.42	0.30	0.26	0.64	0.38	0.51	0.51	1.00	
Existential	0.24	-0.04	-0.01	0.09	0.48	-0.06	0.26	0.10	0.42	0.21	0.38	0.16	1.00

Table 6 indicated that reading comprehension had the highest correlation with both logical ( $r=-0.24$ ) and existential ( $r=0.24$ ) one negative and the other positive. While the lowest correlation was with visual ( $r=-0.10$ ), musical ( $r=-0.15$ ) and intrapersonal ( $r=-0.11$ ). However, the correlation analysis revealed that there were no significant relationships between participants' success in reading comprehension and kinesthetic ( $r=0.04$ ) and intrapersonal ( $r=0.04$ ).

As shown in the table, grammar scores demonstrated low negative correlations with logical ( $r=-0.16$ ), musical ( $r=-0.13$ ), intrapersonal ( $r=-0.11$ ), interpersonal ( $r=-0.12$ ) and naturalist ( $r=-0.11$ ). In contrast, there were no relationships with verbal, visual, kinesthetic and existential. However, the results quantified no relationship between any type of MI and vocabulary scores.

This study is in agreement with Sogutlu & Coşkun study (2018), in which there is a negative relationship between interpersonal intelligence and grammar success. While

it is in contrast with kinaesthetic intelligence which has no any relation. The result is also dissimilar to Sogutlu (2018) which revealed there is no correlation between any intelligent type and students' scores in reading skill as well as vocabulary scores. But it is in line with the negative correlation between grammar scores and interpersonal intelligence.

Regarding listening comprehension scores, the results showed that it had low positive correlations with verbal ( $r=0.26$ ), kinesthetic( $r=0.20$ ) intrapersonal( $r=0.11$ ), interpersonal( $r=0.13$ ) and naturalist ( $r=-0.13$ ), but no relationships with logical, musical and existential. The results are reliable to Vongkrahchang & Chinwonno (2016) study which showed a positive association between some MI and reading skill development.

To answer the fourth question of this study, participants were asked to fill a form comprising the types of digital technologies that stimulate their dominant intelligence to learn English language skills. Only 32 participants responded to this question and suggested 28 applications and programs that support their English language skills. The researcher mapped the digital technologies with their descriptions to the nine MI along with the language skills in Table 7.

Table 7. The Correlation of each Digital Technologies with Participants' Dominant MI and English Language Skills

<b>Digital Technology</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Intelligence</b>	<b>Skills</b>
Drops: Language learning <a href="https://apps.apple.com/us/app/drops">https://apps.apple.com/us/app/drops</a>	Drop platform provides teaching the language through visual mnemonics. It is produced in different methods through pronouncing the word as much as needed to put in a sentence	Verbal, Visual, Logical	Reading Listening Speaking Writing,
World's Biggest Crossword <a href="https://worldcrossword.com">https://worldcrossword.com</a>	A puzzle game gives learners a written explanation about the missing word with limited letter options to complete a puzzle	Verbal, Visual, Logical	Reading, Writing
Lumosity Brain Training	A game where learners train and improve their brain through various	Kinaesthetic, Logical,	Reading, Writing



<a href="https://sharpbrains.com/z/lumosity">https://sharpbrains.com/z/lumosity</a>	activities including memory, math and logic games.	Verbal, Visual,	
Duolingo <a href="http://www.duolingo.com">www.duolingo.com</a>	Digital resources can be valuable tools to let students master language skills rather than memorize it.	Verbal, Visual, Musical, Intrapersonal, Interpersonal	Reading Listening Speaking Writing
Netflix <a href="https://www.netflix.com">https://www.netflix.com</a>	Creates incentives of using one's body to solve problems by performing ideas, thoughts, emotions through gestures and body language.	Verbal, Visual, Musical, Interpersonal, Kinaesthetic	Reading, Listening , Writing
Bubbl.us <a href="https://bubbl.us">https://bubbl.us</a>	Brainstorming applications helps learners arrange and organize ideas in a clear consecutive arrangement.	Verbal, Visual, logical, Naturalist	Reading, Writing
Ted talk <a href="https://www.ted.com">https://www.ted.com</a>	A talk show consisting of videos of professional people talking about distinctive subjects of valuable content.	Verbal, Visual, Intrapersonal, logical	Reading, Listening
I Naturalist <a href="https://www.inaturalist.org">https://www.inaturalist.org</a>	An application helps to learn more about the nature surrounding us by providing picture and articles.	Verbal, Visual, logical, Existential, Naturalist	Reading, Writing
Hangman <a href="https://hangmanwordgame.com">https://hangmanwordgame.com</a>	It is a classic letter guessing game where you have to guess a word by picking random letters but you have limited tries.	Verbal, Visual, logical, Interpersonal, Kinaesthetic	Reading Listening Speaking Writing

June's journey <a href="https://www.games/junes-journey">https://www.games/junes-journey</a>	An adventurous mystery-solving game of multiple chapters. Each chapter contains multiple scenes each one of them has a hidden object written down by names you have to look for them.	Verbal, Visual, logical, Interpersonal	Reading
Mind Master <a href="https://www.mindmaster">https://www.mindmaster</a>	Provides a better way for brainstorming, note-taking, and project planning.	Verbal, Visual, logical, Intrapersonal	Reading, Writing
TalkEnglish.com <a href="https://www.talkenglish.com">https://www.talkenglish.com</a>	Improve learners to speak English fluently.	Verbal, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal	Listening Speaking
Talk Now <a href="https://download.cnet.com/Talk-Now-Audio-Chat">https://download.cnet.com/Talk-Now-Audio-Chat</a>	Audio Chat to English speaking practice	Verbal, Logical Interpersonal, Intrapersonal	Listening Speaking
ITalki <a href="https://www.italki.com">https://www.italki.com</a>	Online language learning platform which connects language learners and teachers through video chat	Verbal, Logical Interpersonal, Intrapersonal	Listening Speaking
Alison <a href="http://www.alison.com">www.alison.com</a>	Speaking and Writing English Effectively.	Verbal, Visual	Writing, Speaking
FluentU <a href="http://www.fluentu.com">www.fluentu.com</a>	It brings language learning to life with real-world videos.	Verbal, Visual, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal	Listening , Speaking
Wattpad <a href="http://www.wattpad.com">www.wattpad.com</a>	The world's most-loved social storytelling platform that allow learners to express their talent through writing.	Verbal, Intrapersonal, Interpersonal	Reading, Speaking, Writing

“Busuu” <a href="http://www.busuu.com">www.busuu.com</a>	Offers full language courses that are perfect in everyday life, work or even travel	Visual, Interpersonal	Speaking Writing
Memrise Program <a href="https://www.memrise.com">https://www.memrise.com</a>	Supports people to study languages in an enjoyable effective way with systematic and frequent testing.	Visual, Musical, Interpersonal	Speaking, Writing, Listening
Lyrics Training Program <a href="https://lyricstraining.com">https://lyricstraining.com</a>	Teaching learners’ targeted language through listening to music, poetry, songs, rhythms, voiced and unvoiced sounds.	Verbal, Visual, Musical, Interpersonal	Listening , Speaking
Music Puzzler <a href="https://www.music-puzzler">https://www.music-puzzler</a>	A puzzle game with musical timbres.  The learners listen to a random song to develop their listening skill and learn the language easily.	Verbal, Musical, Interpersonal	Listening , Writing
Quizlet <a href="https://quizlet.com">https://quizlet.com</a>	An application assists learners to study information through learning tools, games and various activities, writing, spelling.	Verbal, logical Interpersonal, Kinesthetic	Reading, Listening , Writing
Anki <a href="https://apps.ankiweb.net">https://apps.ankiweb.net</a>	A program shows words on flashcards that learners cannot forget (the foreign word on one side and the meaning on the other side) it also teaches them how to form a correct sentence with the right spelling.	Verbal, Intrapersonal Interpersonal	Reading, Listening , Speaking, Writing
Microsoft Teams <a href="https://www.microsoft.com">https://www.microsoft.com</a>	An app that helps to strengthen communication skills and exchanging information between two or more people adequately.	Verbal, Visual, Intrapersonal, Interpersonal	Reading, Listening , Speaking, Writing

Animaker <a href="https://www.animaker.com">https://www.animaker.com</a>	An intelligent animated video making software used for students' projects in universities to help them understand topics through animation. One of its features is lip-syncing which allows recording a voice on the animated characters.	Verbal, Visual, Intrapersonal	Reading, Listening , Speaking
GoodReads <a href="https://www.goodreads.com">https://www.goodreads.com</a>	An application contains plenty of different databases of annotations, books to allow learners' reading and publish reviews.	Verbal, Intrapersonal	Reading
Charades <a href="http://www.getcharadeideas.com">http://www.getcharadeideas.com</a>	A player acts out a word or phrase while other players guess the word or phrase.	Verbal, Intrapersonal, Kinaesthetic	Reading Listening , Speaking

The findings of table 7 showed the correlation of each of the digital technologies with participants' dominant MI and English language skills. For example, there is a positive relationship between verbal-linguistic, visual and logical and reading skill through doing activities such as puzzles, games, storytelling, flashcards and reading e-books. Furthermore, the constructive relationship between logical, intrapersonal and interpersonal MI and problem-solving activities was clear through participants mean scores in favour of the post-test (Table 4). Integrating digital technologies with MI theory could develop participants' language proficiency. Therefore, educators and learners could use such digital technologies to support those who are strong in verbal-linguistics, visual and logical or intrapersonal and interpersonal MI.

## Discussion

According to the participants' responses, verbal-linguistic intelligence almost appears in most of the digital technologies. Those who have high verbal-linguistic intelligence can understand spoken context, analyze written texts and judge things

visually and logically. They were also able to recognize patterns easily, connect words to their pictures, enjoy visual arts, and adore writing diaries and narratives. For instance, once they pronounce or say things loudly, they can learn and memorize them faster which then helps greatly in mastering language skills. Since technologies have been impeded in almost all activities throughout our daily routine, this intelligence could be applied in different electronic activities or applications to help learners learn English effectively. Furthermore, using the suggested digital technologies in learning English helps them to learn practically every day used phrases rather than focusing on vocabulary or grammar separately. It helps them to gradually enhance their speech and conversational skills and develop their way of debates or persuasive speeches. Besides, most of these applications provide them with the correct word pronunciation along with sentence format through a small video. The video could be repeated more than once until they elaborate the phrase. Then, the application itself is supported with voice recognition tool to detect any verbal mistakes or mispronunciations.

Another benefit of some digital resources is providing learners with an English test and depending on their scores, they will continue the next level that suits their previous knowledge. For instance, to challenge them, it will be required to write a specific number of words daily because learning English is all about following up and practising. Some programs also offer a free unlimited space for writing whatever comes to their mind. Once they are ready, the text will undergo an automatic correction for all the vocabulary and grammar. Moreover, for raising their motivation to acquire reading, writing, vocabulary and grammar fruitfully, their creative stories, articles or diaries could be collected and published in an electronic form. Learners with verbal-linguistic intelligence are usually talented in telling stories. Through interacting with others to tell their stories, they will strengthen their language ability to speak fluently. Besides, recording this process on a video and saved for future replaying to improve listening skill. In this case, they will not only be motivated to improve language learning but will also gain fame.

Furthermore, visual intelligence which focuses on visualizing things was the second rank of the participants' responses. The result revealed participants with visual intelligence are good at memorizing directions, charts and pictures because they like

digital technologies that focus on putting puzzles together and enjoy drawing, painting and visual art. The suggested applications of this intelligence could be downloaded on all iOS devices especially iPads. they will mainly sketch anything related to a given word using Apple pencil. Their drawing must express the actual meaning of a specific word in any way. These applications consist of levels and each level contains a group of words and the difficulty of the vocabulary varies with each level up. iPads are more useful because of the larger screen space. some applications are useful to all age groups. The result will be better vocabulary and higher-quality drawings. The paintings could be turned into an album for others to print or use for any purposes.

Besides, sometimes engaging in fun activities to learn something new is very beneficial. Interacting between learners can always push each other to do better and they have a great impact on learning English well. Learners with visual intelligence could catch things better when they are imaged, a game where one of the learners act a particular word using different body parts without talking and the rest start guessing the word he/she is trying to explain which will help them learn English better.

For example, learners with musical intelligence could have the ability to develop musical rhythms and to write lyrics to a melody, and to understand compositions of songs and melodies (Kelly, 2020). Listening to music has extremely enriched their English language since many singers use different metaphors and unique words to describe a situation or an experience they have been through. Various musical applications provide the lyrics meanwhile the song is on a play, so they can read the lyrics while the song is playing which will improve both their pronunciation and listening skills.

Regarding other MI such as interpersonal and intrapersonal, a group of e-activities are provided to develop language by learning new words and then utilizing them through presentations or communication with other to improve the use of vocabulary and speaking skill. Playing online video games is also very beneficial to listen and gain new words through dealing with people who are speaking English fluently which then will be added to their vocabulary collection to form well-constructed grammatical sentences. E-activities like online quizzes can help learners with interpersonal intelligence to gain many vocabularies and improve their reading and writing skills. Activities that use interpersonal intelligence is very important as it can shape someone's personality,

increases self-confidence and also meeting different people and interacting with them will help in learning different things like language, culture, and history. For instance, working in a group with people from different nationalities is very beneficial to teach them lots of language skills by listening to the correct pronunciations, asking the meaning of the words and sentences and repeating it several times then using properly. The result is consistent with Sulaiman et al (2011) in which students can increase self-learning. Besides, learners with intrapersonal intelligence could operate software to work alone by reading fictional diaries and writing essays, documents, thoughts and feelings.

For learners who excel in logical intelligence can easily understand and analyse relationships between things and have a good-developed reasoning strength (Vital, 2017). They can design a connection between alphabetic and numeric codes and each code gives a specific letter or word to form a full sentence. For example, playing online games help learners to solve vocabulary and easy word problems by forming a connection between a pattern of words for developing their vocabulary knowledge which “is essential for mastering a language” as Sukying (2020) indicated.

Moreover, those who have the talent of controlling things skilfully have kinaesthetic intelligence. Some application such as Charades in which a player acts in front of others a word or phrase correctly. The others need to guess what has been acted from their memory and then pronounce it correctly or they will lose the game. It can develop their English listening skills, vocabulary and pronunciation.

As well, learners with naturalistic and existential could use applications that help to learn language through searching, identifying, classifying, collecting natural objects, providing pictures, defining what they have seen, forming words incorrect grammatical sentences and writing articles. They also employ websites to find answers philosophical questions about life, death and seek to understand others and the world around them. This is good especially in learning a new language because they can make a connection between what is being taught and the real world.

Consequently, by using digital technologies, participants could depend on their MI and their unique abilities to find a suitable way for everyone to learn the English language easily.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, according to Sternberg and Preiss (2005), technology is a tool for amplifying cognitive abilities. Many of the activities and programs that are available online are tools to enhance skills or MI learners have. Furthermore, Yesilel (2016) stated that "language teachers must guide learners to use web-based instructional tools to learn and practise English language skills." Thus, the study showed that using an online method in a specific language can strengthen participants' terminology in the English language, which makes them have the passion to acquire and learn more about it. The results demonstrated that by involving students in e-activities of multiple intelligence that tap into the nine different types of MI, help them to gain different skills, increase knowledge and enhance self-confidence. The study also revealed that most of the MI types have a positive impact on reading, grammar, vocabulary and listening skills as well as showing rapid progress in improving these skills through the appropriate use of digital technologies.

## **Pedagogical Implications**

Findings from this study provide useful insights on the usefulness of understanding Gardner's MI theory because educators will understand learners better thus choosing specific learning technique that best suits them. Technology should be used wisely in enhancing different parts of their characters rather than spending hours scrolling through social media without gaining any benefits. Besides, using digital technologies provide efficient techniques to improve English language skills while considering their various MI. Therefore, successful educators must attempt to tie all teaching objectives to two or more forms of MI. For example, they must include most or all of the nine MI once or twice a week and set a list of activities to ensure applying a broad multiple intelligence methodology in the teaching process. In planning to help students who struggle from being proficient at English skills and avoid all difficulties in language learning, teachers ought to find out what the students are strong at and correlate between their dominant MI and their ability to use digital technologies effectively. Finally, Educators should address students learning styles and create various lessons using technology for each intelligence to fulfil their individualized potentials (Fose, 2005). As a result, it is suggested that



educators have to offer their students multiple teaching methods to suit all types of MI they have that motivate them to learn skilfully by implementing digital technologies to meet the learners' need.

## References

- Aliweh, A. M. (2011). The effect of electronic portfolios on promoting Egyptian EFL college students' writing competence and autonomy. *Asian EFL Journal*, 13(2), 90-132.
- Ashaver, D., & Igyuve, M. S. (2013). The use of audio-visual materials in teaching and learning process in the College of Education Benue state, Nigeria. *Journal of Research and Method of Education*, 6(1), 44–55.
- Armstrong, T. (2003). *The multiple intelligences of reading and writing: Making the words come alive*. ASCD.
- Armstrong, T. (2009). *Multiple intelligences in the classroom*. ASCD.
- Bas, G., & Beyhan, O. (2010). Effects of multiple intelligences supported project-based learning on students' achievement levels and attitudes towards English lesson. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 3(2), 365-385.
- Burns, A. (2003). *Collaborative action research for English language teachers*. Ernst Klett Sprachen.
- Busuu Ltd. (2019). Busuu (22.2.0) [Mobile App. <https://www.busuu.com>]
- Celik, S. (2019). Intelligence Differences and Mediation Factors: A Sequential Explanatory Study of Improvement of EFL Undergraduate Students' Reading Comprehension Skills. *International Journal of Language Education*, 3(2), 128-145.
- Christensen, M. C., McDonald, R., Altman, E. & Palmer, J. (2018). 'Disruptive Innovation: An Intellectual History and Directions for Future Research', *Journal of Management Studies*, 55(7), pp. 1043-1078. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/joms.12349>.
- Derakhshan, A., & Faribi, M. (2015). Multiple intelligences: Language learning and teaching. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 5(4), 63.
- Duolingo creator: 'I wanted to create a way to learn languages for free'. The Guardian. Retrieved in July 2020 from

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/aug/27/luis-von-ahn-ceo-duolingo-interview>.

- Exam English. (2020) Retrieved from: <https://www.examenglish.com/cpe/CPE>
- Fose, L. (2005). Exploring technology to address student multiple intelligences & learning styles. Retrieved from: [https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as\\_sdt=0%2C5&q=+Exploring+Technology+To+Address+Student+Multiple+Intelligences+%26+Learning+Styles&btnG=](https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5&q=+Exploring+Technology+To+Address+Student+Multiple+Intelligences+%26+Learning+Styles&btnG=)
- Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gardner, H. (1999). *Intelligence reframed: Multiple intelligences for the 21st century*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gardner, H. (2004). Audiences for the theory of multiple intelligences. *Teachers College Record*, 106, 212-220.
- Gardner, H. (2005). Multiple lenses on the mind. Retrieved on July 20, 2020, from <http://www.howardgardner.com/papers/papers.html>
- Gardner, H. (2006). *Changing Minds. The art and science of changing our own and other people's minds*. Boston MA.: Harvard Business School Press.
- Himmelsbach, V. (2019). Pros and Cons of Technology in the Classroom in 2019. Retrieved May 4, 2020: <https://tophat.com/blog/6-pros-cons-technologyclassroom>
- Ho, D. T. K., & Intai, R. (2017). Effectiveness of audio-visual aids in teaching lower secondary science in a rural secondary school. *Asia Pacific Journal of Educators and Education*, 32, 91-106.
- Karjo, C. H., & Andreani, W. (2018, May). Learning foreign languages with Duolingo and Memrise. In *Proceedings of the 2018 International Conference on Distance Education and Learning* (pp. 109-112).
- Kelly, M. (2020). Teaching Students Who Have Musical Intelligence. Retrieved July 28, 2020, from <https://www.thoughtco.com/musical-intelligence-profile-8095>
- Lau, Allen. "Where Stories Live." Wattpad, 2009, [www.wattpad.com](http://www.wattpad.com).
- Luke, J. Y., Wiharja, C. K., & Sidupa, C. (2018, August). The Effectiveness Level and Positive Values of Practicing Translation Using Mobile App Duolingo for

- Indonesian Freshmen Students. In *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on E-Society, E-Education and E-Technology* (pp. 26-29).
- McKenzie, W. (1999). Multiple Intelligences Survey. Retrieved from: <http://surfaquarium.com/MI/%20MIinvent.htm>
- McKenzie, W. (2010). *Multiple intelligences and instructional technology, Second Edition*.
- Madkour, M., & Mohamed, R. (2016). 'Identifying college students' multiple intelligences to enhance motivation and language proficiency'. *English Language Teaching*, 9(6), pp. 92-107.
- Mankad, K. B. (2015). The Role of Multiple Intelligence in E-Learning. *International Journal for Scientific Research & Development*, 3(5), 1076-1081.
- Nushi, M., & Eqbali, M. H. (2017). Duolingo: A Mobile Application to Assist Second Language Learning. *Teaching English with Technology*, 17(1), 89-98.
- Oyesola, G. O. (2014). Criteria for selecting audio-visual material in Geography in the post-primary institution. Retrieved from [www.unilorin.edu.ng](http://www.unilorin.edu.ng)
- Palmberg, R. (2009). *Activities and Exercises for Logical-Mathematical Learners of English*. [ebook] Kiev, Ukraine: Palmsoft Publications, p.4. Available at: <http://www.finchpark.com/courses/TP/week-04/Activities-E-Logical-MLE.pdf>
- Shelly, G. B., Gunter, G. A., & Gunter, R. E. (2013). *Teachers discovering computers: Integrating technology in a connected world*. Cengage Learning.
- Sogutlu, E. (2018). Multiple intelligences and foreign language learning: Possible relationship. In *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on New Findings in Humanities and Social Sciences* (pp. 1-10).
- SÖĞÜTLÜ, E., COŞKUN, L (2018). The Relationship between Multiple Intelligences and Success in Foreign Language Learning: A case study of Albanian Learners of Turkish as a Foreign Language. Retrieved from: [https://scholar.google.ae/scholar?hl=en&as\\_sdt=0%2C5&as\\_vis=1&q=The+Relationship+between+Multiple+Intelligences+and+Success+in+Foreign+Language+Learning%3A+Case+study+of+Albanian+Learners+of+Turkish+as+a+Foreign+Language&btnG](https://scholar.google.ae/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5&as_vis=1&q=The+Relationship+between+Multiple+Intelligences+and+Success+in+Foreign+Language+Learning%3A+Case+study+of+Albanian+Learners+of+Turkish+as+a+Foreign+Language&btnG)

- Sternberg, R. J., & Preiss, D. D. (Eds.). (2005). *The educational psychology series. Intelligence and technology: The impact of tools on the nature and development of human abilities*. (1st edition) Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Sukying, A. (2020). Word Knowledge through Morphological Awareness in EFL Learners. *TSOL International Journal*, 15(1), 74-85.
- Sulaiman, T., Sulaiman, S., & Suan, W. H. (2011). Integrating multiple intelligences and technology into classroom instruction to transform instructional practice in Malaysia. *Journal of Language teaching and research*, 2(5), 1146.
- Vesselinov, R., & Grego, J. (2012). Duolingo effectiveness study. *City University of New York, USA*, 28. Retrieved from: [http://static.duolingo.com/s3/DuolingoReport\\_Final.pdf](http://static.duolingo.com/s3/DuolingoReport_Final.pdf)
- Vital, M. (2017). 9 Types of Intelligence - Infographic. Retrieved July 22, 2020, from <https://blog.adioma.com/9-types-of-intelligence-infographic>
- Vongkrahchang, S., & Chinwonno, A. (2016). Effects of Personal Intelligence Reading Instruction on personal intelligence profiles of Thai university students. *Kasetsart Journal of Social Sciences*, 37(1), 7-14.
- Wang, L. (2005). The advantages of using technology in second language education. *T.H.E. Journal*, 32 (10), 1-6.
- Wattpad Corp. (2020). Retrieved from: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/wattpad-read-write-stories/id306310789>
- Xhomara, N., & Shkemi, F. (2020). The influence of multiple intelligences on learning styles in teaching and learning. *Journal of Applied Technical and Educational Sciences*, 10(1), 19-48.
- Yeşilel, D. B. A. (2016). Technology-enhanced Language Learning for Digital Natives. *Participatory Educational Research*, 4(2), 97-111.
- Zarei, A. A., & Afshar, N. S. (2014). Multiple intelligences as predictors of reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 4(1), 23-38.



## Overcoming Students' English Pronunciation in Remote Area, Indonesia

**<sup>1</sup>Ujang Suparman, <sup>2</sup>Ridwan Ridwan, <sup>1</sup>Hasan Hariri**

*<sup>1</sup>Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Lampung*

*<sup>2</sup>SMP Negeri 3 Way Pengubuan, Lampung Tengah, Indonesia*

*Corresponding author: <sup>1</sup>Ujang Suparman, email: [ujang.suparman@fkip.unila.ac.id](mailto:ujang.suparman@fkip.unila.ac.id)*

### **Bio-profiles:**

**Ujang Suparman** is a lecturer and researcher; his careers: since 1987 up to the present time as a lecturer at the English Study Program, University of Lampung; 2005–2016, as a lecturer on Psycholinguistics and Qualitative Research at the Masters Degree in English Education, Muhammadiyah University Prof. DR. Hamka, Jakarta; 2005 up to present, as a national book reviewer of English books for elementary school, junior and senior high schools, and vocational school (SMK) in PUSBUK DEPDIKNAS; 2005–2008. Besides, from 1989 through 2000, he once worked for Hawthorn Institute of Education, Melbourne Australia, as a lecturer of Interpreting and Translating; 1998–2000, working for Melbourne Institute of Asian Languages and Societies (MIALS), the University of Melbourne, as a lecturer on Indonesian studies. His research interests are in reading difficulties, reading strategies, reading assessment, curriculum design, translation, English for specific purposes, motivation, personality and learning styles, language acquisition, second and foreign language assessment. His email address: [ujang.suparman@fkip.unila.ac.id](mailto:ujang.suparman@fkip.unila.ac.id)

**Ridwan Ridwan** works as an English teacher for more than 25 years, active as a Central Lampung District curriculum development team, resource person at the District English Teacher Association. From 2007 to 2010 was involved in the Mainstreaming Good

Practices in Basic Education project in collaboration with UNICEF and the European Union funded Ministry of Education and Culture. Becoming a Facilitator and Master Trainer to provide training assistance conducted by Regional Facilitators in Indonesia, as an educational consultant in private schools from kindergarten, elementary, junior high and vocational/high school in Lampung Province. He can be reached at [ridwanrosidimuawi@gmail.com](mailto:ridwanrosidimuawi@gmail.com)

**Hasan Hariri** is a lecturer as a professor associate at Lampung University (1992), he began his career as an educator by teaching in high school. After graduating from S-1, he became a permanent lecturer at the Yunisla Foreign Language Academy and also taught at other institutions, including Lampung University and private universities. He was appointed as a Civil Servant (PNS) at Lampung University in 2002 with the task of providing English language training/courses especially TOEFL for the public, students, and lecturers. After completing S-3 in 2012, the authors was appointed the Chief of Staff of educator, and since 2014, he switched assignments to become a lecturer at the Master of Education Management FKIP Unila. In addition, since 2015 he has been active as a member of the Lampung University scientific work verification team and a team supporting the writing of FKIP Lampung University's scientific work. He can be reached at [hasanhariri@unila.ac.id](mailto:hasanhariri@unila.ac.id)

## **Abstract**

The teaching of pronunciation often lags behind the four main language skills: speaking, reading, listening, and writing. Pronunciation is very fundamental in meeting communicative communication criteria. This study aims to instill English pronunciation as acceptable as possible so that students have the confidence to start communicating, especially orally. The authors raise the following research questions 1) what difficulties do students face with regard to pronunciation? 2) Can the learning process with multilevel teaching techniques improve the pronunciation of the students? This study used classroom action research through an action cycle consisting of planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting (Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon, 2013). The participants are students of class VII.B SMP Negeri 3 Waypengubuan Lampung Indonesia, consisting of

31 students (17 females and 14 males). The conclusions are that students really have difficulties in pronouncing English words as follows: the letter combination /ea/ is pronounced [i]. and /ea/ is pronounced [æ]; the letters /u/ still pronounced [u], /u/ pronounced as [a], and 'u' is not pronounced and also silent word a. 2) Applying multi-level teaching can improve students' pronunciation skills up to 95.62% of acceptable pronunciation.

**Keywords:** *descriptive text, multi-level teaching, pronunciation*

## **Introduction**

English language is a compulsory subject to teach in Indonesia starting from junior high. Indonesian people regard it is a very important language as it is admitted as one of international languages. Therefore, it is languages that Indonesian schooling introduces it even from the kindergarten level.

The end of learning language is that students are able to communicate both orally and written. For junior high school level, students are insised to master English at least up to fuctional, which means that they are able to communicate both orally and written to survie for the daily needs.

To communicate orally students are required to be able to pronounce the English words acceptably. It was found that after learning English for one semester, students' pronunciations were hard to undertand. For example, *books* is pronounced as *boks*. In short, the students pronounced it as it happened in the Indonesian language reading system.

Such a condition drove the authors to administer the pronunciation tests through reading descriptive text intensively. From the test, it was known that students can pronounce the English words acceptably only 72.3%. The cause of the problems was (1) most of the students did not have a person to guide, (2) if the students stated that they had a person to guide with low competency to be a guide, and (3) most students experienced pronunciation problems.

EFL classes mostly reject pronunciation (Robertson, 2020). Most language teachers are better at English grammar than pronunciation (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin,

2010). Teachers must transfer only what they know to their students; therefore it is not surprising to see the fact that students are also more competent in grammar and lexis than pronunciation as well. The behavior of Indonesian teachers, in general, is that they tend to be reluctant to teach pronunciation. Although pronunciation plays an important role because it does not become the subject of demands in examinations, teachers are lazy to teach it. The authors try to break it up to practice pronunciation. Over the years, the presence of communicative language teaching or communicative approaches in language teaching brought new enthusiasm for teaching pronunciation. The communicative approach emphasizes that language is learned to communicate. In oral communication, the teachers cannot deny the important role of pronunciation (Aziez & Aziez, 2018).

The teacher must find a solution to the problem above so that students' interest in learning well enough is not damaged because of their frustration and the teacher must also encourage the students who are less interested in learning to be more interested in learning. To overcome this problem, the authors use multi-level teaching.

Pronunciation learning is integrated into speaking and reading, especially reading aloud. But in reality, that's not enough. In addition, teachers have very limited time allocation if they have to deal with each student. Special treatment only for the pronunciation aspect will be very time consuming. In order not to take too much time, the author uses multi-level teaching. This is because in multi-level teaching there are aspects of utilizing social relations that are mutually beneficial, such as peer tutors. Multi-level teaching - as in multi-level marketing - can stimulate learning, because the up line will get additional scores from their training efforts (Tudge & Rogoff, 1999).

## **Literature Review**

### **Pronunciation matter**

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English (Standop, 1990) states that pronunciation is the way in which a word is pronounced. The Indonesian point of view that the writing and reading system of English from that of Indonesian for example, Indonesians tend to pronounce the word *turist* as it is spelt, but English people do not do like that English has its own transcript system. Such differences make Indonesian people perceive that reading and writing in English are different. It is difficult for nonnative



speakers to pronounce words as native speakers do. Therefore, the pronunciation referred to, in this research here, is an acceptable pronunciation. Acceptable pronunciation is the pronunciation that is generally understood by English users in general. For example, the words *girl* according to the phonetic symbols will be symbolized as /gɜ:l/. But by certain tribes in Indonesia, the word *girl* will be pronounced /gæ:l/. Things that are caused by such factors are certainly tolerated. What cannot be tolerated is that if the word *made* is pronounced as the Balinese name /Made/ which is not pronounced /meid/. Also, English pronunciation has silent letters. They are [k], [p], [w], [l], [s], [b], and [t]. [K] is silent for *know*, *knee*, *knife*, and so on. [P] is silent for *psychology*, *psychologist*, and *pneumonia*. [W] is silent for *wrap*, *wrapt*, *wrist*, *write*, and *wrinkle*. [L] is silent for *should*, *would*, *could*. [S] is silent for *isle*, *aisle*, and *island*. [B] is silent for *debt* and *doubt*. [T] is silent for *listen*, *often*, *castle*, and *soften*.

Indonesia also has many local languages. Each language has a unique pronunciation accent. For example, Batak and Mandarin people tend to pronounce /e/ instead of /ə/ such as the word *among* /ə'mʌŋ/, Bugis tend to add sound /g/ closing words that end with /n/. For Indonesian, their mother tongue is mostly the local language. Their second language is the national language, Indonesian. Then, they learn several foreign languages at school, such as English. The students' difficulty in pronouncing English words is inseparable from the influence of mother tongue (Alhaisoni, Al-Zuoud, & Gaudel, 2015).

At the college level, pronunciation is a separate subject study. However, Gimson (Cruttenden, 2014). *“Clearly a foreign learner who requires an adequate performance in the language for the practical purposes of everyday communication will not need to master all the variants described. Nevertheless, any teacher or learner must consider how much of time given to the acquisition of another language should be devoted to pronunciation and what level of performance is necessary for efficient communication (Gimson & Ramsaran, 1970; Hornby & Cowie, 1974; Hornby, Cowie, Gimson, & Hornby, 1974).*

### **Pronunciation Practice**

The exercise can be used in various ways as a mode of endeavor in itself as well as in imitative and unprepared practice steps. The aim of this exercise is to stabilize the

pronunciation patterns. Practices can include oral reading scripts of various kinds, whether chosen by the teacher or chosen by the students themselves or compiled by the teacher and/or students (for example, radio broadcast scripts or TV broadcast scripts of all types; quotes from famous speeches, plays, narrative poems, novels, plays and role-plays, etc. planned (relatively short) oral presentations of various topics, with chosen topics,); dress rehearsal and final appearance in class with audio and/or video recording (and feedback criticism sessions either immediately or later); independent learning exercises outside the classroom or learning sessions in pairs/small groups with audio and/or video recording; one-on-one speech training session with the speaking teacher (e.g., speech coach) (Aziez & Aziez, 2018).

### **Vocabulary Concept**

We cannot say anything if we do not have a vocabulary. As a result, we cannot communicate with each other. According Hornby and Zhang (1984) vocabulary is the total number of words which, with rules for combining them, make up a language".

Because of this, it can be said that vocabulary is the basic material forming language and has a very important role. In line with (Hornby & Zhang, 1984). It would be impossible to learn language without vocabulary (Rivers, 2018).

It is evident that vocabulary is very important to learn not only to know its meaning but also its pronunciation. The vocabulary intended in this study is all the words needed in the descriptive text given to students. For example, the word *he*, if there are five words in the text, the authors count five vocabulary words. This is because student inconsistencies are very high. *He* can be read correctly in a sentence, but not in other sentences.

Even though research on vocabulary indicates that vocabulary is fundamental in language instruction, vocabulary activities appear only in reading section, in which it is given in one of the nine activities in the chapter. No vocabulary learning strategies are present and no recycling is found. This lack of attention to the vocabulary component is truly happens in Indonesia (Aziez & Aziez, 2018). It gets worse in the pronunciation.

## **Descriptive Text**

In the Indonesian curriculum of Junior High School (JHS), it is said that the descriptive text has general characteristics namely a) communicative objectives, b) the structure of the text, and c) the characteristics of language. The communicative purpose of the descriptive text is to describe a particular person, object, or place. The structure of the descriptive text consists of an introduction to the object or identification to be described and a description (Pendidikan, 2006). The description can be a color, a measure of origin that only gives information about a particular object, place or person. Whereas linguistic characteristics use: certain objects, simple present tense, relating verb, action verb, adjective, adverb, and figurative language (Permendikbud, 2016). The foregoing needs to be explained with the aim that this research is clearly framed focused and becomes the reason for the title selection. Everything will be different if the type of text is not focused. For example, descriptive and narrative texts are taught so that different spellings will occur. The verb *go*, in the descriptive text will change to "went" in another text. One of the solutions to overcome this problem is the use of multi-level teaching as elaborated in the following section.

## **Multi Level Teaching**

Motivation is important in all learning. This is clearly a success factor in pronunciation. However, motivating students to develop their pronunciation is not easy. Concern for pronunciation is the need for students to convey ideas, and pronunciation instructions that revolve around the microscopic features of language have been at odds with this goal. The emphasis on the exact meaning of individual voices has also met with resistance from students for various reasons. For example, some feel that if they produce this strange sound correctly, they will lose their own identity. Pronunciation learning also places students in a great risk position: They risk making mistakes, feeling embarrassed, failing, and losing self-esteem (Beebe, 1983). Given what students face, it is not surprising that pronunciation does not have a high priority for many students.

The teacher must facilitate the form of teaching not only to meet the language learner's goals but also to create a positive experience. Pronunciation has a relationship with communication. For communication purposes, a connection is required. For this

reason, students need to know exactly what connections are, how well they make connections, and what they need to do to improve connections. For example, before emphasizing the specification of pronunciation, the students must first experience using language as a means for communicative purposes that are truly objectives. For this purpose, the teacher exercises it which is embedded in the method. Whereas the techniques for training teachers can provide settings and stimuli for this communication experience, and help them analyze moments of communication breakdown, some of which can be traced to speech difficulties. After the students recognize the role of pronunciation in the communication process, they are then ready for focusing on the pronunciation work. For this reason, teachers use multi-level teaching.

Adding income is the goal of Multilevel marketing (MLM). MLM provides opportunities with minimum costs and time flexibility to achieve financial independence if the individual manages to secure a loyal sales base. MLM is a genre of personal sales where products or services are distributed by agents to customers through personal contacts (Ambarini, 2011; Hikmawati, 2013; Nga & Mun, 2011).

Up line is a student who has been declared graduated in mastering the pronunciation of a text that is taught or the best among students and is given the authority to provide guidance to his friends who have not mastered the text taught in learning activities at the time. How to determine the up line? The teacher offers fairly to all students to be tested. Next, take notes that state that they are ready to be tested up-line and openly test before other students. The number of up lines is adjusted by the number of students and the time allocation available, so as to achieve a reasonable comparison; not too much and not too little. In carrying out their duties, the up line is given a sheet containing a chart to be filled up by the up line which includes the up line itself, the down line and the value.

The down line is students who are learning classically by the teacher who has not yet mastered the pronunciation of the text that is the target of learning or worse the pronunciation than of the up line.

A reward is giving additional value to a predetermined passing grade value for each up line who successfully guides and tests friends so that they graduate. For example, the passing grade is 6 (six) and from each student who is guided to pass is 0.1, and the up line can graduate 3, then the up line gets an accumulated grade of 6.3.

## Method

### The aim of the study

The ability to say is directly proportional to the ability to accept and understand the words of others. Therefore, this study aims to inform researchers and explain how the dynamics and challenges of giving English pronunciation to students from remote areas and from low-income families, as much as possible so that students have the confidence to start communicating especially orally. The authors propose the following research questions:

1. What difficulties do students face with regard to pronunciation?
2. Can the learning process with multilevel teaching techniques improve the pronunciation of students' description texts?

### Participants and the context

This study used classroom action research through an action cycle consisting of planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting (Kemmis et al., 2013). The population which is the subject of research was students of class VII.B SMP Negeri 3 Waypengubuan Lampung Indonesia, consisting of 31 students (17 females and 14 males). The authors, in conducting this research, did loose collaboration, namely collaboration between students and teachers (Arikunto & Suhardjono, 2006; Setiadi, 2006).

### Procedure

Efforts to overcome problems of pronunciation faced by students as stated in the background can be done by students to pronounce with the following basic learning steps as shown in the table 1 below.

Table 1. Learning implementation procedures

No	Time	Activity	eachers' activities	Student activities
1.	5 minutes	Opening	Conveying anything that will be done.	Ask things that aren't clear yet.
2.	15 minutes	Modeling	Teach students how to say the words in the text.	Students imitate.

3.	15 minutes	Search up lines	Offer students to be tested to be upline. Looking for the best of everything.	Register to be tested.
4.	5 minutes	Grouping	Divide down line to up lines to form study groups.	Form a study group.
5.	20 minutes	Peer tutorial	As a director, supervisor, model, trainer, a guide for the whole group and students. Noting things that need to be recorded in the class observation note sheets.	Up line teaches down line.
6.	15 minutes	Down lines test	Distribute sheet charts up and down line relationships.	Up lines test the down line.
7.	5 minutes	Closing Reporting	Delivering notes that need to be delivered to students about things that are good to be maintained and things that are not good to be fixed.	Listening and running input from the teacher.

## Result and Discussion

### Cycle I

Cycle 1 lasts for three meetings. The authors offer openly that anyone could be an upline and the authors openly test it. Five students who had best pronunciation were being an up-line. The principle applied was not to find the pronunciation which was acceptable to all, but the most widely accepted pronunciation among students.

After teaching, the authors conducted a test to determine the development of students' pronunciation. From the test data, it was known that the pronunciation of students grew to the good development. However, the results had not reached what the authors wanted. Therefore, the authors proceeded to Cycle 2. The test results in Cycle 1 the authors present in the table as follows.

Table. 2. The Pronunciation Development of students in Cycle 1

No	Measurement	Average incorrect percentage	Average correct percentage
1	Before	27.3	72.3
2	I	9.68	90.32

Source: Classroom Action Research Data

Developing pronunciation in a foreign language is a complicated process. Pronunciation, as one aspect of language, is a form of behavior, but more than that, it expresses one's feelings. What's more, for change to occur, students must first recognize it and make changes. However, to change, once obtained, can be easily marked because the process is canceled too quickly for students who are impatient. Thus, steps to maintain motivation must be built into the learning experience. These learning considerations are as important as insights into the language itself (Wong, 1987).

## Cycle 2

After the third meeting in Cycle 2, the authors did the test to find out the level of development of students' pronunciation. The test results turned out to show a better direction, but the results had not reached the desired target. Thus the author proceeded to the Cycle 3. The data of Cycle 2 is presented by the authors as follows.

Table 3. Development of the pronunciation of students Cycle 2

No	Measurement	Average Incorrect percentage	Average percentage correct
1	II	6.99	93.01

Source: Classroom Action Research Data

Productive pronunciation depends on identifying relevant goals and can be achieved by the students to change their pronunciation and teach them how to speak more clearly and effectively. Dramatic changes in the near future are rare, but changes in their perceptions of the phenomena of pronunciation in their own language and in that of native speaker can be significant. This is because pronunciation learning can show students the main components of spoken English systems; show how these components contribute to the expression of meaning and communication in general; teach students how to understand features in natural speech; teach them how to understand these features in their own speech; and provide tools for them to develop their own pronunciation. By giving them specimens to be developed independently, the responsibility falls to those who have the actual power to make the necessary changes (Wong, 1987).

### Cycle 3

After the third teaching was accomplished, the authors conducted the test to find out the development of students' pronunciation. It turned out from the test that the development of their pronunciation had exceeded the desired target. The target that the authors wanted was 95% acceptable or only 5% the level of the unacceptability of students' pronunciation, while the achievement of their pronunciation had reached 4.4%. The result of the third test is presented as follows.

Table 4. Development of students' pronunciation in Cycle 3

No	Measurement	Incorrect percentage average	Correct percentage Average
1	III	4.4	95.62

Source: Classroom Action Research Data

By looking at Table 4 above, the authors had reached the target set. Thus the authors can end the action.

The authors present the overall development of the students' pronunciation from each cycle as follows.

Table 5. Development of students' pronunciation of each cycle

No	Measurement	Average percentage correct
1	Before treatment	72.3
2	I	90.32
3	II	93.01
4	III	95.62

Source: Classroom Action Research Data

Good pronunciation skills are the basis for reading and speaking skills. The development of students' pronunciation skills, as in table 5 is in line with studies that reveal the relationship between reading and speaking. The use of reading tests as a diagnosis has been the basis of criticism that spontaneous reading and speaking are different processes and those students who can read parts well can speak poorly - or vice versa. Advantages of using many readings, including the following: (a) a uniform



database for each student & easing the evaluation task for teachers (b) having standard texts eliminates the need to copy samples of student speeches, which will be required for interviews, picture descriptions, and task-based activities; (c) the text can be controlled for the length and degree of difficulty, which students cannot avoid; and (d) reading can be made more like a conversation by choosing dialogue as text. The teacher can take one part and another student, and then they can exchange parts. Teacher participation makes it more fun for students and gives them samples of native speaker speeches that they can review as often as possible (Wong, 1987).

Pronunciation is the most important verbal communication skill and it is important in the evaluation of the speaker by the listener. This is the language skill that is the most difficult to learn and difficult to measure (Fraser, 2000; Naji, Subramaniam, & White, 2019). According to Morley (1998) pronunciation is what creates the impression of speakers of knowledge about language. The mastery of pronunciation is necessary for skills which, in turn, make students pragmatically competent in any social context (Alrefae & Al-Ghamdi, 2019). On the other hand, bad pronunciation can cause misunderstanding between speaker and listener. In addition, a student with a bad pronunciation accent can lose confidence and that may have an overall negative impact on the student's personality. Therefore it is important to understand that we can use simple words or grammatical structures in our communication, but we cannot use simple pronunciation (Lund, 2003). Pronunciation is very important in our social lives as in determining our prestige, social position, and even our professional competence (Al-Ahdal, 2020; Gelvanovsky, 2002).

Also, the good results are in the line with that usually, children are well trained to do tutoring at the end of the first session, but with first and second-grade students it may be necessary to train them for several sessions and days (Carta, Dinwiddie, Kohler, Delquadri, & Greenwood, 1984).

## **Conclusions**

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that 1) students really have difficulties in pronouncing English words as follows: the letter combination /ea/ which should be pronounced /i:/ e.g. leak [li:k] and /ea/ which should

be pronounced [æ] e.g. the letters /u/ which should be pronounced [ʊ], e.g. put [pʊt] u/ which should be pronounced [ʌ] e.g. but [bʌt], and /u/ which is not pronounced (muted u), e.g. *enough* [ɪ'nʌf], and also silent word a. 2) Applying multi-level teaching has enables students' pronunciation skills to improve up to 95.62% of acceptable pronunciation. This article has presented problems and how to solve them related to pronunciation in the Indonesian context. As it is known, Indonesia has a variety of tribes, customs, cultures, and languages and they live together in a melting pot. To test and deepen and reproduce more comprehensive learning practices, other researchers need to conduct further studies with a different language and cultural settings and contexts.

### **Pedagogical Implications**

The fact that even the urban students who study pronunciation remain lack accepted English pronunciation. This might be due to lack of exposure to received English pronunciation. This study which was carried out in a remote area where the facilities and environment to some extent are different from those in urban area, the problem of teaching received English pronunciation is more complicated. Therefore, it is assumed that English language teachers in remote area should pay more attention to the implementation of exposure. The following are some implications.

Firstly, in order to help the students acquire received English pronunciation; it is inevitable for the students to have a lot of exposure to pronunciation, they can make use of films, videos, songs most frequently by native speakers.

Additionally, the differences in pronouncing words in English and Indonesia are very great due to the wide differences socio-cultural knowledge of the students. Therefore, socio-cultural information pertaining to the differences in pronunciation between English and Indonesia should be incorporated into English curriculum.

### **References**

Al-Ahdal, A. (2020). Overcoming Pronunciation Hurdles in EFL Settings: An Evaluation of Podcasts as a Learning Tool at Qassim University Saudi Arabia. *Asian EFL Journal Research Articles*, 27.

- Alhaisoni, E. M., Al-Zuoud, K. M., & Gaudel, D. R. (2015). Analysis of Spelling Errors of Saudi Beginner Learners of English Enrolled in an Intensive English Language Program. *English Language Teaching*, 8(3), 185-192.
- Alrefaee, Y., & Al-Ghamdi, N. (2019). Refusals among Yemeni EFL Learners: A Study of Negative Pragmatic Transfer and Its Relation to Proficiency. *Asian EFL Journal Research Articles*, 25.
- Ambarini, A. (2011). Pengaruh Jiwa Wirausaha terhadap Pengembangan Karir Individu (Studi Pada Distributor Multi Level Marketing Oriflame Di Bandar Lampung): Skripsi.
- Arikunto, S., & Suhardjono, S. (2006). Penelitian tindakan kelas: Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.
- Aziez, F., & Aziez, F. (2018). The Vocabulary Input of Indonesia's English Textbooks and National Examination Texts for Junior and Senior High Schools. *TESOL International Journal*, 13(3), 66-67.
- Beebe, L. M. (1983). Risk-taking and the language learner. *Classroom oriented research in second language acquisition*, 39-66.
- Carta, J., Dinwiddie, G., Kohler, F., Delquadri, J., & Greenwood, C. (1984). The Juniper Gardens Peer Tutoring Programs for Spelling, Reading, and Math (Version 1): Teachers' manual. *Kansas City, KS: Juniper Gardens Children's Project, Bureau of Child Research, University of Kansas.*
- Celce-Murcia, M., Brinton, D. M., & Goodwin, J. M. (2010). *Teaching pronunciation hardback with audio CDs (2): A course book and reference guide*: Cambridge University Press.
- Cruttenden, A. (2014). *Gimson's pronunciation of English*: Routledge.
- Fraser, H. (2000). Literacy vs oral communication skills for ESL learners. *Literacy Link, Newsletter of the Australian Council for Adult Literacy.*
- Gelvanovsky, G. V. (2002). Effective pronunciation teaching: principles, factors, and teachability. *Identity, culture, and language teaching. USA: CREEES.*
- Gimson, A. C., & Ramsaran, S. (1970). *An introduction to the pronunciation of English* (Vol. 4): Edward Arnold London.
- Hikmawati, A. (2013). Strategi Pemasaran Multi Level Marketing (MLM) Pada PT. Avail Elok Indonesia Distributor Jepara.

- Hornby, A. S., & Cowie, A. P. (1974). Oxford advanced learner's dictionary of current English. *London: Oxford University Press, 1*, 974.
- Hornby, A. S., Cowie, A. P., Gimson, A. C., & Hornby, A. S. (1974). *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary of current English* (Vol. 1428): Oxford university press Oxford.
- Hornby, A. S., & Zhang, F. (1984). *Oxford advanced learner's dictionary of current English with Chinese translation*: Oxford University Press.
- Kemmis, S., McTaggart, R., & Nixon, R. (2013). *The action research planner: Doing critical participatory action research*: Springer Science & Business Media.
- Lund, K. (2003). Age and accent. *Retrieved June, 6, 2011*.
- Morley, J. (1998). Trippingly on the Tongue. *ESL Magazine, 1*(1), 20-23.
- Naji, J., Subramaniam, G., & White, G. (2019). Literature and Language Learning *New Approaches to Literature for Language Learning* (pp. 25-50): Springer.
- Nga, J. K. H., & Mun, S. W. (2011). The influence of MLM companies and agent attributes on the willingness to undertake multilevel marketing as a career option among youth. *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*.
- Pendidikan, B. S. N. (2006). Kurikulum 2006. *Jakarta: Media Makmur Maju Mandiri*.
- Permendikbud, N. (2016). 24. Kompetensi Inti dan Kompetensi Dasar Pelajaran pada Kurikulum 2013 pada Pendidikan Dasar dan Pendidikan Menengah. *Kompetensi Inti dan Kompetensi Dasar Pelajaran pada Kurikulum 2013 pada Pendidikan Dasar dan Pendidikan Menengah*.
- Rivers, W. M. (2018). *Teaching Foreign Language Skills Rev Ed*: University of Chicago Press.
- Robertson, P. (2020). a nritin. *Asian EFL Journal, 27*(1).
- Setiadi, A. B. (2006). Metode Penelitian Untuk Pengajaran Bahasa Asing. *Yogyakarta: Graha Ilmu*.
- Standop, E. (1990). Oxford advanced learner's dictionary of current English: Cowie, AP (ed.), 4th edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989, xix+ 1579 pp., DM 37.80 (distributed in the Federal Republic of Germany by Cornelsen Verlagsgesellschaft): Pergamon.

- Tudge, J., & Rogoff, B. (1999). Peer influences on cognitive development: Piagetian and Vygotskian perspectives. *Lev Vygotsky: critical assessments*, 3, 32-56.
- Wong, R. (1987). Teaching Pronunciation: Focus on English Rhythm and Intonation. *Language in Education: Theory and Practice*, No. 68.



## **Analyzing Student's Learning Outcome Using Systemic Approach**

**Nadya Nurhidayah N**

*STKIP YPUP Makassar*

**Nurfitriyah Halim**

*STKIP YPUP Makassar*

**Muhammad Basri**

*State University of Makassar*

### **Bio-profiles:**

**Nadya Nurhidayah N** earned her Master's degree from the State University of Makassar, respectively. She has great interests in instructional pedagogy, the psychology of teaching and technology-aided in language teaching. She has been working in a college, some education institutions, and some youth collaboration since 2011. Currently, she is pursuing her doctoral degree at State University Makassar by taking ICT based learning specification as her interest. Her recent work has globalized and utilized the use of media technology for daily teaching and learning at some schools.

**Nurfitriyah Halim** is a reviewer and editors on some of journals in Makassar who is taking her Doctoral degree at State University Makassar by focusing on her interest in the area research of translation.

**Muhammad Basri** is a professor in Applied Linguistics of Universitas Negeri Makassar. He is the head of English Language Education for Doctoral Program at the Postgraduate Study of Universitas Negeri Makassar. His research interests focus on biliteracy and bilingual communication.

## **Abstract**

The main goal of a learning program in education is made to construct students' understanding and skill of how things happened. Thus, a lesson that emphasizes an output over an approach becomes very important to be considered on each teaching-plan. This phenomena are needed to emphasize using problem solving to apply systemic approach. The idea of using this form can perform an action to assist students in solving a problem. The problem solving steps based on systemic approach consists of four stages, namely problem analysis, problem solving process planning, calculation, and checking answers and interpretation of results. Classroom action research was chosen to apply at this study, which is aimed to see the increasing of student learning outcomes after systemic approach to problem solving is applied. The subject of this research is 35 students of Graphic Design class. In this study, it is a matter of students learning outcomes on the material Augmented Reality by applying Metaverse. This research was conducted in two cycles because in the second cycle, the indicator of success has been reached that the students achieve the minimal clarity of at least 75%. The results showed that students learning outcomes in the first cycle reached 37.14% classical completeness, and in the second cycle of classical completeness of 85.71%. This shows that the application of systemic approach to problem solving can increase student learning outcomes.

**Keywords:** *learning outcomes, systemic approach, problem solving, augmented reality*

## **Introduction**

Good education is an education that not only prepares the students for a particular profession or positions, but also prepares them to be able to overcome daily problems. Trianto (2007) states that the correlation between the ways teachers teach and the students' efforts in acquiring and developing the acquired insights are such a way to enhance the quality of education in schools and to attain students' success in their learning process. The material that cannot be separated from everyday life is language.

Language is a medium of verbal communication among the human community throughout the world. Through the medium of human language, people communicate and share a wide range of meanings, ideas, emotions, feelings and a variety of problems in

life. Therefore, there is no question and doubt that language plays a very vital role in the existence and meaning of human life. To increase the intensity and quality of relationships, communication, interaction, business transactions, trade and diplomacy with the nations of the world, English has been selected and designated as a compulsory language to be taught in schools from junior high schools to university. Akbari (2010) states that the choices and decisions are very logical, strategic and prospective because English is a lingua franca of international speakers at and has spread across the globe. Moreover, Although global language competitors have begun to emerge such as Mandarin and Arabic which is claimed as important language, English remains the major language followed by Hobras (2018). Although the emerging of other important languages rapidly developed, English stays global not only in education but also in all aspects. Therefore, the purpose of learning a language especially English since elementary and general grade is to make students able to use language in their daily lives and for learning various disciplines. Learning language emphasizes on students' capability to solve their daily problems conversation and this capability is crucial to be noticed.

To meet the students need, many ways are provided to gather those needs at an early age, such as drill, practice, and get used for something they learn before it comes to school curriculum. Learning a language needs reasonable and critical thinking which refers to the individuals' ability to think and to make correct decisions independently. Nowadays enhancing critical thinking in learners is considered one of the foreign language teachers' tasks due to its high position in foreign language classrooms. Hence the ability of students depends on the success of teaching and learning process.

Basically, learning programs aims not only to understand and to master on what and how something happens, but also to provide an understanding regarding "why it happens". Referring to this matter, learning how to solve problems is crucial to teach. Based on the regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture about basic and secondary education content standards that problem solving is a part of the competence that must be possessed by students. Problem solving plays an important role in the curriculum for several reasons: 1) can build new knowledge, 2) solve problems in language structure or other context English, 3) be able to implement and adapt the various



problem solving strategies, 4) monitor and reflect the problem solving process.

Along with Duch, Groh, & Allen, (2001) who stated that in the problem-based approach, complex, real-world problems are used to motivate students to identify and research the concepts and principles they need to know to work through those problems. Students work in small learning teams, bringing together collective skill at acquiring, communicating, and integrating information. Problem-based instruction addresses directly many of the recommended and desirable outcomes of an undergraduate education: specifically, the ability to do the following:

- Think critically and be able to analyze and solve complex, real-world problems
- Find, evaluate, and use appropriate learning resources
- Work cooperatively in teams and small groups
- Demonstrate versatile and effective communication skills, both verbal and written
- Use content knowledge and intellectual skills acquired at the university to become continual learners

Problem solving has become the means to rejoin content and application in a learning environment for basic skills as well as their application in various contexts. English language learning by using problem solving becomes systemic approach activity that includes student involvement in various cognitive, behavioral and attitudinal actions, including represent the problem, solution search and implement solutions (Gick, 1980). Problem solving is a manifestation of mental activity consisting of various cognitive skills and actions (Kirkley & Kirkley, 2016). Problem solving is a process that involves students in various cognitive actions such as abstracting, representing, integrating, and using prior knowledge. Further troubleshooting is intended in this study is an activity that involves students in solving problems to obtain solutions where this solution cannot be done with routine procedures.

The ability to solve the problem systemically means that they are having good thinking skills. The problem-solving process allows the team to identify issues and implement action plans to reduce barriers and solve problems to meet predetermined objectives. Working together in a collaborative group is an important part of starting the process (Sohigian, 2015). Which takes creativity and open minded as two matters individuals that are needed to have when solving their problems. Using systemic approach

to solve problems may accelerate the process of solving problems by students. The four stages are identified for problem-solving, which involve problem analysis, problem solving process planning, calculation, and checking the answers and interpretation of results (Schoenfeld, 1992), the first procedure is analyzing problems. In this part, the students are asked to carefully read the task and then note what they just identified and felt curious on along with possible solutions addressing that problem. Second, the students need to construct a strategy to solve the problem, in case that it has been standardized. However, when it is not standardized yet, they need to write down the formulation and check whether it corresponds to the problem they encounter. Furthermore, they need to translate the problem into the standardized one. Third, counting operation is conducted through data distribution. Furthermore, he stated that the data was identified in standardized one and allowed to conduct a counting process. Students must be careful in making the identification so that the answers obtained are correct. Finally, checking the answers or solutions along with the interpretation of the result makes the students compare the counting result with the possible answer they have found in problem analysis. They need to check whether the answers correspond to the problems and identify any mistakes they made. If the student finds a mistake in either the identification or decision-making process, then the student should immediately justify the answer.

Systemic problem-solving approach is an approach that seeks a better and practical solution gradually. In practice, it is often easy to choose systemic approach while also applying your creativity during certain stages. In addition to systemic approach, there is also a creative approach. Both of these are not contradictory, they can be applied on the basis of the situation. A systemic and creative approach can be applied together to produce better problem solving (Heerkens & Winden, 2017).

In his research (Akil 2015) stated that systemic approach is an approach considers to the holistic point of view that covers the entire elements of a system. All elements of the system should intersect, interrelate, and interacts one another. If any element misses any of these systemic features, the element should be excluded from the system, and otherwise, it will jeopardize the system. Moreover, Kaufman & Baer (2012) claimed systemic approach affects everything in the system. Systemic approach is also defined by Fogarty (2015) as the approach that describes something that happens or exists throughout

a whole system. In addition, (Al- Bhery et al. 2010) declared that systemic approach depended on the concept of the system that meant a set of things that accumulated in a certain field and had several interrelations that aim at achieving specific goals. Therefore, the researcher concludes that systemic approach is an approach depended on the concept of system that emphasize the regularity and holistic point of view in identifying and categorizing adjectives to make the learners easily to master them.

The concept system that is generally taken by many institutions makes the learner thinks linear and not a holistic viewpoint which does not cover the entire element system. Meanwhile, the goal of holistic education is to help develop the potential of individuals in a more pleasant and exciting atmosphere of learning, democratic and humanist through experience in interacting with their environment. (Wanya, 2007) stated that the used of problem solving approach systematically will equip the students with the ability to solve practical problems to prepare them for real life situation. It could be said that, through holistic education, students are expected to be themselves (learning to be) by keep exploring their skill. In the sense of being able to obtain psychological freedom, make good decisions, learn in a way that suits him, obtain social skills, and be able to develop his character and emotions (Basil Bernstein). Therefore, the system used is expected to apply as many sources of material for any learning process as in many other learning environments do.

Applying technology in teaching and learning is the most current trend, this is because technology in all aspects of life is inseparable nowadays (Farooq & Soomro, 2018). Especially in information technology or the most known as the internet. Almost all schools in big cities have implemented various types of technology in teaching and learning activities. It cannot be denied that the advancement of an education system in developing countries is attached from the role of technology.

Moreover, (Sessoms, 2008) as cited in (Farooq & Soomro, 2018) stated that new prospect has been provided by technology that the teaching and learning process can be altered. This is enabled the teachers to create a new learning circumstance interactively. In this case, a teacher must have some technology-related competencies and training how to assimilate technology with teaching. This is putting the teacher and the students to

teach and learn no longer in traditional ways. Thus, technological devices should be always used by students and teachers.

The technology intervention has brought the students to be ready to function in a very different working experience than existed decades ago. And of course, the teacher even be more ready that they are required to rethink how they teach and what the students need to learn to prepare them for this challenging time. The problems that these future professionals will be expected to solve will cross disciplinary boundaries, and will request innovative approaches and complex problem-solving skills.

Mobile is one of the electronic devices that is developing in today's society, and almost all users are very dependent on this little object. Mobile phones are very useful for students in developing learning media so that they are able to attract students' learning interest.

Maulina, Noni, & Basri, (2019) on their study of WhatsApp Audio and Video Chat-Based in Stimulating Students' Self-Confidence and Motivation to Speak English found that This kind of mobile learning gives a great impact to complete the conventional teaching and learning. As a matter of fact that the students' daily life has been intervene by WhatsApp application. Almost social media interaction is done in WhatsApp. Therefore, the results promote to development mobile research in enhancing both theory and implementation for more stimulation in motivating and increasing self-confidence.

English learners got many opportunities and advantages of the growing of mobile learning in education. And as a part of mobile learning, Augmented Reality (AR) technique has potential to facilitate learning through enjoyment over learning tasks, engagement and motivation.

Carmigniani & Furht, (2014) defined Augmented Reality (AR) as a real-time direct or indirect view of a physical real-world environment that has been augmented by adding virtual computer-generated information to it. Augmented Reality is a technology that expands our physical world by adding layers of digital information into it. Unlike VR (Virtual Reality), AR does not create an entire artificial environment to replace the original with the virtual. AR appears in the live view of the environment and adds sound, video and graphics to it. Thus, AR is the appearance of the real world physical

environment, coupled with computer-generated images that change the perception of reality.

Paper (2018) concluded that all things considered, putting AR into practice as a mobile learning experience in language classrooms provides language learners with fundamentally motivating game experiences, challenge and joy. These positive outcomes might result in crossing the border between formal and informal learning. AR-based activities trigger attention and increases motivation as m-learning is a phenomenon appreciated by digital natives. Besides, she is also suggested that the foreign language teachers should take initiatives to design similar activities according to the needs of their students and observe the strengths and weaknesses of such experiences and design better ones in order to increase motivation and academic achievement in their classes.

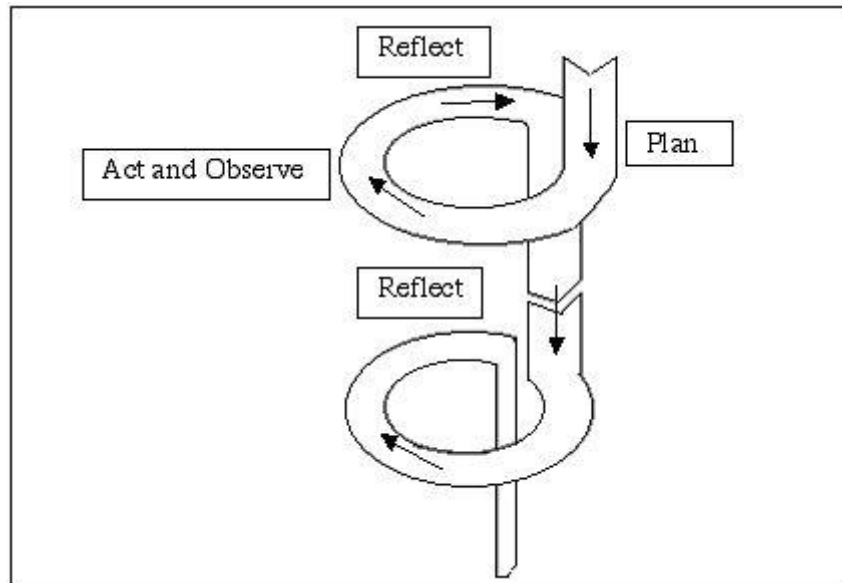
Along with Paper, Kesim & Ozarslan (2012) believed that augmented reality has power to change how people use computers. Augmented reality makes the impossible become possible and its potential in education is just beginning. Augmented reality interfaces offer unified interaction between the real and virtual worlds. Using augmented reality systems learners interact with the 3D information, objects and events in a natural way. Then, coordinating a team of expert to possible augmented reality solution in educational issues is essential. In order to achieve realistic solutions, designing and managing multi-disciplinary research project to enhance the content and environments is needed. Educators must work with researchers to develop augmented reality interfaces. Software and hardware technologies play an important and key role to produce augmented reality applications.

Several studies have been conducted related to systemic approach in problem solving, it showed positively corresponds with the viewpoints of (Lave 1988) and (McCormick 1997). After the design stage, most students could develop their own problem solving process and highlighted the evaluation and revision cycling path rather than just follow a linear process. The students gained an inventive and flexible approach that could better adapt to different situations that they faced. Therefore, at this research, the researcher expected the procedures on systemic approach to problem-solving and teacher's assistance can be a helpful strategy for students in solving the language problem; especially for writing skill in English. The statement supported by Iffah J. D. N. and

Masruroh F (2017) that systemic approach to problem solving influenced the students' language learning outcomes Learning outcomes is vital in learning process. It refers to patterns of actions, values, understandings, attitudes, appreciation, and skills (Suprijono A, 2017). The learning outcomes intended in this study point to the students' cognitive values after applying systemic approach to problem solving. Furthermore, Solak and Çakır (2015) examined the correlation between the use of learning materials that were enriched with AR and learner's motivation and academic achievement levels among 130 university students. Knowing that the learners at SMK Negeri 5 Gowa Makassar class of Graphic Design tend to have difficulty in catching the learning materials in making Video Editing such as placing the line, coloring (light and dark), texture and spaces were selected as the learning material. The researcher expected that the using of Systemic Approach to Problem Solving on the learning materials can be given impressive learning outcome However, from the previous studies conducted, there were not researched yet about the student learning outcomes. Therefore, this research is a research, continuing previous research, which aimed to increase student learning outcomes by applying systemic approach to problem solving.

## **Methodology**

Generally, this study aimed to see an improvement of the students' learning outcomes through the application of systemic approach to problem solving. Corresponding to this purpose, this study is a Classroom Action Research (CAR). Classroom action research (CAR) is a systemic inquiry with the goal of informing practice in particular situation (Angelo & Cross, 1993). It means that classroom action research is a way for instructors or teacher to discover what works best in their own classroom situation, thus allowing informed decision about teaching. As a scientific activity of a teacher, CAR also acted as the researcher, in her/his class, either individually or collaboratively, by designing, executing, and reflecting the action in collaborative and participative manner aimed to improve or enhance the quality of teaching and learning process in class through particular treatment in a cycle (Kunandar 2011). A CAR Cycle structure that used in this study.



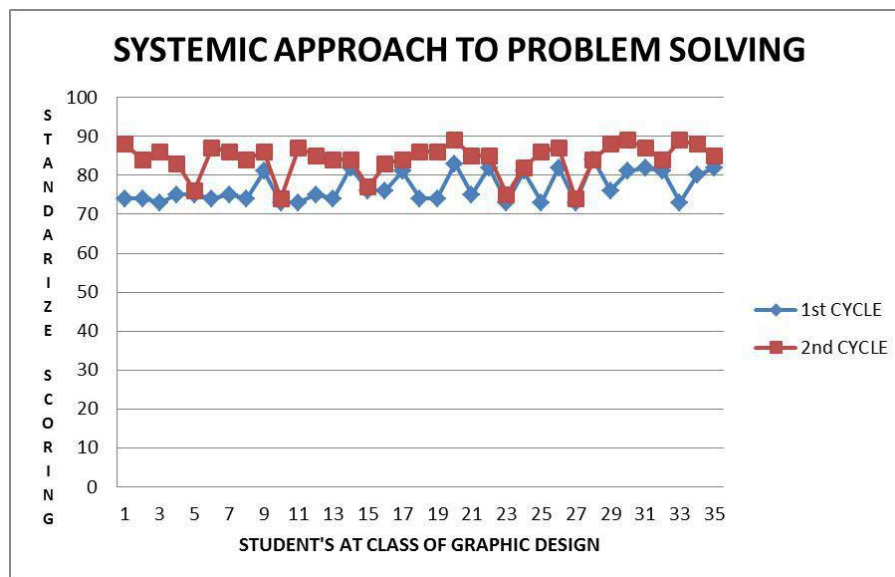
**Figure 1.** CAR Cycle Structure (Kemmis & Taggart, 1988)

This study was conducted with the students of the Vocational School class of Graphic Design at SMK 5 Gowa Makassar. This study was conducted in one class containing 35 students in order to see the improvement of the students' learning outcomes after a treatment –Systemic Approach to Problem Solving- was implemented. Designing referring to placing the line, coloring (light and dark), texture and spaces were selected as the learning material, which started with understanding the features of making video as graphic design students. The key concept of Classroom Action Research, following (Adelman & Adelman, 2006), consisted of four components which included planning, acting, observing, and reflecting (Kusuma, 2011).

The instrument used in this study is tested on students' learning outcomes by using writing paragraph test by using Augmented Reality in Metaverse. The test was in the form of essays about Graphic Design. It was aimed to observe the students' understanding the learning materials and, thus, see whether or not their learning outcomes were improved after a treatment using Systemic Approach to Problem Solving was implemented. Before it was applied to data collection, it should be firstly validated by experts. Hence, the researcher asked a favor to experts in linguistics and an assessment to validate the instrument for this study.

The indicator of success in this study is the achievement of the percentage score of students learning outcomes that complete classical learning at least 75% after applying systemic approach to problem solving from cycle 1 to the next cycle. And students achieve the average learning completeness minimal mastery standard Vocational Students' class of Graphic Design at SMK 5 Gowa Makassar applied learning by applying systemic approach to problem solving.

## Analysis



**Figure 2. Chart of 1<sup>st</sup> Cycle and 2<sup>nd</sup> Cycle**

The first cycle run in two meetings. The former conducted the learning process by applying Systemic Approach to Problem Solving, and the latter conducted the test of students' learning outcomes. This cycle consisted of four procedures. First, planning. The researcher designed the teaching plan, the task for testing the students' learning outcomes, and the alternative test, and then validated the test. The researcher validates the instrument to a person skilled in linguistic.

Second, acting. The researcher did the teaching-learning process by applying Systemic Approach to Problem Solving. Understanding the features design graphic such as, placing the line, coloring (light and dark), texture and spaces were selected as the learning material of making video as graphic design students. In this process, the researcher provided students with the task and asked them to complete it using systemic



approach. This approach involved problem analysis, problem solving process planning, calculation, and checking answers and interpretation of results respectively. At the implementation stage, the researcher helps students by giving worksheets by using Metaverse. This has never been done in previous research. Students are able to work on their mobile phone in accordance with the stages of systemic approach to problem solving. There is a small discussion process that is also visible when students have difficulty in solving problems.

Third, observing. The researcher observed the students during the learning process. By assisting them who found difficulty in solving the problem, while observing and admonishing the others who seemed not focused on their learning in order to make sure that they all were able to understand the material well. The help given by the researcher to this student is referred to as scaffolding as revealed (Vygotsky, 1978). Previous research has also revealed that the Participation in scaffolding activities is an important element in mediating new learning as well as building a classroom 'community of practice' (Lave and Wenger 1991). The experience of collaborative accomplishment in negotiating challenging, but supported tasks creates a shared classroom culture in which learners use various semiotic tools to achieve common intellectual task goals. The researcher acted as teacher observing the students solving the given problem by applying Systemic Approach to Problem Solving. After the process ended, the researcher provided them with a test at the next meeting in order to see their learning outcomes.

Based on the result, 22 of 35 students having the test reached their score less than 78 or under the minimal mastery standard the school had predetermined. It indicated that they did not complete their learning yet. The other 13 students had their score above 78, which indicated their complete learning. The students' average score was 76,97 with the classical completeness at 37.14%. Classically, it was not yet considered complete since it did not reach 62.85%.

Fourth, reflecting. The researcher analyzed and evaluated the students' observed learning outcomes in order to see the success of this study, respectively. The result of this stage was used for refinement to conduct Cycle 2. The students' learning outcomes only reached 37.14% classical completeness. It indicated that most of them did not comprehend Systemic Approach to Problem Solving. Hence, in the next cycle, the

researcher -as teacher- should be more active to interact with the students and motivate them to ask what they did not know yet. The researcher should pay more attention on students who needed assistance to get out of the difficulty they might encounter in problem-solving. The students should be drilled to be familiar with Systemic Approach to Problem Solving in order to make them easier for problem-solving, and finally in turn, their classical completeness might reach more than 62.85%.

This second cycle runs in two meetings. The former conducted the learning process by applying Systemic Approach to Problem Solving, and the latter conducted the test of students' learning outcomes. Similar to the previous one, this cycle consisted of four procedures. First, planning. The researcher designed the teaching plan that corresponded to the reflection on Cycle 1. In addition, the researcher also designed the task for testing the students' learning outcomes and the alternative test for this second cycle, and then validated the test to the experts, respectively. After conducting validation and it was considered valid, the researcher collected the data.

Second, acting. The researcher acted as teacher conducting teaching-learning process by applying Systemic Approach to Problem Solving. The material continued to determining the surface area and the volume of a cube and rectangular cuboid. The researcher provided the students with task containing related problems which pointed to Systemic Approach to Problem Solving assisted with Augmented Reality in Metaverse Application. The researcher refined the learning process based on the reflection in Cycle 1. Then, the researcher made students more active in their learning process. The researchers stressed more on problem-solving and asked the students to be more active in learning. Then asked them to make questions for any difficulty they found. In addition, motivation would be given to help them in solving the problem well.

Third, observing. The researcher observed the students during the learning process. The researcher led them to be more active and to make questions for any difficulty they found on systemic Approach to Problem Solving assisted with Augmented Reality in Metaverse Application. Compared to Cycle 1, this current cycle was better. The students were more enthusiastic and encouraged to pay attention on the researcher, acting as teacher. They were more likely to ask and interact with the teacher, since they were accustomed to the researcher acting as their teacher and it made them enjoy the

learning. Additionally, they were more capable to apply Systemic Approach to Problem Solving and hence, more motivated to solve the problem related to the learning material of Graphic Design. After the learning process ended, the researcher provided them with a test in order to see their learning outcomes.

Based on the result, 30 of 35 students reached their score more than 78 or more than the minimum criteria of successfulness (i.e. KKM) the school had set. It indicated that they had completed their learning. However, the other 5 students had their score less than 78, indicating their incompleteness in learning the subject matter. The students' average score was 84.2 with the classical completeness at 85.71%. It showed that the indicator of students' improvement in their learning outcomes had completed, and thus, the research completed in Cycle 2 as well.

Fourth, reflecting. In this phase, the students' learning outcomes were analyzed in order to see the success of this current study. The result of Cycle 2 showed that the students had successfully reached the classical completeness. Therefore, the study ended in Cycle 2 since it had matched the success criteria. In addition, the student learning activity in Cycle 2 was found better than the first one. They seemed more motivated to learn and more focused on the process of problem-solving.

## **Discussion**

The finding shows that applying Systemic Approach to Problem Solving enabled to improve the 10th students' learning outcomes, particularly in learning materials in class of Graphic Design. This improvement was found in the increasing results from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2. In Cycle 1, the students' average score was 76.97 with the classical completeness at 37.14%. In Cycle 2, however, the students' average score was 84.2 with the classical completeness at 85.71%. It indicated an improvement and completeness on students' classical learning outcomes *since it reached over the criteria of successfulness which was predetermined at 75%, as the researcher set*. The result of this study showed that the application of Systemic Approach to Problem Solving could be used as an option for teachers to teach problem-solving to their students. However, there hasn't been a specific way for the student's ability on facing and finding out the problem solving to be assessed as (Macadangang, 2019) mentioned at her research that the students were

proficient in solving problem but they found difficulty in elaborating the set of solution. This could be implied that further, the teacher/educators/tutors need to be more aware of these as one of necessity during the assessment of this approach, for the total implementation of Systemic Approach to problem solving in the teaching and learning process has come to successful.

## **Conclusion**

It can be gleaned from the result of this research that, systemic approach helps the students to master and comprehend adjectives because they are taught all interrelated elements related to adjectives. Following with research result of (Alwiah & Muliati, 2018) who found that the use of systemic approach in teaching adjectives help students understanding adjectives faster and better. It shows that the use of AR as a technology can support systemic approach in teaching problem solving ability shows positive impact to the students. The completeness of the experiment resulted that students interest in learning with a new approach, moreover of the first cycle. Therefore, it can be concluded that this type of approach makes the students' more active in the classroom and motivates them to study English, especially adjectives. The students are supposed to learn adjective as one of the alternatives to add their vocabulary and to learn about nine interrelated elements, namely use, usage, synonym, antonym, meaning, pronunciation, spelling, collocation and order. It can be inferred that, the used of the media is very essential to support teaching plan at school, therefore the stakeholders of school should also give more attention and notice the need of each major related to its learning development. As, (Chen, 2008) stated in her research that administrators should try to understand and meet the needs of language teachers so that they can provide necessary and appropriate support for language instruction.

## **Implications for Pedagogy**

The theoretical contribution of this study to pedagogical aspect is related to the educators and to those who interested in vocabulary instruction. The educators are in need to notice this skill mastery of revealing a problem in classroom activity, as systemic approach has, students should be triggered to level up their cognitive sense, especially

related to 4Cs skill. This ability will only be awarded if the educators/teachers have the essential knowledge, tools, support and skill to achieve this. The awareness of this research result can empower the students to become adapt academic technology. The approach proposed by this study builds up for students to give more attention while exploring the problem solving model instruction. The outcome of this research is also in line with some findings, that the implication that run parallel with Alwiah et al (2018) indicates that the whole elements of adjectives should be taught systemically because the completeness of the materials determines the effectiveness of learning process, and this could only be achieve once the teachers promotes the suitable approach. The approach that is created in this study can be utilized as a reference for teachers/educators/tutors to acquire the possible generic structure of teaching and learning development. It is recommended that the novice writers study the possible approach related to private high schools which identified the need of cognitive skills. In addition, for the next researchers, it is every expected to move on from the implementation of the systemic approach to problem solving to the model use of problem based learning itself on the field of applied linguistics.

## References

- Akbari, R., Behzadpoor, F., & Dadvand, B. (2010). Development of English language teaching reflection inventory. *System*, 38(2), 211-227. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2010.03.00>
- Akil, Mansur. (2015). *Systemic Approach (SA) to Curriculum Development: Application and Implication of Systems Thinking in Curriculum Development*. Makassar: State University of Makassar.
- Al-Bhery et al. 2010. Effects of Using the Systemic Approach on Learning Some Fencing Skills for Junior Fencers. *Egypt: World Journal of Sport Sciences* 3.
- Adelman, C., & Adelman, C. (2006). Kurt Lewin and the Origins of Action Research *Kurt Lewin and the Origins of Action Research*, 792(1993). <https://doi.org/10.1080/0965079930010102>
- Alwiah, W., & Muliati, A. (2018). The Effectiveness of Systemic Approach in Teaching

- Adjectives, 5(1).
- Carmigniani, J., & Furht, B. (2014). *Augmented Reality : An Overview Augmented Reality : An Overview*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-0064-6>
- Chen, Y. L. (2008). Factors Affecting the Integration of Information and Communications Technology in Teaching English in Taiwan, (May), 1–44.
- Duch, B. J., Groh, S. E., & Allen, D. E. (2001). *The Power of Problem-Based Learning*. Virginia: Stylus Publishing.
- Farooq, M. U., & Soomro, A. F. (2018). Teachers and Technology : Trends in English Language Teaching in Saudi Arabia, 8(5), 10–19. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ijel.v8n5p10>
- Gick, H. (1980). *Analogical Problem Solving.pdf*. Michigan: Academic Press. Inc.
- Heerkens, H., & Winden, A. Van. (2017). *Solving Managerial Problems Systematically*.
- Kaufman, J. C., & Baer, J. (2012). Beyond New and Appropriate : Who Decides What Is Creative ? Beyond New and Appropriate : Who Decides What Is Creative ?, (January). <https://doi.org/10.1080/10400419.2012.649237>
- Kesim, M., & Ozarslan, Y. (2012). Augmented Reality in Education : Current Technologies and the Potential for Augmented reality in education : current technologies and the potential for education, (December). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.06.654>
- Kirkley, J., & Kirkley, J. (2016). Principles for Teaching Problem Solving, (August).
- Macadangdang, M. D. B. (2019). The Asian EFL Journal. *Problem Solving Proficiency and Reading Comprehension Skills of College Students and Selected Correlates*, 23(3), 52–79.
- Maulina, Noni, N., & Basri, M. (2019). WhatsApp Audio and Video Chat-Based in Stimulating Students' Self-Confidence and Motivation to Speak English. *The Asian EFL Journal*, 23(6), 181–203.
- Paper, C. (2018). Augmented Reality Games and Motivation in Language Learning Augmented Reality Games and Motivation in Language Learning, (July).
- Schoenfeld, A. H. (1992). *Learning to Think Mathematically: Sense -Making in Mathematics*. New York.
- Sohigian, E. (2015). Utilizing a Systematic Approach to Problem- solving in the

Elementary School Setting : A Program Evaluation Project.

Wanya, Cherry S. 2007. "Determinants of Problem Solving Performance Among College Physics Students". Unpublished Doctoral Thesis. CSU, Aparri, Cagayan

Zorbas, V. (2018). Prospects for global English: Which languages may rival English as a lingua franca in the 21st century? *Ioannina*, (March).



## **Pragmatic Transfer in Refusals of Requests by Chinese University ESL Learners**

**Jin Guan**

*Shenzhen Technology University*

### **Bio-profile:**

**Jin Guan** is Lecturer of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Shenzhen Technology University (SZTU). She earned her MA in English Language Studies from Hong Kong Polytechnic University. She worked as a deputy director of the Foreign Language Training Center at Guangdong University of Foreign Studies before she joined SZTU. Her research interests are on the fields of intercultural pragmatics and second language acquisition.

[graceguan24@qq.com](mailto:graceguan24@qq.com)

### **Abstract**

The objective of this study is to compare similarities and differences in the content, frequency and order of semantic formulas in the speech acts of refusals of requests produced by Chinese university ESL (English as a Second Language) learners and English university students who speak English as a first language, and to investigate the incidences of pragmatic transfer in refusal strategies used by Chinese ESL learners, as well as to explore the possible reasons for the transfer from a socio-cultural perspective. The participants in this study are three groups: 30 native speakers of English from universities in the UK (EEs), 30 Chinese university ESL learners (CEs) and 30 native speakers of Chinese from universities in mainland China (CCs). A Discourse Completion Test (DCT), written in both Chinese and English versions, was used to collect data. The data were then coded based on the refusal taxonomy developed by Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz. Results indicate that although a similar range of refusal strategies were available to CC and CE groups, cross-cultural variation was evident in the content and



frequency of semantic formulas used by the two groups in relation to the contextual variables (power and social distance). The evidence of pragmatic transfer in refusal strategies by Chinese learners of English was also found in the content, frequency and order of semantic formulas. The study also found that politeness is what people in both Chinese and English cultures are concerned about; however, the ways in which politeness is manifested reflect different natures of the two cultures.

**Keywords:** *pragmatic transfer, speech act, politeness, refusal, Chinese ESL learners*

## **Introduction**

Interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) research, which addresses how non-native speakers perform L2 speech acts and acquire L2 pragmatic knowledge (Kasper & Dahl, 1991), has indicated that L2 learners are likely to transfer their L1 speech act norms to L2 production. Pragmatic transfer has been found in a wide range of speech acts, such as requests, apologies, complaints and refusals, produced by L2 learners with different L2 proficiency levels.

Among all the speech acts, refusal is a highly complex one involving a certain degree of rudeness and discourtesy. Even advanced L2 learners with high proficiency in vocabulary and grammar cannot necessarily make refusals effectively in accordance with L2 norms. A number of studies have been concerned with pragmatic transfer in refusals across cultures, mostly examining L2 learners from European countries or other non-Asian cultural backgrounds (Li, 2018), while pragmatic transfer in refusals by L2 learners from mainland China are insufficiently researched.

Chinese people are generally perceived to be more face-conscious than people from English-speaking countries in that China is a highly collectivist culture (Hofstede et al., 2010), rooted in Confucianism, where people act in the interests of the group and not necessarily of themselves, so they tend to pursue moderate means in conflict in order to protect both their own and others' face, while English-speaking cultures generally feature individualism (Hofstede et al., 2010) in which face is seen as individuals' wants, so loss of face for one person does not necessarily takes a toll on the group. In light of different face values and cultural norms, it is not uncommon that Chinese ESL learners transfer

Chinese speech act strategies to English in cross-cultural communication, which may induce communication breakdowns. Therefore, to help Chinese ESL learners avoid rudeness and misunderstanding in cross-cultural context, the present research aims to investigate pragmatic transfer made by Chinese ESL learners and explore the possible causes for the transfer.

## **Literature Review**

### *Pragmatic transfer*

Pragmatic transfer is one of the most frequently addressed issues in interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) research which belongs to two different disciplines, namely, second language acquisition research and pragmatics. Transfer in second language acquisition is a strategy used by language learners of incorporating their L1 elements in L2 production (Olshtain and Cohen, 1989). Pragmatic transfer is transfer of L1 sociocultural communicative competence in performing L2 speech acts (Takahashi & Beebe, 1987). Kasper (1992) defines pragmatic transfer as "...the influence exerted by learners' pragmatic knowledge of languages and cultures other than L2 on their comprehension, production and learning of L2 pragmatic information" (p.203).

Relying on Leech's (1983) distinction between pragmalinguistics and sociolinguistics, Thomas (1983) divided pragmatic transfer into pragmalinguistic transfer and sociolinguistic transfer. Later Kasper (1992) reviewed Thomas's dichotomy and offered a more comprehensive definition to the two terms. Pragmalinguistic transfer refers to the process whereby the illocutionary force or politeness value in L1 affects language learners' perception and production of form and function of L2. Sociopragmatic transfer refers to transfer of L1 social perceptions of linguistic action to L2 contexts (Kasper, 1992). There is another differentiation of pragmatic transfer, namely positive transfer and negative transfer (Kasper, 1992). Positive transfer facilitates cross-cultural communication with a convergence of behaviors of native and non-native speakers of a language, while negative transfer induces misunderstandings and communication breakdown between native and non-native speakers of a language (Eslami & Noora, 2008).

Research in interlanguage pragmatics has shown that ESL learners' performance of speech acts is often different from that of native speakers because they lack the knowledge about the sociocultural rules of the target language, which may result in communication breakdown, also known as "pragmatic failure". Thomas (1984) defined pragmatic failure as "the mismatch which arises from cross-culturally different assessments within the social parameters affecting linguistic choice, size, size of imposition, social distance between speaker and hearer, relative rights and obligations, etc" (p.226). Pragmatic failure is considered more serious than linguistic failure. If a person commits a linguistic error, he is just considered to be a less proficient language learner. However, if he makes a pragmatic mistake, he might sound rude, disrespectful or impolite.

### *Speech Acts of Refusals*

A speech act is a functional unit in communication (Austin, 1962). The production of speech acts involves both linguistic and sociocultural knowledge. Interlocutors usually adopt certain strategies consciously or unconsciously in performing speech acts to maintain each other's face and avoid conflicts. Brown and Levinson (1987) defined face as "...the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself...".

Certain acts, by their nature, make it difficult to maintain the face of the people involved in an interaction. These acts are referred to as face-threatening. Refusal is a highly face-threatening act and is a "sticking point" in cross-cultural communication (Beebe et al., 1990). The inability to refuse with awareness and proficiency of pragmatic knowledge of the target culture would hurt the initiator's face and, even worse, jeopardizing the interpersonal relationship. In fact, many Chinese are so sensitive to saving or losing face that they consider it a very serious matter. Chinese concept of *face* has its roots to Confucianism for social harmony through maintaining appropriate interpersonal relationships and networks, which affects how modern Chinese interact and communicate with other people (Beamer & Varner, 2001).

During the process of performing the speech act of refusal, three contextual variables are usually involved in the choice of politeness strategies by speakers, namely power (P), social distance (S) and rank of imposition (R). For example, a speaker would

use different refusal strategies when declining a request by someone of higher power and by someone of lower power. The refusal strategies also differ according to the social distance between the interlocutors that induces different rank of imposition as well.

In one word, among different speech acts, refusals are highly face-threatening, so more face-saving strategies are expected to be used, especially in refusing individuals of higher power or larger social distance. Speakers may apply certain strategies, mostly indirect strategies, such as expressing regrets, giving explanations and stating an alternative to reinforce positive facework on the part of the speaker and attend to the initiators' face.

### *Cross-cultural Studies on Refusals*

Some researchers have attempted to compare English refusals and non-English refusals. Liao and Bresnahan (1996) conducted a comparative study on American and Mandarin refusals strategies. 570 Chinese university students from Taiwan and 516 American university students were asked to fill a discourse completion test (DCT). The research found that Americans and Taiwanese use different refusal strategies and semantic formulas. Chinese people are more economic in making refusals and they tend to utter an excuse if they are right. Besides, both groups provide vague reasons when refusing an interlocutor of higher power; however, more Chinese offer specific reasons in refusing a high-power interlocutor.

Lin (2014) also examined the cross-cultural differences between Chinese and English refusals, and how Chinese EFL learners produce English refusals. 30 Chinese native speakers in Taiwan (NSC), 30 Chinese EFL learners in Taiwan (EFL), and 30 native speakers of American English in America (NSE) participated in the study. The research found both similarities and differences between Chinese and English refusals. EFLs tend to adopt more strategies and softening devices than NSCs and NSEs. In addition, some Chinese native expressions were never used by EFLs.

Nelson et al. (2002) conducted a comparative study on Egyptian Arabic and American English refusals by using a DCT. The findings showed that both groups use similar refusal strategies with similar frequency. The study also proposed that the DCT fails to reveal the sociopragmatic complexities of face-threatening acts such as refusals.

Shishavan & Sharifian (2016) studied refusals by Iranian EFL learners and Australian students whose first language is English. The study found that both Iranians and Australians used similar strategies, mostly indirect strategies, when refusing an addressee of higher social power, while they differ in the strategies used to refuse an addressee of equal social power.

Genc & Tekyildiz (2009) investigated the refusal strategies adopted by Turkish EFL learners and native speakers of English from rural and urban areas, and found that all the groups used refusal strategies in a similar manner and the status of the interlocutors plays a predominant role in strategy choice.

#### *Studies on Pragmatic Transfer in ESL/EFL refusals*

Pragmatic Transfer in ESL/EFL refusals has drawn many researchers over the past decades. A majority of them have focused on pragmatic transfer across different English proficiency levels. The most influential research in this aspect was conducted by Beebe et al. (1990). They explored the extent of pragmatic transfer in Japanese ESL/EFL refusals across different English proficiency levels. The study found that pragmatic transfer is evident at both the lower and higher proficiency levels and transfer increases as learners' proficiency increased. Besides, pragmatic transfer was found in the order, frequency and content of semantic formulas. For instance, compared with American native speakers, Japanese native speakers and Japanese ESL speakers tend to use expressions of regret more frequently with interlocutors of higher social status, but less frequently with lower-status interlocutors.

The past research on pragmatic transfer in ESL/EFL refusals also addressed other Asian languages, such as Korean, Thai and Chinese, but they are less investigated than Japanese. Kwon (2003) examined pragmatic transfer in refusals of Korean EFL learners. The results supported the conclusion drawn by Beebe et al. of positive correlation between pragmatic transfer and L2 learners' proficiency. Research on pragmatic transfer in Thai EFL refusals revealed that pragmatic transfer exists in the content of refusal strategies, and EFL learners with lower English proficiency are likely to produce L2 by translating L1 because of their insufficient L2 pragmatic knowledge (Wannaruk, 2008). Chang (2009) investigated pragmatic transfer in refusals by Chinese ESL learners from

Taiwan and to what extent the transfer was influenced by the learners' L2 proficiency. This study indicated that pragmatic transfer occurs in the frequency and content of semantic formulas, but the results do not show a greater transfer in the refusal formulas as English proficiency of Chinese learners increases. Li's (2018) study on pragmatic transfer in Chinese EFL refusals found that both pragmalinguistic transfer and sociopragmatic transfer were evident in the use of semantic formulas. For example, in refusals of invitations, sociopragmatic transfer exists in the salutations in the opening, and supportive moves such as willingness, small talk, gratitude and apology.

Some researchers were concerned with the pragmatic transfer in refusals made by Arabic EFL learners. Allami & Naeimi (2011) studied refusals by Iranian EFL learners, and found a positive correlation between L2 proficiency and pragmatic transfer, in accordance with Beebe et al.'s findings. In addition, upper-intermediate learners tend to transfer more L1 sociocultural norms to L2 and make more pragmatic errors than the lower-intermediate learners. Al-Eryani (2007) investigated the refusal strategies used by Yemeni EFL learners and pragmatic transfer was found in refusals of requests. For instance, when refusing an interlocutor of higher status, Yemeni Arabic speakers used excuses in the first and the second positions of the semantic formulas; Yemeni EFL learners used excuses in all positions, whereas American English speakers used excuses only in the third position.

By reviewing the literature, we found that pragmatic transfer in ESL/EFL refusals produced by Chinese English learners is insufficiently researched. To date, there have been some studies on EFL refusals by Taiwanese English learners, but there are limited attempts to study pragmatic transfer in ESL refusals made by Chinese from mainland China. Mainland China and Taiwan score 80 and 58 respectively in terms of power distance index ("Country Comparison - Hofstede Insights", n.d.) – i.e. people from mainland China are more likely to conform to the hierarchy in the society so that they may adopt different speech act strategies from Taiwanese. Besides, most studies on Chinese ESL refusals only presented the data on the order, frequency and content of semantic formulas used by different cultural groups without offering a sociocultural explanation. Therefore, the present research endeavors to add some reference for filling the hole by examining the following questions:

1. What are the semantic formulas used by native speakers of Chinese, native speakers of English and Chinese ESL learners when making refusals?
2. What are the similarities and differences in the content, frequency and order of semantic formulas used by the three groups?
3. Does pragmatic transfer exist in the frequency, order and content of the semantic formulas of the refusals produced by Chinese ESL learners? What are the possible reasons for the pragmatic transfer from a sociocultural perspective?

## **Methodology**

### *Subjects*

Ninety subjects participated in this study: 30 native speakers of English from the UK (EEs), 30 Chinese learners of English (CEs) and 30 native speakers of Chinese from mainland China (CCs), as shown in table 1.

Table 1. The participants in the study

	No. of participants	Age
Native speakers of English from the UK (EEs)	30	18-25
Chinese learners of English (CEs)	30	18-25
Native speakers of mainland Chinese(CCs)	30	18-25

The groups of EEs and CEs provided English data while the group of CCs provided Chinese data. The subjects in the three groups were all university students doing their bachelor's or master's degrees. The age of the subjects ranged from 18 to 25 years old. The students in CE group were all English majors because they had more awareness and capability of applying certain communication strategies when making refusals. Students in the other two groups were expected to have acquired appropriate sociolinguistic rules that represent the norms of their cultures. All the subjects were not required to take any special roles but to be themselves in order to obtain realistic responses. For reliability of both sets of L1 data, subjects who had spent an extended amount of time in the environment of the target language and culture were not included in the study.

*Instrument – Discourse Completion Test (DCT)*

Data in this study was collected through a written role-play questionnaire called a “Discourse Completion Test (DCT)”. It is the most widely used technique in testing pragmatic knowledge (El-Okda, 2011). It consists of a structured written discourse that provides the context for the speech act being studied with rejoinders that are cues for eliciting the desired speech act. The respondents write down what they think would be said in the context given. The respondents’ responses are then analyzed in terms of semantic formulas used to perform the refusals. Since the study is concerned with university students, all the situations in the DCT used in this study were designed to be familiar to university students. The DCT in this investigation offered 4 situations about refusals of requests with all together 360 refusals elicited from the three groups of participants. In the situations, two variables were involved: power (P) and social distance (S) (see Table 2.).

Table 2. Offense contexts in the DCT

<b>Speech Acts</b>	<b>Situation</b>	<b>Power(H)</b>	<b>Social Distance (S/H)</b>	<b>Item</b>
Refusing Request	a Refusing to take charge of the orientation activities	higher	small	1
Refusing Request	a Refusing to help a freshman with his assignment	lower	small	4
Refusing Request	a Refusing to offer a seat	equal	large	3
Refusing Request	a Refusing to plan a party	equal	small	2

*Note.* Power(H) refers to the power of the hearer. Social distance(S/H) refers to the social distance between the speaker and the hearer. Item refers to the item No. in the DCT questionnaire (appendix 2).



Each situation could only be answered by a refusal. The social distance variables in situation item 1 and 4 are the same, while power variables are different, so the influence of power on the choice of refusal strategies can be shown. On the other hand, in situation item 2 and 3, the power variables are the same, whereas the social distance variables are different, so the influence of social distance on the choice of refusals strategies can be manifested. The DCT was written in two versions, English and Chinese. Both versions were developed to be equivalent in terms of format and content. CEs and EEs responded to the English DCT whereas the Chinese version was employed with CCs. A sample item is provided below.

*You are in the school library. Your friend called you to save a seat for him/her and he/she will come in about twenty minutes. At this time, a student who you don't know comes to you and asks you if the seat is available.*

– *Student: Excuse me, can I take the seat?*

– *You: \_\_\_\_\_*

#### *Data Analysis*

The data will be coded based on the refusal taxonomy (see Appendix 1) including sets of semantic formulas developed by Beebe, Takahashi and Uliss-Weltz (1990) which is widely used in the research of refusals. A semantic formula is a verbal move, such as a statement of regret or an excuse that is used as part of the total act of refusing. For example, if a student refuses his or her professor's suggestion about registering an elective course this semester by saying:

*"I'd love to choose that course but the semester is very intense. Thank you anyway."*

This response could be coded as consisting of three units or strategies, each falling into a corresponding semantic formula as showed in the brackets:

*"I'd love to choose that course" [positive feeling]*

*"but this semester is very intense" [explanation]*

*"thank you anyway" [gratitude].*

The order of semantic formulas used in each refusal will also be coded. In the above example, [positive feeling] was first, [explanation] second, and [gratitude] third. After

classifying all the semantic formulas used in the collected data, the total number of those semantic formulas in responses to each eliciting act will be counted, and then a list will be made to show the frequency and order of semantic formulas used in each situation. Lastly, the researcher will compare the similarities and differences of the content, frequency and order of semantic formulas used by the three groups of subjects, followed by an exploration of the reasons for the similarities and differences. For the convenience of comparison, the Chinese data will be translated into English for analysis. Grammatical accuracy was not examined.

## Results & Discussion

### *Refusing a request by a higher-power interlocutor*

Table 3. Typical Order of Semantic Formulas in Refusals of Requests

Hearer power = higher

Group	Order of semantic formulas			
	1	2	3	4
EE	Regret (13) Gratitude (7) Direct refusal (3) Hedging (3) Positive opinion (2) Alternative (2)	Excuse (20) Regret (1)	Excuse (6) Alternative (4) Regret (2)	Gratitude (1)
CE	Regret (9) Gratitude (8) Positive opinion (6) Postponement (5) Acceptance (2)	Excuse (16) Past acceptance (1)	Alternative (9) Regret (3) Excuse (1) Request (1)	Regret (1) Gratitude (1)

CC	Excuse (9) Regret (5) Acceptance (4) Gratitude (4) Postponement (5) Pause filler (2) Positive opinion (1)	Excuse (17) Alternative (6) Regret (2)	Alternative (10) Excuse (3) Positive opinion (2) Regret (2)	Regret (2)
----	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------	------------

*Note.* EE=English speaking English; CE=Chinese speaking English; CC=Chinese speaking Chinese. The number in the parentheses means the number of subjects answered with this category.

Table 3 shows the frequency and order of semantic formulas used by the three groups to refuse a request of higher power. In this situation, subjects are required to refuse the request by the president of the Student Union of taking charge of the orientation activities. In this context, the president of the Student Union is thought to possess more power than the refuser. All the three groups have a great tendency of using indirect refusals such as regret, excuses, gratitude, and alternatives to refuse the president of the Student Union.

CEs and CCs tend to repeat gratitude or regret at the end of the refusal even though they have expressed “thank you” or “sorry” at the beginning of the response. For example, “thank you for giving this opportunity, but I’m pretty tied up this week. Thank you again.” Even though many CCs and CEs want to refuse the president of the Student Union indeed, they still tend to express acceptance by words such as “yes” or “OK”, and then give reasons for the refusal, while none of EEs respond in this way.

The contradictory responses made by Chinese speakers may sometimes make native speakers of English confused about whether those Chinese speakers really want to accept the request or not. For example, a Chinese speaker may say “OK, I can take it, but I need to work on my assignment these days. Maybe you can ask A to do it.” The reason might be that ambiguity is a Chinese cultural trait which perfectly defined Chinese behavior in negotiation. The Chinese sometimes say “yes” when they actually mean “no”

or “uncertain” since they do not want to offend or embarrass the foreign negotiators. The foreign negotiators may feel very frustrated sometimes when they are trying to interpret the real meaning.

The most frequently used semantic formula in all the three groups is *excuse*. The second most frequently used semantic formula is *regret* for EE and CE groups, and *alternatives* for CCs. There is evidence of pragmatic transfer in the frequency of semantic formulas used by CEs. 16 CCs and 9 CEs use *alternatives* by responding something like “Maybe we can ask A if he wants to take charge of it” or “but I need an assistant to cooperate with me” while only 6 EEs use *alternatives*. *Alternatives* can be regarded as a compensation to minimize the threat to the interlocutor’s face. 5 CCs and 2 CEs use *postponement* to win more time for consideration and to avoid the immediate response. For example, a typical response is “I’ll think about it”. But none of EEs uses *postponement*; instead, they respond in a more direct and immediate way than CCs and CEs, because the Chinese like to use implicit responses to deal with tricky situations.

There is the evidence showing pragmatic transfer in the order of semantic formulas used by CEs. The most common order for EEs is *regret + excuse*, for example, “I’m sorry I got assignments due to next week.” The common order for CEs is very much close to that for CCs, *postponement + excuse + alternative*, for example, “I am not sure if I can spare time to do it, as my assignment is urgent. But I’m very willing to contribute some suggestions or ideas for the activities.” A reason or an excuse is often used to moderate the intensity of the refuser’s negative response to the interlocutor’ initial idea, minimizing the disruptive impact of the refusal by explaining why compliance is not possible.

*Refusing a request by a lower-power interlocutor*

Table 4. Typical Order of Semantic Formulas in Refusals of Requests

Hearer power = lower

Group	Order of semantic formulas			
	1	2	3	4
EE	Regret (10) Positive opinion (7) Dissuasion (6) Alternative (4) Excuse (3)	Excuse (15) Direct refusal (7) Acceptance (2) Regret (2) Dissuasion (1) Request (1)	Alternative (6) Excuse (3) Regret (1)	Alternative (1)
CE	Regret (8) Excuse (4) Acceptance (4) Positive opinion (4) Dissuasion (4) Wish (3) Request (2) Postponement (1)	Excuse (10) Alternative (4) Direct refusal (4) Regret (1) Dissuasion (1)	Alternative (7) Regret (2)	
CC	Excuse (8) Regret (6) Self-defense (6) Acceptance (5) Request (2) Philosophy (1) Direct refusal (1) Alternative (1)	Excuse (8) Alternative (7) Postponement (2) Dissuasion (1) Suggestion (1)	Alternative (5) Future acceptance (3) Suggestion (1)	

*Note.* EE=English speaking English; CE=Chinese speaking English; CC=Chinese speaking Chinese. The number in the parentheses means the number of subjects answered with this category.

Table 4 shows the frequency and order of semantic formulas used by EEs, CEs and CCs to refuse a request of lower power. In this situation, the subjects are required to refuse the request of helping a student who is in a lower grade with his assignment. Similar to refusing the request of higher power, the subjects in all the three groups tend to use the strategies of *regrets*, *excuses*, *dissuasion* and *alternatives*. 13 CCs, 11 CEs and 10 EEs use *alternatives* in refusals, for example, “If you’re really worried, go and see your personal tutor.” Fewer subjects use *postponement* such as “I’ll think about it” to refuse the lower power than to refuse the higher power. *Dissuasion* has been found being used in all the three groups. *Dissuasion* is often used to refuse the interlocutors by foretelling the possibility of negative results, criticizing the interlocutor or making self-defense. For example, in this situation, some subjects criticize the interlocutor very mildly by saying “trust yourself” or “believe in yourself”, and some presented the negative consequence, for example, “I’m afraid I can’t give you useful suggestions in a few minutes” or “I can’t finish reading next week”. When refusing the higher power in the previous situation, the subjects rarely use *dissuasion* to refuse the professor.

The most frequently used semantic formulas in all the three groups is *excuse*. The second most frequently used semantic formula is *regret* for EEs and *alternative* for CEs and CCs. There is evidence of pragmatic transfer in the frequency of semantic formulas used by CEs refusing lower power. Firstly, 7 EEs and 4 CEs use direct refusals saying “sorry, no” or “I don’t have time to read it”, and only 1 CC uses direct refusals. The reason might be that Chinese culture is considered to be high-context culture that values implicit communication, whereas British culture is low-context culture that values explicit communication.

Secondly, CCs and CEs express *acceptance* far more frequently than EEs, but the *acceptance* actually functions “no”. Many CEs and CCs may have more concerns about the interlocutor’s feelings and thus they may tend to disobey their true feelings and ritually accept the interlocutor’s request, while EEs simply utter what they are thinking, since Chinese people have interdependent self-construals while western people have independent self-construals. A self-construal is conceptualized as how individuals see the relationship of their self to others or their self as at a distance from others (Singelis & Sharkey, 1995). An independent self-construal is a unique entity that emphasizes a

person's own internal thoughts and feelings. An interdependent self-construal is defined as an entity that is closely intertwined with others and that is responsive to, and dependent on, the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others.

There is no evidence of pragmatic transfer in the order of semantic formulas used by CEs. For all the three groups, the most common order is *regret + excuse + alternative*. For example, “I’m sorry, but I really have to prepare for my final exam. I think you can go to your teacher for help” and “I’m sorry that I am busy preparing my final exam also, so I think the time maybe not enough because I do want to read your essay carefully. Alright, you leave a copy of your essay for me and let me try to find my classmates to help you.”

*Refusing a request with small S/H social distance*

Table 5. Typical Order of Semantic Formulas in Refusals of Requests

S/H social distance = small

Group	Order of semantic formulas			
	1	2	3	4
EE	Wish (8) Regret (5) Alternative (4) Self defense (3) Positive opinion (3) Acceptance (2) Excuse (2) Direct refusal (2) Postponement (1)	Excuse (17) Request (2) Wish (1) Alternative (1)	Regret (6) Alternative (3) Self defense (2) Excuse (1)	Alternative (2)
CE	Positive opinion (8) Wish (6) Regret (5) Postponement (5) Self defense (4) Excuse (2)	Excuse (12) Direct refusal (1) Future acceptance (1)	Alternative (3) Direct refusal (1) Regret (2) Excuse (2) Request (2)	

CC	Wish (8)			
	Excuse (7)	Excuse (11)	Regret (2)	
	Acceptance (5)	Regret (2)	Alternative (4)	
	Postponement (5)	Alternative (3)	Request (3)	
	Regret (2)		Excuse (1)	
	Direct refusal (1)			

Note. EE=English speaking English; CE=Chinese speaking English; CC=Chinese speaking Chinese. The number in the parentheses means the number of subjects answered with this category.

Table 5 shows the frequency and order of semantic formulas used by EEs, CEs and CCs when they refuse the request of a person they are familiar with. In this scenario, all the subjects are required to refuse their best friend's request of helping plan a party. As the data show, *regret*, *wish*, *positive opinion*, *excuse* and *alternative* are the semantic formulas widely used by the three groups. *Wish* is a frequently used semantic formula to express the refuser's willingness. Also, *request* is also a commonly used semantic formula in all the three groups. Most of them tend to *request* postponement, for example, "I've got some work to do this week. Can we do it next week?" This strategy of *request* is often used by the refuser to transfer the responsibility of refusal back to the interlocutor, and it's a kind of dissuasion strategy. Subjects in all the three groups like to give *alternatives*. For example, "Why don't you ask A? You know how much they love to plan parties!" and "I have a lot to do this week, but I think I can squeeze a little time to help you." Chen et al. (1995) point out that *alternative* provides a way to avoid a direct confrontation. It illustrates the operation of preserving the hearer's face by showing the speaker's concern for the hearer's need. This is a positive on-record politeness strategy often used to soften the threatening power of refusals and shows the influence of the notion of "respectfulness" and "modesty" in Chinese politeness conceptions (Gu, 1990).

*Excuse* remains the most frequently used semantic formula for all the three groups. The second and third most frequently used semantic formulas are *regret* and *alternative* for EEs, *regret* and *positive opinion* for CEs, and *alternatives* and *wish* for CCs. There is the evidence showing pragmatic transfer in the frequency of semantic formulas used by CEs.



In this situation, 11 EEs, 7 CEs and 6 CCs express *regret* in refusing their best friend’s request for a favor, so we can find that English native speakers are more likely to say “sorry” to their friends, even to their best friend, than Chinese speakers. In Chinese culture, polite language is better termed distant language (Ma, 2008). Politeness markers such as “sorry”, “excuse me” and “thank you” are often used towards people one does not know well, especially people at a different social level from oneself. If one appears quite polite by saying “sorry” or “thank you” to the people in smaller social distance such as his or her best friend or family members, he or she will be considered feeling angry or annoyed at them.

Another example of pragmatic transfer is that CEs and CCs use much more *postponement* than EEs. 5 CC, 5 CEs and only 1 EE use *postponement*. For example, Many Chinese speakers say, “I’ll check my schedule and see if I have time.” The most commonly used Chinese *postponements* are “I’ll reconsider about it”, “Let’s talk about it later”, “Let’s study the problem later”, and “Another day maybe.”

There is not much evidence showing pragmatic transfer in the order of semantic formulas used by CEs. Most EEs and CEs like to place *wish* or *regrets* in the first order, while most CCs do not use *regrets* very often and they tend to place *wish* in the first place. The most common patterns of refusal for the three groups are similar as *wish/regret + excuse + alternative*. For example, “I wish I could. But I’ve got some work to do this week. Can we do it next week?” and “sorry, I’m tied up these days. But I have a lot of work to do this week so I will do the best I can but my help may be limited. Maybe you should get someone else to help us to make up for the work I can’t do.”

#### 4.4 Refusing a request with large S/H social distance

Table 6. Typical Order of Semantic Formulas in Refusals of Requests

S/H social distance = large

Group	Order of semantic formulas			
	1	2	3	4
EE	Regret (16) Direct refusal (8) Excuse (3)	Excuse (16) Regret (4) Alternative (1)	Excuse (3) Regret (1)	

	Dissuasion (1)			
CE	Excuse (14) Regret (8) Direct refusal (8)	Excuse (13) Alternative (1)	Alternative (4)	
CC	Excuse (14) Direct refusal (7) Regret (4)	Regret (3) Direct refusal (4) Excuse (2) Alternative (1)		

*Note.* EE=English speaking English; CE=Chinese speaking English; CC=Chinese speaking Chinese. The number in the parentheses means the number of subjects answered with this category.

Table 6 shows the frequency and order of semantic formulas used by EEs, CEs and CCs. In this situation, subjects are required to refuse a stranger's request of taking the seat which they are saving for their friends. Social distance refers to the relationship between the interlocutors. If two people are very close, they would have a low degree of social distance. Two strangers would typically have a high degree of social distance. We can find from Table 6 that the subjects' responses are far simpler with just a limited use of semantic formulas than the responses to refuse the people with smaller social distance. All the three groups use a similar range of semantic formulas such as *direct refusals*, *regret*, *excuse*, and *alternative*. Since the social distance between the refuser and the interlocutor is larger, the refuser may consider that this is the first time and also the last time meeting this stranger, so he or she does not bother to use as many strategies as possible to attend to the face of the interlocutor. Another interesting finding is that a majority of subjects tend to beat around the bush with the interlocutor by making up an excuse on the spot. For example, they make up excuses such as "Sorry, my friend asked me to save it for them while they went to a meeting" or "You're not a lucky duck, someone has taken this seat and he went to the toilet." These responses may be regarded as white lies. In Chinese culture white lies or polite lies are acceptable or even expected for protecting the face of the interlocutors and avoiding embarrassment in the

communication (Lindner, 2009). Generally, the alternatives the subjects offered do not differ so much. Based on all the subjects' responses, we found two popular *alternatives* that the subjects tend to use. Presented in examples, the two kinds of alternatives are "she is still 20 minutes away, so if you would like to, just sit here until she comes" and "it's not available but there are a lot of vacant seats over there."

*Excuse* is the most frequently used semantic formula for all the three groups. The frequency of using direct refusal such as "no" and "you can't sit here" to refuse strangers far exceeds that to refuse familiar people. According to the data, there is the evidence of pragmatic transfer in the frequency of semantic formulas used by CEs. In this case, Chinese speakers appear more direct than English speakers. 11 CCs, 8 CEs and 8 EEs refuse directly to strangers. British culture is regarded as individualism culture that values equality, while Chinese is just on the opposite. Chinese belongs to the collectivism culture and they distinguish in-group and out-group members clearly. Chinese are less likely to refuse a family member or best friends, but they are cold in manner to the out-group members, so the refusal speech acts are not as polite as they refuse the in-group members (Li, 2007). For instance, in this situation, most Chinese speakers reply the stranger as simply and directly as possible, such as "no." Also for this reason, the Chinese are more economical in their choices of the number of the refusal strategies when refusing the strangers. 21 EEs use *regret* such as "sorry" while only 8 CEs and 4 CCs use the strategy of *regrets*.

There is not much evidence showing pragmatic transfer in the order of semantic formulas used by CEs, but the patterns of semantic formulas used by the three groups are different. The most common orders of semantic formulas used by EEs and CEs are the same, namely, *regret + excuse*. For example, "Sorry, my friend is in the loo and she will come back shortly." CCs tend to give excuses straightforwardly without adding other strategies. For example, "my mate has just gone off and will be back in a minute."

## **Conclusion**

This study examines the differences in the semantic formulas used by Chinese university ESL learners and English university students when they refuse someone's request. Through the study we found preliminary evidence for the pragmatic transfer of

refusal strategies with respect to the frequency and order of semantic formulas used by Chinese learners of English. The study also shows the differences in the refusal strategies used by the subjects in situations where they are of higher or lower power, and larger or smaller social distance.

This study has important implications for teaching and learning English, especially in an ESL context. The results of the study indicate that refusals by Chinese ESL students could result in pragmatic failure when the students interact with native speakers of English because of the differences in the ways that refusals are performed between the two cultures. For example, the findings in this study indicated that native speakers of Chinese sometimes say “yes” but mean “no”, which may perplex the native speakers of English. The responsibility of language educators is to remind learners that in order to communicate effectively and successfully in a second language, as they would in their native language, acquiring grammatical knowledge alone is not sufficient, but learners may also have to acquire and practice sociolinguistic rules by studying the target culture.

Before generalizing the findings, the study contains a number of limitations that should be noted. Firstly, in spite of a rationale for the use of the DCT as an appropriate method for the study, data that were artificially elicited by a written role-play questionnaire might have yielded different results from naturally occurring data. Secondly, there are 90 subjects involved in the present study, and the sample size is relatively small so that the samples are less likely to represent all the university students in China and the U.K. A larger sample size may produce different results from the current findings.

## References

- Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to do things with words*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Allami, H., & Naeimi, A. (2011). A cross-linguistic study of refusals: An analysis of pragmatic competence development in Iranian EFL learners. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43(1), 385–406. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2010.07.010>
- Al-Eryani, A. A. (2007). Refusal strategies by Yemeni EFL learners. *The Asian EFL Journal*, 9(2), 19-34.

- Brown, P. & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in language use*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Beebe, L. M., Takahashi, T. & Uliss-weltz, R. (1990). Pragmatic transfer in ESL refusals. In R. Scarcella, R. Andersen, & S. D. Krashen (Eds.), *On the development of communicative competence in a second language* (pp. 55-73). New York: Newbury House.
- Beamer, L. & Varner, I. (2001). *Intercultural communication in the global workplace*. Boston: McGraw-Hill/Irwin.
- Babai Shishavan, H., & Sharifian, F. (2016). The refusal speech act in a cross-cultural perspective: A study of Iranian English-language learners and Anglo-Australian speakers. *Language & Communication*, 47, 75–88. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2016.01.001>
- Chang, Y. F. (2009). How to say no: an analysis of cross-cultural difference and pragmatic transfer. *Language Sciences*, 31(4), 477-493.
- Country Comparison - Hofstede Insights. Retrieved 25 September 2019, from <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/china,taiwan/>
- Chen, X., Ye, L. & Zhang, Y. (1995). Refusing in Chinese. In G. Kasper (Ed.), *Pragmatics of Chinese as a Native and Target Language* (pp. 119-163). Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press.
- El-Okda, M. (2011). Developing pragmatic competence: challenges and solutions. *The Asian EFL Journal*, 13(2), 90-132.
- Eslami, Z. R. & Noora, A. (2008). Perceived pragmatic transferability of L1 request strategies by Persian learners of English. In M. Putz & J. N. Aertselaer (Eds.), *Developing contrastive pragmatics: Interlanguage and cross-cultural perspectives* (pp. 302-333). Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Genc, Z. S. & Tekyildiz, O. (2009). Use of Refusal Strategies by Turkish EFL Learners and Native Speakers of English in Urban and Rural Areas. *The Asian EFL Journal*, 11(3), 299-328.
- Gu, Y. (1990). Politeness phenomena in modern Chinese. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 14(2), 237-257.

- Hofstede, G. J., & Minkov, M. (2010). *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*, 3rd Edition. McGraw-Hill.
- Kasper, G., & Dahl, M. (1991). Research Methods in Interlanguage Pragmatics. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 13(2), 215–247. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0272263100009955>
- Kasper, G. (1992). Pragmatic transfer. *Interlanguage Studies Bulletin (Utrecht)*, 8(3), 203–231. <https://doi.org/10.1177/026765839200800303>
- Kwon, J. (2003). *Pragmatic transfer and proficiency in refusals of Korean EFL learners (PhD Thesis)*. Boston University.
- Li, W. (2018). *Pragmatic Transfer and Development: Evidence from EFL learners in China*. John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Leech, G. (1983). *Principles of pragmatics*. London: Longman.
- Ma, Y. X. (2008). The study of the Chinese speech act. *Intercultural Communication Studies*, 17(1), 209-217.
- Olshain, E. & Cohen, A. D. (1989). Speech act behaviour across languages. In Dechert, H. W. & Raupach, R. (eds.), *Transfer in language production* (pp.53–67).
- Liao, C. & Bresnahan, M. I. (1996). A contrastive pragmatic study on American English and mandarin refusal strategies. *Language Sciences*, 18, 703-727.
- Lin, M.F. (2014). An interlanguage pragmatic study on Chinese EFL learners' refusal: Perception and performance. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 5(3), 642.
- Li, H. L. (2007). A comparative study of refusal speech acts in Chinese and American English. *Canadian Social Science*, 3(4), 64-67.
- Lindner, E. (2009). How Asia can contribute to world peace psychology: Creating a dignified and peaceful world by employing unity in diversity. In C. J. Montiel & N. M. Noor (Eds.), *Peace psychology in Asia* (p. 298). New York: Springer.
- Nelson, G. L., Carson, J., Batal, M. A., & Bakary, W. E. (2002). Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: Strategy Use in Egyptian Arabic and American English Refusals. *Applied Linguistics*, 23(2), 163–189. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/23.2.163>
- Singelis, T. M. & Sharkey, W. E. (1995). Culture, self-construal, and embarrassability. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 26, 622-644.

- Takahashi, T., & Beebe, L. M. (1987). The development of pragmatic competence by Japanese learners of English. *JALT journal*, 8(2), 131–155.
- Thomas, J. (1983). Cross-cultural pragmatic failure. *Applied Linguistics*, 4, 91-112
- Thomas, J. (1984). Cross-cultural discourse as “unequal encounter”: Towards a pragmatic analysis. *Applied Linguistics*, 5, 226-235.
- Wannaruk, A. (2008). Pragmatic Transfer in Thai EFL Refusals. *RELC Journal*, 39(3), 318–337. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688208096844>

## Appendix 1

### CLASSIFICATION OF REFUSALS

- I. Direct
  - A. Performative (e.g., “ I refuse”)
  - B. Nonperformative statement
    - 1. “No”
    - 2. Negative willingness (“I can’t”. “I won’t”. “I don’t think so”.)
- II. Indirect
  - A. Statement of regret (e.g., “I’m sorry...”; “I feel terrible...”)
  - B. Wish (e.g., “I wish I could help you...”)
  - C. Excuse, reason, explanation (e.g., “My children will be home that night.”; “I have a headache.”)
  - D. Statement of alternative
    - 1. I can’t do X instead of Y (e.g., “I’d rather...” “I’d prefer...”)
    - 2. Why don’t you do X instead of Y (e.g., “Why don’t you ask someone else?”)
  - E. Set condition for future or past acceptance (e.g., “If you had asked me earlier, I would have...”)
  - F. Promise of future acceptance (e.g., “I’ll do it next time”; “I promise I’ll...” or “Next time I’ll...”-using “will” of promise or “promise”)
  - G. Statement of principle (e.g., “I never do business with friends.”)
  - H. Statement of philosophy (e.g., “One can’t be too careful.”)
  - I. Attempt to dissuade interlocutor
    - 1. Threat or statement of negative consequences to the request (I won’t be any fun tonight” to refuse an invitation)
    - 2. Guilt trip (e.g., Waitress to costumers who want to sit a while: I can’t make a living off people who just offer coffee.”)
    - 3. Criticize request/requester, etc. (statement of negative felling or opinion);
    - 4. Request for help, empathy, and assistance by dropping or holding the request.



5. Let interlocutor off the hook (e.g., “Don’t worry about it.” “That’s okay.” “You don’t have to.”)
  6. Self defense (e.g., “I’m trying my best.” “I’m doing all I can do.” “ I no do nutting wrong.”)
- J. Acceptance that functions as a refusal
1. Unspecific or indefinite reply
  2. Lack of enthusiasm
- K. Avoidance
1. Nonverbal
    - a. Silence
    - b. Hesitation
    - c. Do nothing
    - d. Physical departure
  2. Verbal
    - a. Topic switch
    - b. Joke
    - c. Repetition of part of request, etc. (e.g., “Monday?”)
    - d. Postponement (e.g., “I’ll think about it.”)
    - e. Hedging (e.g., “Gee, I don’t know.” “I’m not sure.”)

#### Adjuncts to Refusals

1. Statement of positive opinion/feeling or agreement (“That’s a good idea...”; “I’d love to...”)
2. Statement of empathy (e.g., “I realize you are in a difficult situation.”)
3. Pause fillers (e.g., “uhh”; “well”; “oh”; “uhm”)
4. Gratitude/ appreciation

From: Beebe, L. M., Takahashi, T., & Uliss-Weltz, R. (1990). Pragmatic transfer in ESL refusals. In R. C. Scarcella, E. Andersen, & S. D. Krashen (Eds.), *Developing communicative competence in a second language* (pp. 55-73). New York: Newbury House.

## Appendix 2

This is an anonymous survey. All your information and responses will be kept confidential. It will take you 10-20 minutes to finish it. Thanks for your patience!

Your age: \_\_\_\_\_

Your gender: \_\_\_\_\_

### Discourse Completion Test (DCT)

Directions: Please read the following 4 situations. After each situation, you will be asked to write a response in the blank after “you”. Respond as you would in actual conversation.

1. *You are a member of the Student Union at your university. The president of the Student Union asks you to take charge of the orientation activities for new students next week, but you want to spend the next week on your assignment.*

– *President of the Student Union: I think you are the perfect choice to take charge of the orientation activities next week. Can you do it?*

– *You:* \_\_\_\_\_

2. *Your best friend wants you to help plan a party, but you are busy with other work this week.*

– *Your best friend: I really need someone to plan the party with me. Can you help?*

– *You:* \_\_\_\_\_

3. *You are in the school library. Your friend called you to save a seat for him/her and he/she will come in about twenty minutes. At this time, a student who you don't know comes to you and asks you if the seat is available.*

– *Student: Excuse me, can I take the seat?*

– *You:* \_\_\_\_\_

4. *You are a final-year student at your university. One day a first-year student in your department who you used to tutor wants you to read his/her assignment and offer some suggestions, but you are busy preparing for your final exam.*

– *Freshman: My assignment is due next week. I've checked it so many times but cannot find a single problem. I know you are busy, but could you please take a few minutes to read it and give me some suggestions?*

– *You:* \_\_\_\_\_

### - Appendix 3

这是一份匿名的调查问卷，填写这份问卷不会泄漏您的个人资料和您所提供的信息，希望您能在百忙之中抽出10-20分钟时间完成这份问卷。感谢您的耐心和参与！

您的年龄：

您的性别：

#### 话语补全测试

说明：请根据下列具体的语境，在下列横线上填上你的回答。尽量将您自己置于题目情景之中，写下您当时最可能做出的回答。

1.你是学生会的成员。学生会主席让你负责下周迎接新生的活动，但是你下周要忙论文的事情。

- 学生会主席：下周要有人来负责迎接新生的活动，我觉得你是最佳人选。就你来负责吧，怎么样？

- 你：\_\_\_\_\_

2.你最好的朋友想让你帮他/她一起筹办一个聚会，但是这周要忙其它事情。

- 你的好朋友：你可不可以帮我一起筹办那个聚会呀？

- 你：\_\_\_\_\_

3.你现在在学校图书馆。你的朋友要你帮他/她占个位，他/她大约20分钟后就到。就在这时，一位同学走过来问你他/她是否可以坐在这里。

- 同学：不好意思，请问我可以坐在这里吗？

- 你：\_\_\_\_\_

4.你是一名大四的学生。一天，你们系里你曾辅导过的一名大一学生想让你帮忙看看他/她的作业并给一些建议，但是你最近很忙，要准备期末考试，没有时间。

- 大一学生：下周我就要交作业了，这些天我一直在反复检查，但总是找不出什么问题，我知道你很忙，但是你可不可以抽时间帮我看看我的作业，顺便提一些建议？

- 你：\_\_\_\_\_



**The University Students Online Reading Behavior:  
Gender, Subject Area, and Academic Achievement in the Digital Era**

**Sultan**

Faculty of Languages and Literature, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia

**Sakinah Fitri**

Faculty of Languages and Literature, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia

**Bio-profiles:**

**Sultan.** He is a senior lecturer in the Department of Indonesian Language Education, Faculty of Languages and Literature, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia. He earned his doctoral degree in Indonesian Language Teaching. His research interests include teaching reading, critical literacy, and critical discourse analysis. E-mail: [sultan@unm.ac.id](mailto:sultan@unm.ac.id).

**Sakinah Fitri.** She is a lecturer in the Department of Indonesian Language Education, Faculty of Languages and Literature, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia. She earned her master degree in Indonesia Language Teaching. Her research interests include Indonesian language teaching and literature. Email: [sakinah.fitri@unm.ac.id](mailto:sakinah.fitri@unm.ac.id)

**Abstract**

The advancement of the internet has led to the transformation of student reading behavior: from offline to online. The current study aimed to reveal university student reading behavior based on gender, subject area, and academic achievement. A quantitative approach to survey was employed in this study. The respondents of the survey was comprised of 632 students from Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia. Data

were gathered using the Online Reading Behavior Questionnaire. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-test were run for data analysis. The results showed that there was a difference in student reading behavior based on gender, especially that related to the efforts of the students to obtain reading materials, use time for reading, reading beliefs, and reading habits. In addition, based on the subject area, discrepancies were found among students in obtaining reading materials and spending time on reading. However, based on academic achievement, there was no significant difference between high and low-ability students' online reading behavior. The findings of this study can contribute to the design of learning activities and training of student reading behavior in universities.

**Keywords:** *online reading, reading attitude, reading behavior, reading literacy*

## **Introduction**

According to the International Telecommunication Union (2014), there are more than three billions internet users in the world (40,4 %). The proliferation of internet usage has an implication on reading activity. Adolescents, for example, have undergone a period of transition from offline to online reading (Coiro, 2012). Mokhtari, Reichard, & Gardner (2009) reported that university students could spend 12.35 hours per week on web surfing. In addition, they have revealed that 52.88 % of the respondents (N= 539) used an average of 5.7 hours per week for recreational reading and the other 58.99% spent 10.85 hours on academic reading. Research by Huang, Capps, Blacklock, and Garza (2014) showed that university students used 8.95 hours weekly for digital reading. OECD (2015) also found that students performed online activities for two hours every day. Kurata, Ishita, Miyata, & Minami (2016) state that readers dedicate up to 70% of their time for digital reading. The findings of the studies indicate that readers have grown a big interest in online reading, either for academic or recreational purpose. Previous research findings have concluded that people usually spend a great amount of time browsing online reading materials. Compared to those studies, this study was specifically aimed to reveal university student reading behavior in the digital era, including types of reading materials, effort to obtain reading materials, beliefs and habits developed by the students when

reading. These indicators would be explained categorically based on gender, subject area, and academic achievement.

Internet variables have led to significant changes in reading behavior. A quite fascinating finding by Lim, Bong, & Woo (2015) suggested that Korean students who were not normally involved in reading traditional (printed) materials had a tendency to read online. It is obvious that the more interactive, dynamic, and abundant internet reading materials have affected university student reading behavior. In other words, online materials have helped shape readers' reading behavior and diverse reading behaviors are influenced by different variables.

The internet, in fact, has carried a fresh reading attitude and behavior. Alternative reading materials, media, and purposes show the specific behavior of a reader. Reading behavior is affected by internal and external factors. Mansor, Rasul, Rauf, dan Koh (2013) point out three factors that may impact student reading behavior: (1) student background, including gender, age, residence, and ethnic; (2) parents influence on diverse reading materials prepared, time used for reading, assistance provided, and reading companionship; and (3) the role of school, such as that related to the number and variation of reading materials, reading time, availability of reading areas, and teacher strategy in providing guidance for students when they read. In relation to digital reading, readers' reading behavior may vary depending on their social background. Therefore, this study was performed to uncover the difference in student online reading behavior based on gender, subject area, and academic achievement.

Gender is one of the variables that have an impact on one's reading behavior. Clark and Foster (2005) found that: (1) compared to men, women had found reading more interesting, (2) men loved reading in order to become a qualified job seeker, (3) women retold stories they have read more frequently than men, and (4) both men and women expected the provision of a conducive environment for reading from schools. Other research has shown that university student behavior in reading newspapers, magazines, tabloids, and books differed across gender (Datta & Macdonald-Ross, 2002; Karim & Hasan, 2007). There is also a difference in interest in reading (Khairuddin, 2013). Women are more likely to favor reading compared to men (Bussert-Webb & Zhang, 2016). Boys usually spend more time on recreational reading than girls (Lim, Bong, & Woo, 2015).

The previous research findings have indicated that male and female readers are different in some aspects of reading. However, the difference between male and female university students' behavior in online reading has been inconclusive, yet was to be investigated in the present study.

Student subject area is another determinant factor of university student reading behavior. Karim & Hasan (2007) discovered that ICT students read more online reading materials than art students. University students from different subject areas will possess different reading achievement and self-efficacy (Maltepe, 2016; Karabay, Kusdemir Kayiran, & Isik, 2015). Unlike the previous studies, this study would reveal in details university student online reading behavior from a number of aspects, including; (1) variation in reading materials, (2) the student effort to obtain the materials, (2) the use of time for reading, (4) beliefs developed when reading, and (5) reading habit (Mansor, Rasul, Rauf, & Koh (2013).

It is believed that the internet has brought a novelty to university student reading culture. Huang, Capps, Blacklock, & Garza (2014) argue that the internet has transformed university student reading activity and learning experience. This study, which attempted to unveil the aspects of university student online reading behavior, is expected to provide a contribution to the development of reading culture at the university. In contrast to other related research which was conducted in developed countries with better reading culture, the present study was carried out in Indonesia, a developing country whose learners and society show low rates of reading interest and achievement (OECD, 2013 & 2016). According to Yang (2007), Asian students are not accustomed to reading so that holding a book is considered only as part of schoolwork.

## **Method**

A quantitative survey was employed in this study. As a matter of fact, a cross-sectional survey (Creswell, 2010) was used to obtain data on university student reading behavior in relation to the usage of online reading materials. Comparative analysis was performed to investigate the difference in the participants' reading behavior based on gender, subject area, and academic achievement.

The population of this study consisted of the second and fourth year students from Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia. The samples of this study were 632 representatives from all faculties of the target university. Stratified random sampling was employed to select the samples. The profile of the samples was presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. The Profile of the Research Samples**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Subcategory</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Subject Area</b>	Educational Science	103	16.30
	Engineering	113	17.88
	Language and Literature	131	20.73
	Mathematics and Natural Science	121	19.15
	Social Sciences	164	25.94
<b>Gender</b>	Male	180	28.48
	Female	452	71.52
<b>Grade Point</b>	3.51–4.00	330	52.22
<b>Average (GPA)</b>	3.01–3.50	244	38.60
	≤3.00	58	9.18

A questionnaire was developed to collect the data. The instrument was adapted from Mansor, Rasul, Rauf, & Koh (2013). It consisted of two parts, respondent personal information, and reading behavior statements. Personal information includes information related to the participant faculty, subject area, academic year, GPA, and ethnic, while reading behavior statements attempt to uncover the respondent types of reading materials, effort to obtain the materials, time used for reading, reading belief, and reading habit.

The questionnaire contained closed-ended items with four alternative answers. Prior to the distribution, the validity and reliability of the questionnaire were examined. The instrument validity was ensured using Pearson Product Moment with a significance level of 5%, where items were considered valid if the probability of the correlation result was  $< .05$ . On the other hand, the items would be considered invalid if the correlation coefficient  $> .05$ , and thus removed from the instrument. The reliability of the instrument



was measured using Cronbach Alpha consistency. Items were considered reliable when the Cronbach Alpha coefficient  $>.70$  (Cortina, 1993).

IBM SPSS 23 was run to analyze the data statistically, while descriptive analysis was performed to obtain mean scores. Independent sample t-test was used to reveal the difference in the participants' reading behavior based on gender and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was employed to unveil the difference in the respondents' reading behavior based on their subject areas and academic achievement. Scheffe test was carried out for further analysis when ANOVA showed a significant difference in mean scores.

## Results

### *Gender and University Student Reading Behavior*

A significant difference was found between male and female university students in (1) effort to obtain reading materials ( $t=5.262$ ;  $p=.000$ ), (2) time spent on reading ( $p=2.672$ ;  $p=.008$ ), (3) reading belief ( $t=4.4.07$ ;  $p=.000$ ), and (4) reading habit ( $p=3.427$ ;  $p=.001$ ). The descriptive analysis indicated that (1) female students showed a more persistent effort ( $M=20.18$ ,  $SD=3.212$ ) compared to male ( $M=18.68$ ,  $SD=3.335$ ); (2) female students used time more effectively ( $M=4.54$ ,  $SD=1.510$ ) compared to male ( $M=4.18$ ,  $SD=1.555$ ), (3) female students had a more positive belief in reading ( $M=26.05$ ,  $SD=2.373$ ) compared to male ( $M=25.11$ ,  $SD 2.532$ ), and (4) female students had developed a better reading habit ( $M=36.42$ ,  $SD=3.809$ ) compared to male ( $M=35.22$ ,  $SD=4.422$ ). There was no difference in materials read by male and female students ( $t=.171$ ;  $p=.864$ ).

**Table 2. Gender and University Student Reading Behavior**

Aspects of Reading Behavior	Gender	N	M	SD	Df	T	P								
Types of reading materials	Male	180	48.55	5.669	630	.171	.864								
	Female	452	48.47	5.038				The effort to obtain the reading materials	Male	180	18.68	3.335	630	5.262	.000
The effort to obtain the reading materials	Male	180	18.68	3.335	630	5.262	.000								
	Female	452	20.18	3.212											

<b>Time used for reading</b>	Male	180	4.18	1.555	630	2.672	.008
	Female	452	4.54	1.510			
<b>Reading belief</b>	Male	180	25.11	2.532	630	4.407	.000
	Female	452	26.05	2.373			
<b>Reading habit</b>	Male	180	35.22	4.422	630	3.427	.001
	Female	452	36.42	3.809			

### ***Subject Area and University Student Reading Behavior***

Based on subject area, a significant difference was found in the effort to obtain reading materials ( $F=4.465$ ,  $p=.001$ ). Scheffe post hoc test showed that the students from the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences differed significantly in the effort to obtain reading materials compared to the students who came from the Faculty of Educational Science and Faculty of Engineering. The Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences group of students were reported to have the most persistent effort to obtain reading materials ( $M=20.67$ ,  $SD=3.382$ ), while the least persistent effort was shown by the Faculty of Educational Sciences students ( $M=19.10$ ;  $SD=3.037$ ). There was also a significant difference observed in time spent on reading ( $F=5.548$ ,  $p=.000$ ). Scheffe post hoc test indicated that the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences students were significantly different from the Faculty of Language and Literature, Faculty of Social Sciences, and Faculty of Engineering students in terms of time spent on reading. The students from the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences spent the most plentiful time on reading ( $M=4.97$ ,  $SD=1.602$ ), while the students from the Faculty of Educational Sciences spent the smallest amount of time on reading ( $M=4.21$ ;  $SD=1.460$ ). No significant difference was observed among the participants in terms of the types of reading materials that were read ( $F=.100$ ;  $p=9.82$ ), reading belief ( $F=1.962$ ;  $p=.099$ ), and reading habit ( $F=.869$ ;  $p=.482$ ).

**Table 3. Subject Area and University Student Reading Behavior**

<b>Aspects of Reading Behavior</b>	<b>Subject Area</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>p</b>
<b>Types of reading materials</b>	Languages and Literature	131	48.31	4.722	.100	9.82
	Educational Sciences	103	48.71	5.374		
	Mathematics and Natural Science	121	48.50	5.724		
	Social Sciences	164	48.57	4.969		
	Engineering	113	48.40	5.502		
<b>The effort to obtain the reading materials</b>	Languages and Literature	131	19.83	2.922	4.46 5	.00 1
	Educational Sciences	103	19.10	3.037		
	Mathematics and Natural Sciences	121	20.67	3.382		
	Social Sciences	164	19.86	3.430		
	Engineering	113	19.13	3.537		
<b>Time used for reading</b>	Languages and Literature	131	4.27	1.457	5.54 8	.00 0
	Educational Sciences	103	4.57	1.432		
	Mathematics and Natural Sciences	121	4.97	1.602		
	Social Sciences	164	4.21	1.460		
	Engineering	113	4.27	1.599		
<b>Reading belief</b>	Languages and Literature	131	25.70	2.391	1.96 2	.09 9
	Educational Sciences	103	25.93	2.348		
	Mathematics and Natural Sciences	121	26.27	2.432		
	Social Sciences	164	25.54	2.361		
	Engineering	113	25.58	2.722		
<b>Reading habit</b>	Languages and Literature	131	36.168	3.8554	.869	.48 2
	Educational Sciences	103	35.903	4.1645		

Mathematics and Natural Sciences	121	36.612	3.5151
Social Sciences	164	35.750	4.1155
Engineering	113	36.044	4.4629

***Academic Achievement and Reading Behavior***

The results of the analysis showed no significant difference in online reading behavior between low and high achievers. There was no significant difference in the types of reading materials that were read ( $F=.079, p=.924$ ), effort to obtain the reading materials ( $F=.778, p=.460$ ), time used for reading ( $F=.778, p=.090$ ), reading belief ( $F=.860, p=.424$ ), and reading habit ( $F=.577, p=.562$ ).

**Table 4. Academic Achievement and Reading Behavior**

Aspects of Reading Behavior	Academic Achievement	N	M	SD	F	p
Types of reading materials	3.51–4.00	330	48.54	5.072	.079	.924
	3.01–3.50	244	48.50	5.382		
	≤ 3.00	58	48.24	5.453		
The effort to obtain the reading materials	3.51–4.00	330	19.88	3.283	.778	.460
	3.01–3.50	244	19.70	3.375		
	≤ 3.00	58	19.31	3.256		
Time used for reading	3.51–4.00	330	4.39	1.541	2.413	.090
	3.01–3.50	244	4.58	1.558		
	≤ 3.00	58	4.12	1.299		
Reading belief	3.51–4.00	330	25.87	2.528	.860	.424
	3.01–3.50	244	25.76	2.438		
	≤ 3.00	58	25.41	2.069		
Reading habit	3.51–4.00	330	36.03	4.042	.577	.562
	3.01–3.50	244	36.02	4.123		

---

$\leq 3.00$	58	36.02	4.123
-------------	----	-------	-------

---

## Discussion

There is a significant difference in student reading behavior based on gender. Male and female students differ greatly in (1) effort to obtain reading materials, (2) using the time for reading, (3) reading belief, and (4) reading habit, but there is no difference in types of reading materials. Female students have shown a more persistent effort to obtain reading materials, make use of a greater amount of time for reading, have a positive reading belief, and develop a positive reading habit compared to male students. One of the factors that might influence such findings is the female students' metacognitive knowledge which helps shape their positive reading attitude. Female students have been reported to possess a higher level of knowledge in using metacognitive strategy compared to male in reading digitally (Wu, 2014). The assistance of metacognitive knowledge has contributed to the difference between male and female university students in reading online.

The results of this study that have revealed female students positive attitude toward online reading have confirmed previous research findings on offline reading (Clark and Foster, 2005; Lim, Bong, & Woo, 2015; Webb & Zhang, 2016). Even in offline reading, female college students can perform much better than male students. Therefore, it can be concluded that female students are more likely to display a more positive attitude toward reading both printed materials and online.

The results of this study suggest that gender does not affect student reading preference, which means that both female and male students access the same reading materials. This finding is corroborated with that by (Foasberg, 2014) who mentions textbook, academic article, and fiction as the most frequently accessed reading materials by university students. Both male and female students possess high needs for academic interests so that they do not show differences in types of reading that are read online. Research findings showing that there was no significant difference in materials read by male and female students are also caused by the ease of access to reading. Chiang (2014) revealed that easy and unlimited access to reading materials constituted the key to

improvement in reading activity. Internet encourages male and female students to easily access various reading materials.

On the other hand, a significant difference was observed based on student subject area. The difference among students was found in their effort to obtain reading materials and time spent on reading, while there was no discrepancy among students in terms of types of reading materials, reading belief, and reading habit. The Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences students have shown a more lasting effort and dedicated a greater amount of time to reading compared to other students from other faculties. This finding is in contrast with those by (Al-Busaidi, 2017) who found that college was a predictor of language students' linguistic ability where humanities students perform better than sciences students. This finding suggests that the characteristics of students' learning activities can influence their behavior to read online. The Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences students normally learn through tutorial, responses, and laboratory practicum. These intense learning routines require them to explore a variety of reading materials provided on the internet. As a result, students from Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences have to search and browse various reading materials online and spend more of their time on reading.

The difference between the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences and humanities (Faculty of Languages and Literature, Faculty of Educational Sciences, and Faculty of Social Sciences) students' reading behavior may also be influenced by their learning styles. Andrei, Izabela, & Valentina (2014) found that mathematics and science students were more skillful in identifying important information, making a connection, and using more meaningful resources than social sciences students. These learning styles have encouraged mathematics and science students to study more diverse materials and use a greater amount of time for reading.

However, no significant difference in online reading behavior, including types of reading materials, effort to obtain the materials, reading belief, and the reading habit was reported by the low and high achievers. Thus, academic achievement cannot be considered as a distinguishing variable in predicting university student online reading behavior. This finding indicates a shift in low-achiever behavior of reading online. The internet grants easier access for low-ability students to diverse reading materials so that

the students have become more motivated to read. This definitely has had an effect on their reading behavior. As a result, students with low academic achievement are able to perform well as, spend as much time as, and develop a similar positive belief in reading online to students with high academic achievement.

This study has unveiled that internet has brought some changes to university students' reading behavior. The ease of access to various reading materials encourages independence in reading. In the past, reading materials used to be prepared for university students in order to motivate them to perform reading activity (Yang, 2007). However, the presence of the internet has encouraged university students to select and access a wide array of reading materials based on their preference, without having to depend on other people or libraries.

## **Conclusions**

The present study has revealed some differences in student online reading behavior based on gender. The results of this study have confirmed previous research findings on student offline reading behavior across gender. This study has concluded that female students show more positive reading behavior compared to male students in reading online. Female students read more diverse materials, spend more time on reading, and have more positive reading beliefs. Metacognitive knowledge in reading online is believed to be a factor that may influence the reading behavior of female students.

It was also found that the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences students had more positive online reading behavior compared to other students from other faculties. There are significant differences found in the effort to obtain reading materials and the use of reading time among students. The characteristics of students' learning activities and learning styles characterized by their subject area also influence their online reading behavior. Academic achievement cannot be considered as a factor that may contribute to student reading behavior. The internet has made it easier for both low and high ability students to access various reading materials. As a result, they are able to read more than what they used to do in the past.

## **Pedagogical Implication and Recommendation**

The result of this study has implications on lecturers and library managers. Lecturers have to design a program to improve students' interest in reading based on the students' habits, values, and efforts to obtain reading materials. A more intense effort needs to be invested in encouraging male students to develop a more positive reading attitude. Librarians need to pay special attention to the availability of digital reading materials of which characteristics and types suit the students' interest. The availability of the reading materials that conform to the interest of the students will potentially boost their fondness for reading. The findings of this study have implications for fostering reading and learning activities in universities. Student metacognitive knowledge and learning styles to utilize online reading materials need to be trained so that the students can maximize their reading activities and learning achievement. The availability of the digital reading materials that have impacted on university students' reading behavior must be followed by applicable reading methods.

It is expected that there will be further qualitative studies aiming to reveal factors that affect the difference in university students' reading behavior based on gender and subject area in this digital era. The tendency of students from the humanities group to have less reading behavior requires serious attention. To amplify the findings of this study, it is also recommended for future researcher to take into account student socio-economic background, parent education, and geographical factors (urban and rural) in analyzing their reading behavior in the digital era. In terms of learning, it is also important for the lecturer to conduct classroom action research that aims to improve student positive reading behavior.

## **References**

- Al-Busaidi, S. (2017). Predicting academic achievement. *The Asian EFL Journal*, 101, 4–29.
- Andrei, C., Izabela, V. P., & Valentina, Z. (2014). Comparative study between study tracks: Math and sciences or humanities, regarding academic motivation and learning strategies in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade students. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 128, 432–437.



- Bussert-Webb, K. & Zhang, Z. (2016). Reading attitudes of Texas High School students. *Reading Psychology, 37*(3), 424–448, doi:10.1080/02702711.2015.1059396
- Chiang, I-C. N. (2014). Extra-curricular reading in Taiwan. *The Asian EFL Journal, 80*, 4–33.
- Clark, C. & Foster, A. (2005). *Children's and young people reading's habits and preferences: The who, what, why, where, and when*. London: National Literacy Trust.
- Coiro, J. (2012). Understanding dispositions toward reading on the internet. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy, 55*(7), 645–648, doi: 10.1002/jaal.00077
- Cortina, J. M. (1993). What is coefficient alpha? An examination of theory and applications. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 78*(1), 98–104.
- Creswell, J. W. (2010). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mix methods approaches*. California: Sage Publications.
- Datta, S. & Macdonald-Ross, M. (2002). Reading skills and reading habits: A study of new open university undergraduate reserves. *Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning, 17*(1), 69–88, doi: 10.1080/02680510120110193
- Foasberg, N. M. (2014). Student reading practices in print and electronic media. *College & Research Libraries, 75*(5), 705–723, doi: 10.596-/crl.75.5.705
- Huang, H. H., Capps, M., Blacklock, J., & Garza, M. (2014) Reading habits of college students in the United States. *Reading Psychology, 35*(5), 437–467, doi:10.1080/02702711.2012.739593.
- International Telecommunications Union. (2014). *Measuring the information society report 2014*. Geneva: ITU.
- Karabay, A., Kuşdemir Kayıran, B., & Işık, D. (2015). The investigation of pre-service teachers' perceptions about critical reading self-efficacy. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research, 59*, 227–246, doi:10.14689/ejer.2015.59.12.
- Karim, N. S. A. & Hasan, A. (2007). Reading habits and attitude in the digital age: Analysis of gender and academic program differences in Malaysia. *The Electronic Library, 25*(3): 285–298. doi:10.1108/02640470710754805.
- Khairuddin, Z. (2016). A study of students' reading interests in a second language. *International Education Studies, 6*(11), 160–170. doi:10.5539/ies.v6n11p160

- Kurata, K., Ishita, E., Miyata, Y., & Minami, Y. (2016). Print or digital: Reading behavior and preferences in Japan. *Journal of the Association for Information Sciences and Technology*, 68(4), 884–894, doi: 10.1002/asi.23712
- Lim, H. Y., Bong, M., & Woo, Y-K. (2015). Reading attitude as a mediator between contextual factors and reading behavior. *Teachers College Record*, 117( 1): 1–36.
- Maltepe, S. (2016). An analysis of the critical reading levels of pre-service Turkish and literature teachers. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 63, 169–184, doi:10.14689/ejer.2016.63.10
- Mansor, A. N., Rasul, M. S., Rauf, R. A. A., & Koh, B. L. (2013). Developing and sustaining reading habits among teenagers. *The Asia Pacific Education Research*, 22(4): 357–365, doi:10.1007/s40299-012-0017-1
- Mokhtari, K., Reichard, C., & Gardner, A. (2009). The impact of internet and television use on the reading habits and practices of college students. *Journal of Adolescent & Adults Literacy*, 92(7), 609–619, doi:10.1598/JAAL.52.7.6
- OECD. (2013). *PISA 2012 results in focus*. East Jerusalem and Israel: OECD.
- OECD. (2015). *Students, computers and learning: Making the connection*. Paris: OECD Publishing, doi:10.1787/9789264239555-en
- OECD. (2016). *PISA 2015 results: Excellence and equity in education*. Paris: OECD, doi:10.1787/9789264266490-en
- Wu, J-W. (2014). Gender differences in online reading engagement, metacognitive strategies, navigation skills and reading literacy. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 30(3), 252–271, doi:10.1111/jcal.12054
- Yang, A. (2007). Cultivating a reading habit: Silent reading at school. *The Asian EFL Journal*, 9(2), 115–129.



## **Lecturers' Approaches to Developing Students' Interpersonal Communication Skill in Indonesian EFL Classroom**

**Eka Prabawati Rum<sup>1</sup> Mark Garner<sup>2</sup> Muhammad Basri<sup>3</sup>**

*<sup>1</sup>Universitas Negeri Makassar, <sup>2</sup>University of Roehampton, <sup>3</sup>Universitas Negeri Makassar*

*Email: <sup>1</sup>[eprabawatirum@gmail.com](mailto:eprabawatirum@gmail.com), <sup>2</sup>[mark.garner@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:mark.garner@roehampton.ac.uk), <sup>3</sup>[muhammadbasri@unm.ac.id](mailto:muhammadbasri@unm.ac.id)*

### **Bio-profiles:**

**Eka Prabawati Rum** is on the final stage of her Doctor at the School of English Education, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia. She concerns to the interpersonal communication, language learning strategies and sociolinguistics. She is a lecturer of English Education Study Program at Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar, Indonesia.

**Mark Garner** is a senior lecturer in University of Roehampton and a head of Whitelands College, London. His research interest due to the social and educational impacts of high-stakes standardized language tests, operational and emergency communication, and research method.

**Muhammad Basri** is a professor in Applied Linguistics and a head of English Education Study Program of Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia. His research interest deals with the biliteracy development and bilingualism.

Corresponding Author: [muhammadbasri@unm.ac.id](mailto:muhammadbasri@unm.ac.id)

## **Abstract**

The education system in Indonesia is oriented top-down, from lecturer to students. The lecturer is the controller in the classroom, and the students wait for his/her the lecturer's instruction. A lecturer must be able to communicate verbally, in writing, and gesture; to use communication and information technology functionally, and to interact effectively with the students have to be addressed. This article examines the role of the lecturers in supporting students' interpersonal communication skill development in Indonesian EFL Classroom. It reports research conducted in in a private university in Indonesia. A longitudinal ethnographic approach was employed to collect data on (a) lecturers' perceptions of their own interpersonal communication and (b) the extent to which the pedagogical approaches they adopt help to develop their students' interpersonal communication skills. The findings demonstrate that there is marked differences in the way the lecturers perceive the interpersonal communication skill development. These differences falls into three categories of lecturers such as (1) Strongly Supportive Lecturers (SSL), (2) Fairly Supportive Lecturers (FSL), and (3) Weekly Supportive Lecturers (WSL). What is evident that the more supportive the lecturers are of interpersonal communication skill development, the more constructivist is their teaching approach, and the more varied are the opportunities they give to their students to develop interpersonal communication skills, the better the students' interpersonal communication skill development. According to Graham, West and Schaller (1992) teaching requires effective interpersonal communication skills to achieve satisfying outcomes. This study has sought to expand scholarly understanding of Interpersonal Communication Skill in in Indonesian EFL Classroom.

**Keywords:** *Interpersonal communication skill; constructivist approach*

## **Introduction**

The excerpt below is from an exchange in a classroom between Ms. Ira, a lecturer, and Ari, a student, with whom she is annoyed.

Ms. Ira : Kenapa?

*Why?*

Ari : Iye'.. Tidak ji [*smiles awkwardly*]

*Yes.. Nothing.*

Ms. Ira : Ihh.. Saya bertanya kenapa? [*rising intonation; stress on 'kenapa/why'*]

*Ihh.. I'm asking why?*

Ari : ..... [*silent*]

Being dissatisfied with the student's response and facial expression, the lecturer repeats the question with rising intonation; Ari, however, remains silent, perhaps because he does not want to appear insolent.

This extract may appear familiar to many Indonesians, who have encountered similar kinds of exchanges involving unequal status: employer to employee, parent to child, lecturer to student. In relation to the excerpt, questions may arise concerning how each participant felt about the interaction; what the lecturer did next; and how it affected the relationship between lecturer and students; and others.

In teaching and learning, communication always takes place between lecturer and students, both inside and outside the classroom. In the context of active learning, competence in interpersonal communication is essential for the lecturer. Devito (1986) describes teaching as a relational process that follows the developmental stages from initial contact, through intimacy, to dissolution. A lecturer must be able to communicate verbally, in writing, and gesture; to use communication and information technology functionally, and to interact effectively with the students. Graham, West and Schellar (1992) state that teaching involves a process of relational development that requires effective interpersonal communication skills to achieve satisfying outcomes. In the teaching and learning process, the lecturer and the student go through the processes of becoming acquainted, negotiating meanings, and solving problems. Each has objectives to be achieved: one of the lecturer's objectives is to assist the students to achieve his or her objectives in relation to study. Education is a process of relational development

between students and lecturers and is crucially dependent on effective interpersonal communication (Devito, 1986).

All forms of communication, particularly interpersonal communication, are deeply embedded in the culture, which influences how conversations are conducted, how people interact in groups, and how much importance they place on the group versus the individual. Culture influences the topics they talk about and the strategies they use in communicating information or in persuading (Jand, 2007; Moon, 1996; Shibazaki & Brennan, 1998; Devito, 2013). In the context of teaching and learning, classroom interactions are influenced by a strong Indonesian cultural norm of politeness, which can make it rude to answer or otherwise react to a question from those of higher status, as in the excerpt above. The education system in Indonesia is oriented top-down, from lecturer to students. The lecturer is the controller in the classroom, and the students wait for his/her the lecturer's instruction. The assumption is that, without a lecturer, there will be no learning. Students are expected to come to school just to sit and pay attention to the lecturer. We have no idea how much they really understand. An alternative view of the relationship is given by Said and Weda (2018) that the lecturer as a facilitator and a manager in the classroom, who seeks to improve students' motivation to take part in all activities.

The research reported here investigated the relation between lecturers' perceptions of the importance of interpersonal communication skills and the teaching approaches they adopt in the classroom. The study employed a longitudinal ethnographic approach to collect the data. The participants were five lectures in a private institute of higher education in Makassar, South Sulawesi (referred to below as the University). They were classified into three categories, according to their expressed emphasis on students' communication skills, as strongly, fairly, or weakly supportive of developing students' interpersonal communication skills.

### **Setting and Participants**

In Indonesia, institutions of higher education are required by law to develop their own curricula; there is no national standard curriculum. The English Education Department at the University offers 65 subjects; students must achieve 152 credits to pass.

Lecturers are required to master all of the subjects offered in the English curriculum. Communication skills are not explicitly included in the curriculum, but the lecturers are required to enhance their soft skills through professional development sessions. The University holds a compulsory annual workshop on lesson planning, evaluation of course teaching materials, etc.

A number of potential participants were identified to the researcher by the Head of the English Department. A series of preliminary observations was conducted, after which lecturers were approached to participate in the research. Five agreed to do so. All hold permanent lectureships in the English Education department, to achieve which they had to pass through several probationary stages. All have obtained at least a Master's degree (some are pursuing doctoral studies) from the same university, which has a good research culture, and thus are well informed in scholarship relating to teaching and learning. Two have at least 10 years' teaching experience; one around 7 years; the remaining two less than 5 years.

Some items of the participants' personal information are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Summary of Interviewees (all names are pseudonyms)**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Highest qualification</b>	<b>Teaching Experience</b>	<b>Classroom responsibility per semester</b>	<b>Subjects taught</b>
Wati	37	F	Master	11 years	7 classrooms	Intensive Seminar on Speaking, ELT, Microteaching
Sri	37	F	Master	11 years	6 classrooms	Intensive Seminar on Speaking, ELT, Phonetics and Phonology
Ira	36	F	Master	7 years	6 classrooms	Grammar, Sociolinguistics, Prose and Drama

Diana	31	F	Master	4 years	7 classrooms	Intensive Phonetics and Phonology, TEFL	Writing,
Sitti	28	F	Master	2 years	6 classrooms	Introduction Linguistics, Reading 2, Psycholinguistics	to Extensive

The research addressed two questions:

1. What are the lecturers' perceptions of the importance of teaching interpersonal communication?
2. How are these perceptions reflected in their classroom practices?

### Method

The data were collected over one semester, by means of semi-structured interviews with the five lecturers and non-participant observations of their classes. Each lecturer was interviewed three times: once prior to, once during, and once after the observation period. The locations of the interviews varied, as did the times, although the majority were conducted immediately after class.; The first interview focused on the lecturer's perception of the importance of interpersonal communication skills, the lesson plan and their characteristic of teaching approach. The second focused on particular events that occurred during the observation sessions, and the third on and the impact of the teaching approach on students' interpersonal communication development. The interviews were recorded, with the participants' permission, and transcribed.

The interview schedule was adapted from the Interpersonal Communication Skills Inventory (Bienvenu 1971). The Inventory is designed to be used in a wide variety of social situations, as a measure of the individual's overall competencies in interpersonal communication. It has been variously used as a counselling tool, a teaching device, as a supplement to managerial appraisal, and for research. In the present study, it was used to investigate the lecturers' own perceptions of communication skills and of their teaching



approaches in the classroom. The transcription of the interview was analysed and each participant was categorized based on her level of competence in four communication areas, namely: sending clear messages; listening; giving and receiving feedback; and handling emotional instruction. From this a number of themes emerged that were compared with the lecturer's classroom practices as identified by observation.

The researcher undertook non-participant observations of one class per week of each lecturer's class, over the semester. Notes were made throughout the classes; they focused on two specific aspects:

- a. the lecturer's approach to classroom practices;
- b. the effect of this approach on students' interpersonal communication skills development

The notes were analysed for evidence of the general approach to teaching, the use of English in relation to classroom activities, and the lecturer's involvement in facilitating the students' interpersonal communication skills development.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### **Emphasis on Interpersonal Communication Skills**

As stated above, the lecturers were classified according to their support for developing students' interpersonal communication skills. The classification was made on the basis of their replies in the interviews and of observations of their approach in class. In the interviews, they were asked how important students' interpersonal communication skills are in the teaching and learning process (Graham, West and Schaller 1992). During the observation sessions, notes were made of the extent to which students were challenged to develop their own understanding rather than simply accepting the lecturer's word; how much time the lecturer spent listening to students' attempts to explore and express their ideas. Notes were also made of the extent to which the teaching approach had a positive impact on the development of students' interpersonal communication skills. From the data obtained, each lecturer was classified as strongly, fairly, or weakly supportive of communication skills.

Three lecturers were categorized as strongly supportive (see Table 2). They expressed the view that communication is a 'soft' skill that should be developed through teaching and learning process in the classroom. For example, Wati said in an interview

*I think ... It is important to have good communication with the students ... so ... the students don't have to feel shy and ... doubt when they want to ask a question in the class.*

This stress on the importance of a student's self-concept reflects one of Devito's (2013) three aspects of self-perception (the other two are self-awareness and self-esteem). It refers to the ways in which people form impressions of others and how they manage the impressions of self that they express to others.

The use of English language in the classroom is one of factors that can lead the students to be more confident in practicing their speaking skills. As Lindsay and Knight (2006: 8) stated that even if your students do not have much exposure to English outside the classroom, they can still make significant progress in learning the language if they got lots of practice listening to and speaking it inside the classroom.

These 'strongly supportive' lecturers also maintained that communicating by using English in class was not a barrier to students' understanding; rather, that it helps them to practice their speaking skills. Diana saw English as a motivating factor to increase communication:

*"I always use English language when I teach because ... it help students to speak English too ... sometimes our students need more motivations. ... In my mind ... they will understand what I [say] ... even [when] I use English."*

Although Sitti does not teach the speaking skills course, she seeks to stimulate her students to express their ideas and opinions. In class, she asked the students some questions regarding the material to encourage them to learn by linking the materials with various specific contexts in order to ascertain the students' knowledge base. She then placed those students whose answers reflected some valuable initial knowledge into groups and gave them problems to solve. This practice is described by Yager (1991) as constructivist or student-centred learning; it poses a question to the students, who then work together in small groups to discover one or more solutions.

One lecturer, Sri, was categorized as ‘fairly supportive’ of interpersonal communication skills. She stated that there needs to be a good relationship between lecturers and students as they need each other:

*“We as the lecturer should maintain ... good relation[s] with the students by ... having good communication ... We need each other ... [are] bound [to] each other ... the students have to understand what the lecturer said and vice versa ... so that teaching and learning process in the classroom will succeed.”*

In response to a question about which language she uses in class, Sri said

*“I combine ... English language and Indonesian language ... because ... I don’t think our students will fully understand what I said ... [in English] I’m afraid that they will [have] misunderstood what I’m saying.”*

Clearly, Sri believes that students’ understanding of the material is more important than the particular language spoken in the classroom. She was inconsistent in the teaching approach she used to support students’ interpersonal communication. Sri teaches three different courses: Intensive Speaking, English Language Teaching, and Phonetics and Phonology. In the first she took a constructivist teaching approach, but in the other two courses she used a lecturer-centred approach. In these classes the communication was largely one way.

The remaining lecturer, Ira, was classified as ‘weakly supportive’ of interpersonal communication skill. She consistently implements lecturer-centred teaching in her three courses (Grammar, Sociolinguistics, Prose and Drama). Her stance was that of the lecturer as the possessor of knowledge, directing the learning process and controlling the learners’ access to information (Huba and Freed 2000). Her classes were very quiet and only the lecturer spoke; Stofflet assumes (1998) that they were like a ‘one-person show with largely uninvolved learners’. Such direct, unilateral instruction arises from the assumption that there is a fixed body of knowledge that the student must come to know. This approach tends to stifle students’ creativity because they expected to accept the information they are given without question; they are not given an opportunity to express their opinion.

With respect to the language used in class, Ira spoke Bahasa Indonesia most often. She said

*“I prefer to use Indonesian language because ... students ... will not understand what I say ... the most important thing ... the students understand the material.”*

In one class, when two students asked a question about the material using Bahasa Indonesia, Ira answered in the same language. There was no orientation towards engaging in genuinely two-way communication.

### **Teaching approach**

As indicated in the previous section, two contrasting teaching approaches were identified in the observed classes, which can be termed traditional and constructivist. In the traditional (or lecturer-centred) approach, the lecturer controls the class by delivering the material in front of the classroom while all the students are listening and taking notes. Lak et al (2017) state that in this approach the students become passive learners, recipients of the lecturer’s knowledge. In relation to the present study, this is likely to prevent the students from developing their communication skills, as they are not given any chance to be active in putting forward their own ideas and responding to others’ evaluations of them.

By contrast, a constructivist approach focuses on developing the inner world of the individual student; it emphasizes the creative, autonomous power of the student to discover the world in his or her own way, and to experience rather than be a passive recipient of facts (O’Dweyer 2006). Similarly Elliot et al. (2000) describe it as an approach to learning that enables learners actively to construct their own knowledge and in accordance with their own experiences.

In the present study, the majority of the lecturers were observed to take an entirely traditional approach; others a predominantly or partly constructivist approach. A strong correlation was found between the lecturers’ perceptions of communication skills and their teaching approach, and hence the impact on their students’ communication skill development in the classroom. Those who were classified as ‘strongly supportive’ consistently applied constructivist teaching approach, and encouraged the students to share their views, ideas and feelings in relation to the lesson material.

### **Influence on the students' interpersonal communication**

During the classroom observations, it was apparent that the behaviour of more than half of the students in any given class differed according to the teaching approach adopted by the lecturer. The differences are described in more detail below.

#### ***Students taught by 'strongly supportive' lecturers***

In these classes, the students showed increasingly positive behaviour towards the constructivist teaching approach by the lecturer. In the first three classes in the semester, only two or three students were observed to express their own ideas. Subsequently, however, their numbers increased. They evidently began to feel confident and contributed more frequently to the discussion. They often expressed themselves in a mixture of Indonesian and English; when they did so, the lecturer did not comment, but focused on listening to what they were saying.

Two points arising from these observations are worth noting: self-concept and listening. As noted above, people with a weak self-concept tend to have difficulty in expressing their ideas. They are insecure, and worry that others may not like them if they express disagreement; they think that their ideas are not interesting to others and not worth communicating. Listening is important in interpersonal communication. It involves an intellectual and emotional process of searching for meaning and understanding. When the listener is able to construct a coherent interpretation of what the speaker intends, genuine communication takes place.

#### ***Students taught by the 'fairly supportive' lecturer***

This group indicated less impact on the students' interpersonal communication skills development. The students' communicative behaviour tended to vary according to the lecturer's teaching approach. When it was the traditional, lecturer-centred approach, the students were passive, listening in silence to the lecturer's presentation of the material. Three or four students did speak during the classes, but only to ask questions of clarification relating to the material being presented. By contrast, when the lecturer took a constructivist teaching approach, the majority of the students took the opportunity to share their opinions, ideas, or feelings; they usually spoke in Indonesian.

### *Students taught by the ‘weakly supportive’ lecturer*

The students in this group were largely silent during the classes. The entire class typically consisted of the lecturer, Ira, showing slides which she had prepared of the lesson material, and explaining each one at length. After every third or fourth slide, she asked whether the students had any questions, but made no further attempt to check their understanding. Her primary aim appeared to be simply to cover the material for that class.

According to Frymier and Houser (2000) understanding the methods of teaching and being knowledgeable are pedagogically very important, but the nature of the communication is equally important. As Hurt, Scott and McCroskey (1978) state, there is a difference between knowing and teaching, and that difference consists in the communication in the classroom. Effective teaching relies on a form of communication in which the lecturer and the students see themselves as individuals, more than just a lecturer and the students; the communication becomes interactive and interpersonal; they treat each other respectfully. In line with Frymier and Houser (2000) when a trusting and caring relationship develops between lecturers and students, a safe learning environment will be created. The lower levels of learning such as recall and comprehension can occur quite easily without the benefit human interaction, but achieving higher level of learning such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation benefit greatly from interaction between lecturer and student.

Overall, the findings of this study found some marked differences in the five lecturer’s approaches to developing the students’ interpersonal communication skills in the classroom. The differences were not clearly related to the length of their teaching experience, or the era in which they received their lecturer training, although it is interesting to note that two of the ‘strongly supportive’ lecturers had less than 5 years of teaching experience.

The lecturers who were strongly supportive of interpersonal communication consistently applied a constructivist teaching approach. They sought to motivate and create broader opportunities for the students to share their ideas, views, feelings, etc. (Graham, West and Schaller, 1992).

The findings are summarised in Table 2.

**Table 2: Summary of the findings**

No	Lecturers	Classification	Characteristics	Impacts on Students
1.	Wati  Diana  Sitti	Strongly Supportive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Constructivist approach in teaching</li> <li>- Develop innovative activities that create opportunities for students to speak in class.</li> <li>- Supportive of interpersonal communication skill in class</li> <li>- Consider English language is not a barrier for students in learning English Language but as a facilitator of English language learning.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The students' interpersonal communication skill improved</li> <li>- Good progress in the new learning environment</li> <li>-Confident in stating students' mind in both languages</li> <li>- Positive outcome in interpersonal communication development</li> </ul>
2.	Sri	Fairly supportive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Varied approaches in teaching from lecturer-centred to more</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Feel well connected to the class using Indonesian language</li> <li>- Active participation in classroom activities</li> </ul>

			<p>constructivist teaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enjoy the learning process</li> <li>- Positive attitude to spoken Bahasa Indonesia in the class</li> <li>- Supportive of English Language, but not much</li> <li>- More likely to view spoken English language as a potential barrier to English Language learning</li> </ul>
3.	Ira	Weakly supportive	<p>-Lecturing-centred approach in teaching</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Allow students to use Bahasa Indonesia in enhancing communication at the early stage but not encouraged them to use English Language at all</li> </ul> <p>-Passive participant in a classroom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Continues progress but slower</li> </ul>



- Entirely  
focused on  
teaching and  
learning of  
English subject  
material

- Consider  
spoken English  
language as a  
potential barrier  
to English  
Language  
learning

## **Conclusion**

It's clear from this research that there is a relation between the lecturers' perception of interpersonal communication skills, and the characteristics of their teaching approaches, and between the teaching approaches and the enhancement of students' interpersonal communicative behaviour. This study indicates that there is marked differences in the way of the lecturers perceive the interpersonal communication skill development. These differences falls into three categories: Strongly Supportive Lecturers (SSL), Fairly Supportive Lecturers (FSL), and Weekly Supportive Lecturers (WSL). What is evident is that the more supportive the lecturers are of interpersonal communication skill development, and the more constructivist is their teaching approaches in EFL classroom, the better the students' interpersonal communication skill development they have. This study has sought to expand scholarly understanding of Interpersonal Communication Skill in in Indonesian EFL Classroom.

## **Pedagogical Implication**

This study has important implications for teaching and learning policy at institutional level regarding the interpersonal communication skill development in

Indonesian EFL Classroom. The lecturers' supportive attitudes and approaches towards Interpersonal communication skill development which is characterized by the more varied activities the students experienced in have a significant contribution to develop their students' interpersonal communication skill. It is therefore, the university should provide lecturers with supportive environment and opportunities to create a space for the students to develop their interpersonal communication.

## References

- Devito, J.A. (1986). *Teaching as relational development*. In J.M. Civikly (Ed.), *Communicating in college classrooms* (pp.51-59). San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Devito, J.A. (2013). *The Interpersonal Communication Book, The thirteenth edition*. New Jersey: Pearson Education.
- Elliott, S.N., Kratochwill, T.R., Littlefield Cook, J. & Travers, J. (2000). *Educational Psychology: Effective teaching, effective learning* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). Boston, MA: McGraw-Hill College.
- Graham, E.E., West, R., & Schaller, K.A. (1992). The association between the relational teaching approach and teacher job satisfaction. *Communication Reports*, 5, 11-12.
- Hornberger, N.H., (2002). *Multilingual Language Policies and the Continua of Biliteracy: An ecological Approach*. *Language Policy* (1): 27-51.
- Huba, M.E., & Freed, J.E. (2000). *Teacher-Centered vs. Learner-centered paradigms*. Retrieved 10 October 2019, from <http://www.svsu.edu/library/archives/public/InTheLoop/documents/ITL2011/ITL201105.pdf>
- Jandt, F. E. (2007). *An introduction to intercultural communication: Identities in a global community, 5th ed*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lak, Maryam., Soleimani, Hassar., & Parvaneh, Farid. (2017). The Effect of Teacher-Centeredness Method vs. Learner-Certeredness Method of Reading Comprehension among Iranian EFL Learners. *Journal of Advances in English Language Teaching*, 5(1), 1-10.
- Lane. (2010). *Basic of Communication Competent in Interpersonal Communication: Competence and Context, 2nd edition*. Boston: Pearson.

- Lindsay, C., & Knight, D. (2006). *Learning and Teaching English: A course for Teachers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Moon, D. G. (1996). Concepts of “culture”: Implications for intercultural communication research. *Communication Quarterly* 44, 70–84.
- O’Dweyer, S. (2006). In ELT, It’s Time for Constructivist to Get Real. *The Asian EFL Journal Quarterly December 2006*, 8(4), 233-253.
- Said, M. M., & Weda, S. (2018). English Language Anxiety and its Impact on Students’ Oral Communication among Indonesian Students: A Case Study at Tadulako University and Universitas Negeri Makassar. *TESOL International Journal*, 13(3). Retrieved 27 May 2019, from <https://www.elejournals.com/tesol-journal/tij-2018/tesol-international-journal-volume-13-issue-3-2018/>
- Shibazaki, K., & Brennan, K. A. (1998). When birds of different features flock together: A preliminary comparison of intraethnic and inter-ethnic dating relationships. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 15, 248–256.
- Stofflett, R. T. (1998). Putting Constructivist Teaching into Practice in Undergraduate Introductory Science. *Electronic Journal of Science Education*, 3(2). Retrieved 27 May 2019, from <https://ejse.southwestern.edu/article/download/7605/5372>
- Yager, R. E. (1991). The Constructivist Learning Model. The Science Teacher. *The Science Teacher Journal*, 58(6):53-57.

## Appendix

### Semi-Structured Interview Schedule

<i>Period</i>	<b>Aspects</b>
<i>Warming up</i> <i>(Prior to the Observation Period)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The interviewee (personal and educational background)</li><li>- Perception of Interpersonal Communication Skills</li><li>- Lesson Plan</li><li>- Teaching Approach</li></ul>
<i>Exploration</i> <i>(During the Observation Period)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The significance of language choice in the classroom</li><li>- Teaching Approach during the teaching and learning process</li></ul>
<i>Finish</i> <i>(After the Observation Period)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Impacts of teaching approach due to the students' interpersonal communication development.</li></ul>



**Developing English Material for Early Childhood Education Students at the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training in Islamic Higher Education, Indonesia**

**Sahraini**

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Palopo

**St.Hartina**

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Palopo

**Bio-profiles:**

**Sahraini** is English Teacher at State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Palopo. She is interested in research, assessment, and evaluation in Education. She graduated with honors from Doctoral Degree in State University of Yogyakarta in Educational Research and Evaluation. She founder of English Study program in IAIN Palopo. She has attended to a lot of international and national conferences and symposiums. She also the head of Language Center of IAIN Palopo.

**St.Hartina** is English Teacher at State Islamic Institute (IAIN) Palopo. She has received her M.Ed in Makassar University on ELT.

**Abstract**

The main goal of this study was to produce an English materials for students of Early Childhood Education Student at Faculty of Education and Teacher Training in Islamic Higher Education. The Research and Development (R and D) used for developing the English material. There were three phases of design used to develop the English material, namely: need assessment, design, and development/implementation. The respondent involved in this study were the content and instructional experts, a layout

design expert and 30 students of the second semester at IAIN Palopo. The data were collected through a questionnaire and interview. The instrument of data collection were a questionnaire and observation sheet. The result in need assessment phase becomes the basis to design the draft of English materials. All the contents of the materials refers to English for Early childhood Education package into 3 units which is contained 20 tasks for each unit. The draft of design material is developed, tried out, revised, and evaluated to produce the final product. The result of the study shows that the design material are appropriate for the student as indicated by the mean of the content expert evaluation on the material aspect was 4.00 and the layout design expert evaluation was 4.30. The mean of tryout of unit 1 was 4.00 (*very good*), unit 2 was 4.33 (*very good*), unit 3 was 4.44 (*very good*). The Results showed that English material used for Early Childhood Education Student still general. The material was the same for all study programs. However, each study program such as religious, education, mathematics, economics, law are requires a different English learning materials. This study has developed English learning materials based on ESP by analyzing the needs and design of the syllabus of each study program. Thus, the results of this study are more effective than existing materials because they have been developed based on systematic development research procedures and have been tested and revised based on recommendations from English language experts. It means that the materials are trustworthy and appropriate to apply at Early Childhood Education in Islamic Higher Education.

***Keywords :*** *Developing Material, English for Specific Purposes*

## **Introduction**

English for specific purposes (ESP) has grown rapidly in line with the learners' needs of language especially in communication skills academically. All over the world used it as a second and foreign language in non-native context (Kachru, 1983). The demand of English for Spesific Purposes (ESP) is inc reasing not only in those countries where English is used as a mother tongue, but also in many other countries where the students have to adopt English as a medium of instruction for higher education (Jordan, 1997). It is vital to develop texts in students' particular disciplines so that they are able to

perform various tasks in the contexts of their disciplines, for instance, note-taking during lectures and reading texts specific to their major.

In improving the quality of national education, the innovation needs of the English for Specific Purpose curriculum for science students need to be developed as soon as possible so that graduates can compete in entering the workforce. The development of ESP teaching materials needs to be carried out to support and create quality graduates who are able to compete in the world of work who require skilled English-speaking workforce to be actively in accordance with the needs of today's workforce. ESP is a practical discipline with the main focus on helping students to learn (Dudley-Evans, T., St John, M. J., & Saint John, M. J., 1998) and Language teaching materials must consider relevance based on student needs (Morgan, G., & Alfehaid, A.: 2019)

In fact in the field, most lecturers are still teaching using the same English methods and materials, namely general English in different majors. Though what students should learn in class must be in accordance with the needs of students in the workforce later. In addition, special textbooks are not available due to the lack of availability of ESP books and the inability of lecturers to design ESP teaching materials. Most of the topics that are shared are those that have direct relationship to their background study. This causes students to be less motivated to learn and difficulties in communicating their background studies in English because most of their language choices, not to support their background study as students of Early Childhood Education. So, teachers should modify the materials to meet the needs of students (Aniroh, K. : 2019).

By knowing the relationship between English language and their major, the learners can raise their motivation in learning English because they have already seen that English they learn is not useless but it has a great relationship with their major. When the relevant materials are implemented, they will realize that English can help them learn their major.

### ***Statement of the problems***

The research question of this study was how is the appropriate English materials for Early Childhood Education Program in Islamic Higher Education?

### Significance of the Study

The resulting product of this study will facilitate teachers and students to learn the English language that appropriate material for Early Childhood Education in Islamic Higher Education.

### Methodology

This research utilized Research and Development (R&D) design in which the researcher incorporates the analyzed knowledge into a product that can be realistically implemented in the school setting (Borg and Gall). This research adopted Hannifen and Peck Design Model and ESP curriculum design model. It has three phases; need assessment, design, and development/ implementation (Taylor, 2006).

The flow of the research is present on the figure 1 below :

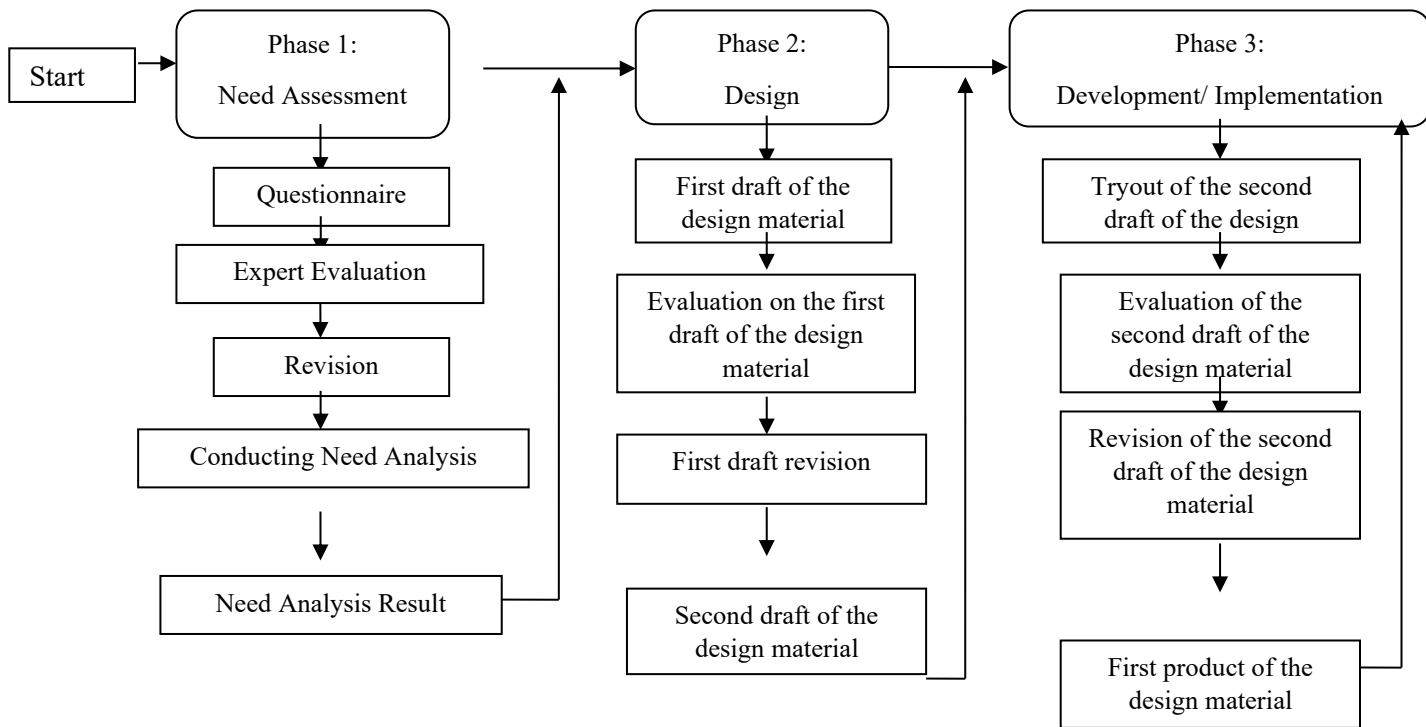


Figure 1: Hannifen and Peck Design Model



The data were collected through questionnaires and interview. The need assessment questionnaires used to collect the data drawing the learners' need. . The questionnaires used were developed and adopted from the assessment questionnaire by Nunan (2004) to gather the information about goal, input, activity, setting, teacher's role and learners' role and also constructed based on the need assessment theory proposed by Nation and Macalister (2010) which was related to necessities, lack and wants of the students and Richards (2001:75) which was related to the level of students' English proficiency level. The questionnaires were given in the need assessment and tryout phases to the 30 students of Early Childhood Education in Islamic Higher Education.

The need assessment result was used to construct the course grid as the guideline in writing the learning material. The process of constructing learning material refers to the theory of developing unit of work proposed by Nunan (2004:31-3) and the basis of sequencing tasks proposed by Richard and Rodgers (2006:232-3) . The developing unit as the first draft sent to the expert to be evaluated. The revised draft then become the second draft of the learning material which was applied in the classroom setting to be tried out by the students as the users of the design material. Having tried out , the questionnaire was shared to the students to get their opinion. The result of the try out and expert comments are used to revised for the improvement of the materials. The revision of the second draft becomes a text book as the final product of the material design.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Need Analysis**

The results cover the needs analysis, developing course grid, the process of designing and writing the materials, expert judgment, the tried out of the designed materials, respondents' opinions on the designed materials, suggestions on the designed materials, the revision, and the description of the final product of designed materials.

To determine the learners' needs and preference on designed materials, the researcher used the six components of task proposed by Nunan (2004:41) and target needs proposed by Hutchinson and Waters (2006: 54-55).The need analysis shows the finding of skills priority needed by the students of Early Childhood Education Program from the

most to the least important. Students are asked to rate or provide numbers from 1 to 4 on each skill. The result is then presented in Figure 2 .

The resulted data from the questionnaire shows that speaking takes the first priority in providing materials for the students. 50% of students agree that speaking must more be included in the lesson for prime portion in materials. It indicates that speaking really benefits for the students.

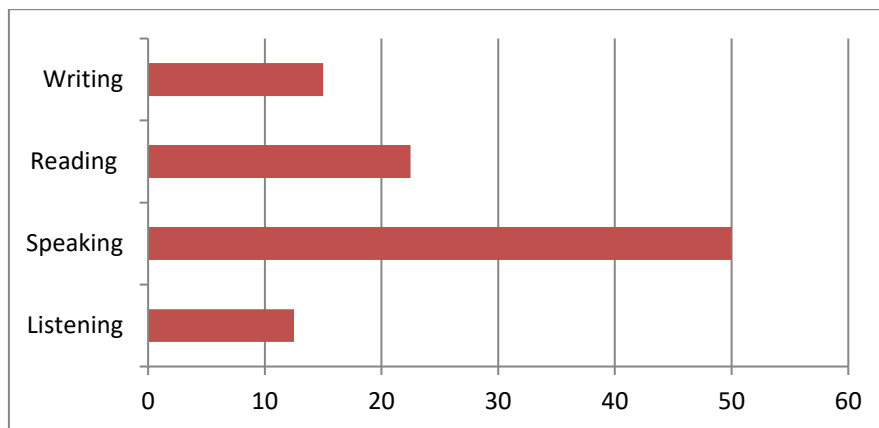
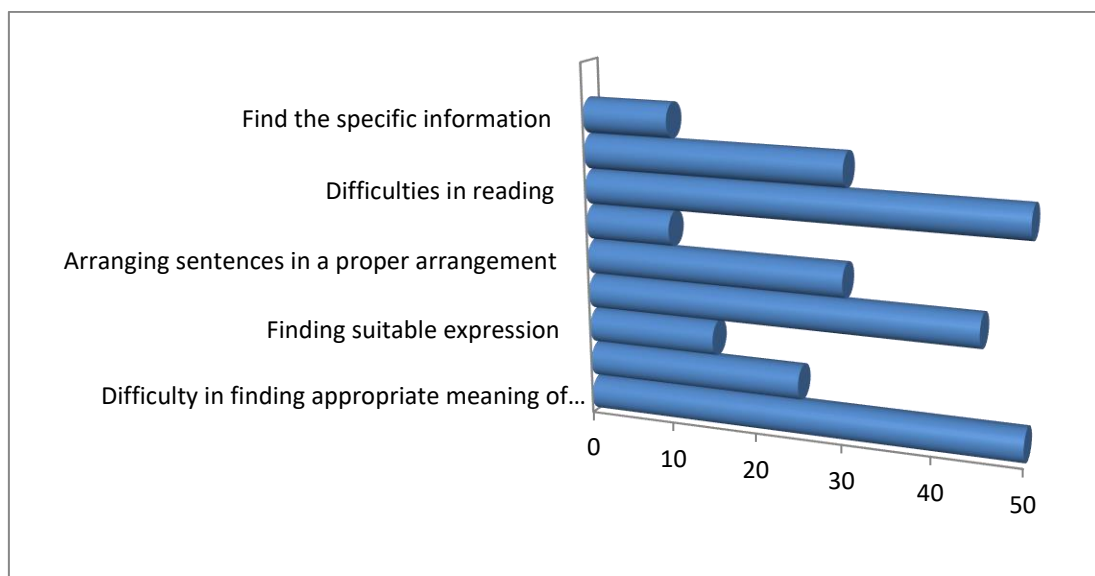


Figure 2: *Skill priority of using language skills in students' academic domain*

The next three questions focus on the target needs which is their perception on teaching of English in their classroom, the relevance of the materials toward their background study, and their needs of English materials related to Early childhood education. It shows 60,18 % the students study English because they are willing to be success in communicating in English and to access information in English.

Based on an analysis of students' lacks, it was found that the students got some difficulties, namely : difficult in understanding the meaning of the words in listening skill. In expressing their ideas in conversation, they got difficulty in finding appropriate meaning of words, finding proper vocabularies, finding suitable expression . In writing skill , the difficulties are expressing the ideas, arranging sentences in a proper arrangement and applying the appropriate punctuation . Meanwhile , the difficulties in reading is find the main ideas , find the details information and find the specific information. The data was elaborate in figure 3.



*Figure 3.* Students lack in learning English

Related to learning needs of the students are topic input related children development, song for children and learning method for children. In listening skill, the students prefer to identify certain information from the listened dialog / monologue with the length of the text around 100 – 150 words. In speaking, they like to Discussed about a particular topic or specific problem (50% ), Practice dialogue in front of the class in pairs with friends (30%) and role play (10%). In reading skill, read an individual text then answer the question about the text (30%), a text with a true-false question (20%) become the preferable input with the length of the text around 100 – 150 words. In writing skill Arrange sentences so that they become one correct paragraph (70%) and Identify and correct sentence structure errors (30%) are preferable. The students preferred completing the task individually, in pairs and in group and also discussing the group with the peers. In teaching and learning , the students preferred the teacher to act as an organizer is involving students and organizing learning activities.

### **Design**

The design of the first draft referred to the developing unit of works and task difficulty purposed by Nunan (2004). The researcher reviewed the competency- based curriculum of English subject used in Early Childhood Education Program. The content of the curriculum which was used as the basis of developing the materials.

The guideline of teaching English to Early Childhood Education program has already been in curriculum. In the syllabus, there are learning objectives and learning outcomes which are (1) proficiency in reading texts properly and correctly, (2) good and correct communication (3) good and correct writing skills (4) understanding that are discussed properly and correctly.

It was started by arranging the course grid then the task arranged based on the level of difficulty. The topics were developed based on the themes which were taught in several subject contents such as learning strategies for early childhood, psychology of early childhood development, curriculum development for early childhood education and so on. In addition, the themes were matched with basic competencies of English curriculum.

Course grid consisted of topics, learning outcomes, objectives, life skills, language function, structure, language input and learning activities. It was designed for one semester. The selected material from the course grid were developed and organized into the textbook as the first draft.

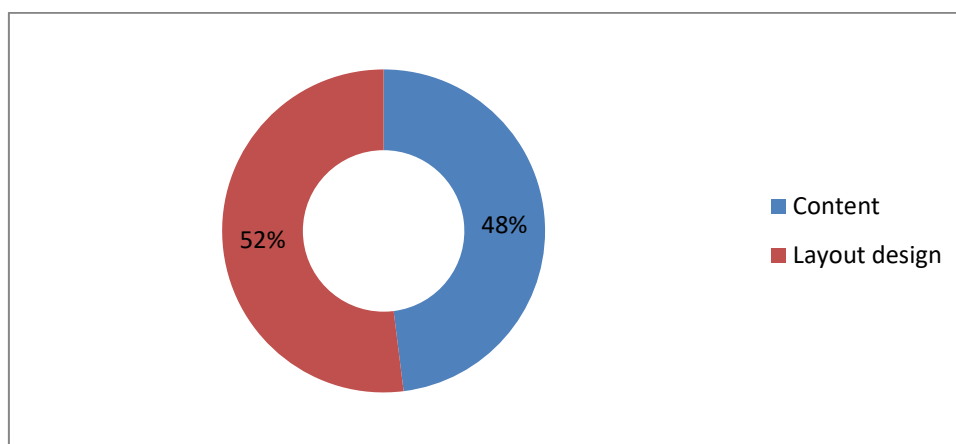
In designing the English materials the researcher referred to task types which were proposed by Ellis (1991: 232), and Pattison (1987 in Nunan, 2004: 57- 58); and patchwork sequence of ESA that was proposed by Harmer (1998: 30). According to the result of needs analysis and the course grid that has been described previously, the designed materials consist of three units. Each unit consists twenty of tasks. It covered reading, listening, speaking and writing skills, grammar focus and also vocabulary building. All of them are integrated each other by using input texts. The text focused on vocabulary development and text type understanding, while the other is grammar focus covered all of grammar points in aforementioned input texts.

After being designed, the three units then became the first draft. Before they were tried-out to the students of Early Childhood Education program, they had to meet the qualifications of good materials from the expert judgment. In this matter, the expert judgment was two of the English lecturers in IAIN Palopo. They were eligible for being an expert on material development.

The expert judgment took three-time consultations. In three-time consultations, there were several parts which still needed to be revised. The suggestions covered the linguistic problems, forms of instructions, effectiveness of the designed activities, and input texts.

After following all of the suggestions from the expert, then the materials were approved and ready to be tried-out to the learners. To make sure that the developed materials were ready to be tried statistically, then a form of questionnaire was administered to the expert.

Based on the data obtained from the questionnaire, it was concluded that the developed materials were ready to be tried-out. This can be seen from the result of the questionnaire that was administered to the expert. There were two aspects being evaluated. They were content aspect and layout design aspect. Here are the results of each aspect based on statistical data obtained from the expert judgment.



**Figure 4.** *Statistical Data Analysis of Expert Judgment*

Figure 4 shows that the average mean of content aspect was 4.00. Thus, the content aspect was categorized as very good. In terms of layout design aspect, the average mean obtained was 4.33 It means that layout design aspect was also categorized into very good category. It was obvious that the developed English materials were definitely ready to be tried out to the students. After revised, the second draft was copied and used by the student in the process of teaching and learning English for Early Childhood Education program. In this section, the researcher was given three meetings to try-out the developed materials. This was of course feasible to try-out three units of the developed materials for six meetings.

To evaluate the appropriateness of the second draft of the design material, close-ended questionnaire was used to get the students' opinions about the design material. There are

six aspects that were evaluated in this research. They were goal, input text, material impact, task, instruction, and lay out. The result of the tryout questionnaire was computed to find out the mean of each unit. The mean was then used to define the appropriateness of the second design material.

**Table 1** : *The mean of try-out questionnaire of the second draft*

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Unit 1	4.00
Unit 2	4.33
Unit 3	4.44

Table 1 showed the mean value after the second draft of designed materials revised and implemented in the try out, the data analysis showed that the design material are appropriate for the student as indicated by the mean of tryout of unit 1 was 4.00 (*very good*), unit 2 was 4.33 (*very good*), unit 3 was 4.44 (*very good*). If the mean value was  $\geq 3.7$  was categorized as very good.

The data obtained from such evaluations then were analyzed considering respondents' opinion on the developed and tried-out materials. The researcher revised the designed materials. After revising the second draft of the materials based on respondents' suggestion in interview, then the materials were approved to be the final draft of the developed materials in this study. Five components of the developed materials were evaluated by using theories proposed by Nunan (2000), Tomlinson and Masuhara (2004), and McDonough (2003), and the designed materials were approved to be suitable for students of Early Childhood Education Program.

## **Conclusion**

It is important to develop English material that is suitable for students of the Early Childhood Education Program. By considering the purpose of this study, the researcher made two conclusions, namely the process of developing materials and on specifications appropriate English material for Early Childhood Education Program.

Regarding the material development process, there are several phases followed by the researcher, namely conducting need analysis, developing material grid, organizing or writing the materials, judging the designed materials by using expert judgment, trying out the second draft, evaluating and revising the materials, and writing the final draft of the designed materials. English material designed consists of 10 units which has 10 tasks of each unit. It focuses on listening, speaking, reading and writing as the integrated skills.

After conducting all the steps or stages of research and development and following all the principles of the theory used, the researcher come to conclusion that the resulted product of materials having been validated has a number of strengths. This product of materials has been suitable for it is proven with its synchronization with students needs of Early Childhood of Education program. I recommend those curriculum developers to develop English material according to their respective study programs. Therefore, in the development of English Materials for Early Childhood Education Students tailored to the needs of students. This is important to differentiate between one study program and another.

## References

- Aniroh, K. (2019). The Challenges of Teacher-Students in Developing ESP Teaching Materials. *The Asian ESP Journal*, 42.
- Borg, W. R., and Gall, M. D. (2003). *Educational Research: An Introduction, 7th Edition*. New York: Longman, Inc.
- Dudley-Evans, T., & St, John. M.-J. (1998). *Developments in ESP: A multi-disciplinary approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ellis, R. (1991). *Grammar teaching practice or consciousness-raising?; Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Pedagogy*. Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters
- Harmer, Jeremy. (2001). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Edinburgh: Pearson Education Company.
- Hutchinson, Tom and Alan Waters. (2006). *English for Specific Purposes; A Learning Centred Approach*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Jordan, R. R. (1997). *English for academic purposes: A guide and resource book for teachers*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kachru, B. B. (1983). *The Indianization of English: The English language in India*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- McDonough, Jo and Christopher Shaw. (1993). *Materials and Methods in ELT: A Teacher's Guide*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Nunan, David. (2004). *Task-based Language Teaching*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Nunan, D. 2001. *Aspects of Task Based ESP instructional materials Design: karen's Language Issues*, (online)
- Mac Alister. J. 2010. *Language Curriculum Design*, New York: Routledge Tailor and Francis Group
- Morgan, G., & Alfahaid, A. (2019). The evaluation of an English for specific purposes course taught to pre-sessional undergraduate students in tandem with general English. *The Asian ESP Journal*, 15(3), 56-98.
- Taylor, Lyn. (2004). *Educational theories and instructional design model, their palec in simulation*. Retrieved on July 14. 2010 from [http://web.mac.com/smhsmusic/Ubos\\_Blog/EDIT\\_580/Entriess/2006/8/6\\_Educational\\_Theories\\_files/057-taylor.pdf](http://web.mac.com/smhsmusic/Ubos_Blog/EDIT_580/Entriess/2006/8/6_Educational_Theories_files/057-taylor.pdf)
- Tomlinson, Brian., and Masuhara, Hitomi. (2004). *Developing Language Course Materials*. Singapore: SEAMEO Regional Language Center.





## **Assessment of Oral Language and the Mastery of Discourse Analysis Subject for University Students**

**Hery Yufrizal**

*Universitas Lampung*

*heryyufrizal@gmail.com*

### **Bio-profile:**

**Hery Yufrizal** finished his undergraduate study at Universitas Lampung. He got Diploma in Teaching English as a Second Language and Masters Degree from Victoria University of Wellington New Zealand. He earned his Ph.D from La Trobe University Australia in 2001. He has been teaching some subjects, such as Pragmatics, Sociolinguistics, Discourse Analysis, and Developing Oral Language Skills.

### **Abstract**

The mastery of Discourse Analysis as subject taught at tertiary level of education is influenced by both the students' level of English proficeincy and the mastery of the subject matter. Learning Discourse Analysis requires both language language skills and content knowledge. This research attempts to investigate how students learn Discourse Analysis and the factors that significantly influence the mastery of Discourse Analysis subject taught through Challenge Based Learning at the institution. The most important finding from this study is that from 5 values of students' assessment on the oral performance: quality of presentation, responding to questions, language use, media use and mastery of the subject; only quality of presentation has significant effect on learning. Another result of the study concerned with the correlation between the application of challenge-based learning and the students' assessment of oral capability. There is a

positive significant correlation between the application of challenge based learning and students' assessment of oral capability.

**Keywords:** *self-assessment, oral capability, challenge based learning, discourse analysis*

## **Introduction**

The study attempts to find out whether there is any significant correlation between the students' oral capability assessment in English and their achievements in the mastery of discourse analysis subject. The students' oral capability assessment deals with five oral learning traits: quality of presentation (QP), responding to questions (RQ), language use (LU), media use (MU), and mastery of subject (MS) (Universitas Lampung, 2019) The five oral presentation traits become the basic reasons for evaluating the students' mastery of Discourse Analyses subject taught at the institution. Discourse Analysis subject was taught through a time series design (Gall and Borg, 2007) where the subject was divided into three teaching blocks. Each block consists of four meetings and a test for each block. The blocks are named RWP (read, write, and present), RRP (read, relate, present) and RIPA (read, illustrate, present, and argue). A comparison was made among the students' achievements in each block. The students are evaluated on the basis of their mastery of discourse analysis in each block. The idea of comparing students, oral capability assessment and the mastery of discourse analysis subject is comparable to the study of interaction and input-output relations in second language acquisition studies. From the studies on comprehensible output (Ellis, 1994; Swain and Lapkin, 1995; and Foster, 1998 and Yufrizal, 2000), it was found that output indeed has an influence on the performance of second/foreign language learners, but how far the output influences language acquisition in general is still a matter of question. Students, in this study are those who learn discourse analysis subject through a series of learning sessions involving the reading of the subject followed by a series of oral presentations and discussions. They receive inputs in discourse analysis subject by reading resource books and discuss what they read by undertaking a series of learning blocks called project-based language learning.

## **Theoretical Framework**

There are three interrelated concepts addressed by this study. The first is the concept of challenge based learning as applied in the study of second/foreign language learning. The second is the concept of oral capability assessment as applied in the students' measures of oral capability (Universitas Lampung, 2019) . The third is the concept of modification output as applied in the study of second/foreign language learning.

### **A. The Challenge Based-Learning**

Challenge based learning was created by Apple Inc. Company which identified environment design leaning principle for the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Johnson and Adams, 2011). The Challenge Based Learning comprises three interrelated phases. The phases are: Engage, Investigate and Act. Every phase comprises activities that prepare teachers to move to the next phase. Within each of the phases there are possibilities for mini-investigation cycles and if necessary a return to an earlier phase (Santos,et al. (2015). Complete steps of each phase is:

#### **Step 1 Engage**

During the Engage Phase, the Learners move from a big abstract idea to a concrete and actionable challenge using the Essential Questioning process. "The goal is to personally connect with the academic content through identification, development, and ownership of a compelling challenge" (Johnson, and Adams, 2011).

#### **Stage 2. Investigate**

During investgate phase, the learners attempt to build learning expeirences that are contextualized, and the same time try to conduct a thorough and wider research. This is done in order to build a strong base for solutios which are applicable and sustainable.

#### **Stage 3 Act.**

In the Act Phase, learners develop evidence based solutions which are implemented to authentic audience. The results of the implementation are carefully examined among the team members. In this phase, learners show their willingness to succeed by demonstrating thier mastery of content subject,

## **B. Oral presentation**

There are five elements of oral presentation evaluated in this study. The five oral presentation elements are measures used by the institution to evaluate students' performance in particular subject matter (Universitas Lampung, 2019). The five elements are: a). the quality of presentation, b). the ability to respond to questions, c) appropriateness of language use, d). effectiveness of media use, and e). mastery of subject.

### **a). The quality of presentation**

The ability of oral presentations is a vital part in education. It can show the students' ability to master particular subject at school. Oral presentation can be adapted to various speaking situations, for example speaking to a group, directing a meeting or giving explanation to a group. According to McBride (2017), there are some features of oral presentation, such as preparation, delivery, audience, and visual. The scorings of the quality of presentation are: 5 very poor, 6 poor, 7. Good, 8.very good, 9, excellent, 10. outstanding

### **b). Responding to questions**

Responding to questions is essential for both students and teacher in order to be succeed in their tasks. For students one of the difficulties of responding to questions is their accuracy to understand the main objective of question and at the same time provide appropriate answers to the questions. Some questions might be misinterpreted and automatically produced wrong answers from the students. The scorings of responding to questions are: 5 very poor, 6 poor, 7. Good, 8.very good, 9, excellent, 10. outstanding

### **c). Language Use**

Language use refers to the appropriateness of the language used to communicate intended meaning of a speaker. This is comparable to usage (the rules for language making) and the use of structure for making it (Anwar, et al.2020). The scorings of media used are: 5 very poor, 6 poor, 7. Good, 8.very good, 9, excellent, 10. Outstanding.

### **d). Media use**

Media usage, also called media consumption or media diet, is defined as “the sum of information and entertainment media taken in by an individual or group” (source:

Wikipedia). The scorings of media used are: 5 very poor, 6 poor, 7. Good, 8.very good, 9, excellent, 10. outstanding

#### **e). Mastery of subject.**

The mastery of subject matter is the foundation upon which the education of a teacher is based. The teacher requires, among other things, the skill of mastering the subject matter and being able to establish the interrelationships between different subjects (Ngugi and Thiguri, 2014). The scorings of mastery of subject are: 5 very poor, 6 poor, 7. Good, 8.very good, 9, excellent, 10. outstanding

### **C. Output Hypothesis**

Study in second language acquisition has produced many theories of how language is acquired effectively. One of theories in is the Comprehensible Output (CO) hypothesis. The comprehensible output hypothesis postulates that learning takes place when learners encounter a gap in their linguistic knowledge of the second language (Swain, 1985). Learners will be able to notice the gap and modify their output by noticing this gap. This will make the students aware on the gap between their knowledge and the language they learn.

The output (saying or writing something in the target language) has a threefold function: - it is an opportunity for language learners to notice gaps in their knowledge of the L2 that needs to be filled; it enables them to test the output hypotheses about the structure of the L2, and also to reflect consciously upon the structure of the L2; it enables the language teacher to design tasks that get students to produce language and the reflect upon its structure, and this, in turn will cause them to modify their output structurally.(see Syarifudin, 2019; Foster, 1998; Shehadeh, 1999; Doughty and Williams, 1998; Oliver, 2000; Mackey, 1999).

### **Research Procedures**

The study implemented quasi experimental research design. Quasi-experimental research designs, like experimental designs, test causal hypotheses. In both experimental (i.e., randomized controlled trials or RCTs) and quasi-experimental designs, the programme or policy is viewed as an “intervention’ in which a treatment – comprising

the elements of the programme/policy being evaluated – is tested for how well it achieves its objectives, as measured by a prespecified set of indicators” (White and Sabarwal 2014; Altun and Sabah, 2020).

In this case, the subjects of the research are students who are enrolled as participants at ‘Discourse Analysis’ subject at the University of Lampung, The students are both as the population and sample of the research. The subjects are students of the third year majoring in teaching English as second/foreign language. These students sit on Discourse Analysis subject with 3 credit load. The subjects were 25 students of the English Study program, consisting of 17 female and 8 male students. The subjects were the sixth semester students enrolled at Discourse Analysis with ages of 19-21 years old..

Following Gall and Borg, 2009, the main steps of the research are: Students attend the session which will be divided into three big sessions: session 1 will consist of three meetings. The technique applied for session 1 was lockstep technique: Lecturer explains, students listen and take note Session 1 ended with test 1. Session 2 was the application of Challenge based learning where students were divided into presenter group and audience group. The presenter groups were assigned to write and present paper. The listener groups are assigned to ask questions. Session 2 ended up with test for the block. Session 3 was the application of challenge based learning with seminar session and challenge from audience. Session 3 ended up with test 3. The blocks were named RWP (read, write, and present), RRP (read, relate, present) and RIPA (read, illustrate, present, and argue).

## **Results and Discussion**

The followings are the results of the research

### **a. Students’ Performances**

Students’ performances were measured in five performance evaluation: quality of the presentation, responding to questions, language use, media use and mastery of the subject. The followings are the results of students’ performances.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of students' performances in five measures

**Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
QP	25	2.00	5.00	3.0800	1.22202
RQ	25	2.00	5.00	2.8400	.89815
LU	25	2.00	5.00	2.5600	.86987
MU	25	2.00	5.00	4.1200	1.05357
MS	25	2.00	5.00	3.2800	.84261
Valid N (listwise)	25				

The descriptive statistics on students' performances in five measures: quality of presentation, responding to questions, language use, media use and mastery of the subject show the following results for the quality of performances, the mean was 3.47, (sd = 1.19). For the measure on how the students respond to questions, the mean score was 3.28 with a standard deviation of 0.97. For the measures of language use, the mean score was 2.88 with a standard deviation of 0.78. For the measure of media uses, the mean score was 3.28 and standard deviation of 0.89. While for the measure of mastery of the subject, the mean score was 3.28 and standard deviation of 1.05.

Table 2: Statistical Analysis from students' oral performances in three tests

**Statistics**

	RWP	RRP	RIPA
N Valid	25	25	25
N Missing	0	0	0
Mean	74.8000	60.8000	74.4800
Std. Deviation	6.11010	6.13732	6.83813
Sum	1870.00	1520.00	1862.00

From the table, it can be summarized that the students' mean score in the first round was 74.8 with a standard deviation (sd) of 6.11. In the second round of the activities, the mean score was 60.8 with an SD of 6.13, and the third block of presentation, the students' mean score was 74.48 and standard deviation of 6.83.

b. Analyses of measure

Table 3 below summarized the t-tests of the five measures

**One-Sample Test**

	Test Value = 0					
	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
QP	17.170	24	.000	3.88000	3.4136	4.3464
RQ	11.947	24	.000	2.92000	2.4156	3.4244
LU	14.715	24	.000	2.56000	2.2009	2.9191
MU	19.553	24	.000	4.12000	3.6851	4.5549
MS	14.462	24	.000	2.32000	1.9889	2.6511

The table reveals that there is a significant difference in the students' responses to quality of presentation with a t-value of 17.17 and mean difference of 3.88. There is also a significant difference in the students' ability to respond to questions with a t value of 11.97 and mean difference of 2.92. The table also reveals that there is a significant difference in the students' language use with a t-value of 14.71 and mean difference of 2.56. The table also reveals that there is a significant difference in media use with a t-value of 4.12 and mean difference of 19.55. Finally, the table also reveals that there is significant difference in the mastery of subject with a t-value of 14.46 and mean difference of 2.32.



Table 4: ANOVA of students' performances in challenge 1 activities

**ANOVA Table**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
QP * WRP	Between Groups	34.173	17	2.010	8.443	.004
	Within Groups	1.667	7	.238		
	Total	35.840	24			
RQ * WRP	Between Groups	20.673	17	1.216	1.648	.258
	Within Groups	5.167	7	.738		
	Total	25.840	24			
LU * WRP	Between Groups	8.500	17	.500	.636	.789
	Within Groups	5.500	7	.786		
	Total	14.000	24			
MU * WRP	Between Groups	13.640	17	.802	.432	.925
	Within Groups	13.000	7	1.857		
	Total	26.640	24			
MS * WRP	Between Groups	11.373	17	.669	.826	.650
	Within Groups	5.667	7	.810		
	Total	17.040	24			

Table 4 reveals that there is a significant influence of quality of presentation on the students' performance in challenge 1 activities with an F value of 8.44. The table also reveals that there is no significant influence among factors of responding to questions, language use, media use and mastery of the subject in challenge 1 activities.

Table 5 below shows the ANOVA of students' performances in challenge 2 activities

**Table 5 ANOVA Table in Challenge 2 activities.**

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
N challenge	Between Groups	13.798	5	2.760	2.379	.078
	Within Groups	22.042	19	1.160		
QP * RRP Total		35.840	24			
RQ * RRP	Between Groups	8.965	5	1.793	2.019	.122
	Within Groups	16.875	19	.888		
	Total	25.840	24			
LU * RRP	Between Groups	3.042	5	.608	1.055	.415
	Within Groups	10.958	19	.577		
	Total	14.000	24			
MU * RRP	Between Groups	6.598	5	1.320	1.251	.325
	Within Groups	20.042	19	1.055		
	Total	26.640	24			
MS * RRP	Between Groups	1.540	5	.308	.378	.858
	Within Groups	15.500	19	.816		
	Total	17.040	24			

The table shows that relatively there is an influence of quality of presentation (QP) and Responding to questions (RQ) on the students' performance in challenge 2 activities with an F value of ) 0.072 and 0.122 on students' mastery of challenge based learning activity no.2. The table also reveals that there are no significant influences among factors of language use, media use and mastery of the subject in challenge 2 activities.

Table 6 below shows the ANOVA of students' performances in challenge 3 activities.

**Table 6 ANOVA Table in Challenge 3 activities.**

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
QP * RIPA	Between Groups	31.673	13	2.436	6.432	.002
	Within Groups	4.167	11	.379		
	Total	35.840	24			
RQ * RIPA	Between Groups	18.757	13	1.443	2.241	.094
	Within Groups	7.083	11	.644		
	Total	25.840	24			
LU * RIPA	Between Groups	7.167	13	.551	.887	.586
	Within Groups	6.833	11	.621		
	Total	14.000	24			
MU * RIPA	Between Groups	14.557	13	1.120	1.019	.494
	Within Groups	12.083	11	1.098		
	Total	26.640	24			
MS * RIPA	Between Groups	6.207	13	.477	.485	.892
	Within Groups	10.833	11	.985		
	Total	17.040	24			

Table 6 reveals students' performances in challenge 3 activities. The table shows that there is a significant influence of quality of presentation on the students' performance in challenge 3 activities with an F value of 6.4. The table also shows that relatively there is an influence of Responding to questions (RQ) to students' performances in challenge 3 activities. There is no significant effect of language use, media use and mastery of the subject in challenge 3 activities.

In challenge 3 activities, the students were given the opportunity to challenge the presenter's idea by asking questions, request for clarification, add and illustrate presenters' explanation. Table 6 shows that there is a significant effect of students' performance in quality of presentation and test 3 performance.

### **Discussion of findings**

The most important finding from this study came in the form of 5 values of learning: quality of presentation (QP), responding to questions (RQ), language use (LU), media use (MU) and mastery of subject (MS). Table 8 of the result report reveals that there is a significant difference in the students' responses to quality of presentation with a t-value of 17.17 and mean difference of 3.88. There is also a significant difference in the students' ability to respond to questions with a t value of 11.97 and mean difference of 2.92. The table also reveals that there is a significant difference in the students' language use with a t-value of 14.71 and mean difference of 2.56. The table also reveals that there is a significant difference in media use with a t-value of 4.12 and mean difference of 19.55. Finally, the table also reveals that there is significant difference in the mastery of subject with a t-value of 14.46 and mean difference of 2.32. The result of these calculations also reveals interesting research phenomena, particularly in the ability of advanced students' ability to process information while learning language is still the main focus. Five measures on the quality of students' presentation capability show the students' capacity of mastering the subject matter and their oral presentation capability.

For the first criteria of students' quality of presentation (QP) on the criteria to evaluate this is based on the measure from the definition. There are ten indicators for the quality of presentation. They are: 1. Show your Passion and Connect with your Audience 2. Focus on your Audience's Needs, 3. Keep it Simple: Concentrate on your Core

Message, 4. Smile and Make Eye Contact with your Audience, 5. Start Strongly, 6. Remember the 10-20-30 Rule for Slideshows, 7. Tell Stories, 8. Use your Voice Effectively, 9. Use your Body Too, 10. Relax, Breathe and Enjoy.

The second trait in students' oral performances was the ability to respond to questions (RQ). This ability is important because one of the main problems with question and answer sessions is that the presenter's nerves frequently force an inappropriate response. This could be caused by misinterpretation of questions asked or that only key words from the question have been heard rather than the full content. The subjects of the research showed that there is a significant effect the ability to respond questions on the mastery of the subject. This shows that the subjects of the research were able to respond to questions appropriately.

The third trait in the students' oral performance was language use (LU) trait. In this aspect the students' performance was judged based on the appropriateness of the language they use. "Language use refers to the communicative meaning of the language."

The fourth trait in the students' ability is media use. Media used was defined as "the sum of information and entertainment media taken in by an individual or group". Table 7 revealed that there is a significant difference in media use with a t-value of 4.12 and mean difference of 19.55.

The fifth trait in the students' oral performance was mastery of the subject (MS). The result of the calculation reveals that there is a significant difference in mastery of the subject with a t-value of 14.46 and mean difference of 2.32.

Another most important finding is the effect of gender on the students' performance. Data from the study showed that in RWP challenge there is a significant correlation between the students' performance and gender with n F value of 11.32 and there is significant correlation in RIPA challenge and gender with F value of 0.063.

### **Conclusions and paedagogical Implications**

Some conclusions can be drawn from the results of the research. Among others are:

- 1) In terms of five measures of oral presentation, there are significant differences in the students' responses to quality of presentation (QP), responding to questions (RQ),

language use (LU), media use (MU) and mastery of the subject MS). Five measures on the quality of students' presentation capability show the students' capacity of mastering the subject matter and their oral presentation capability.

- 2) In terms of the application of Challenge based learning, there is a positive correlation between the students' performance in the challenge and the quality of presentation. The quality of presentation correlates significantly with RWP challenge, RRP challenge, and RIPA challenge. Comparisons among the three challenges showed that in RWP challenge there is a significant correlation between the students' performance and gender with an F value of 11.32 and there is significant correlation in RIPA challenge.

5.2 Some pedagogical implications that can be drawn from the study are:

- 1) The teaching of discourse analysis as a subject at higher education level can have multiple effects on the teaching of English as students' major of study. Students involved in this study are those whose major is English, studying English in order to be English teachers upon the completion of their study. Specific approaches need to be implemented to assist them reach their learning goal. A quasi experimental study implemented in this study represents an approach to study the research paradigm in second/foreign language teaching.

- 2). Challenge based approach as a strategy of learning showed that students attempt their utmost capability to solve learning challenges designed. The results of the study showed that challenge based learning is applicable in some learning situations (Nunn et al, 2016 and Nurhajati. 2018).

## References

- Apple, Inc. (2008) *Apple Classrooms of Tomorrow—Today Learning in the 21st Century*. Cupertino, California: Apple, Inc.
- Altun, Mustafa and Reman Sabah (2020) The Effect of Cooperative Learning Strategies in the Enhancement of EFL Learners' Speaking Skills. *Asian EFL Journal*. Vol.27,2.3

- Anwar, Muhammad, Yusri and Hasmawati (2020) Improving Student's Speaking Performance and Self-Confidence Using Mind Mapping Model in Foreign Language Learning. *Asian EFL Journal*. Vol.27, No.3.1
- Doughty, C and Williams, J (Eds.) (1998). *Focus on Form in Classroom Second Language Acquisition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ellis, R. (1995). Modified oral input and the acquisition of word meanings. *Applied Linguistics*, 16 (4), 410-434
- Gall and Borg, 2007. *Educational Research. An Introduction*, 8th Edition. Pearson.
- Gee, J.P and Green, J.L. *Review of Research in Education*, Vol. 23 (1998), pp. 119-169
- Gee, J. P. (1999). *An introduction to discourse analysis: Theory and method*. New York: Routledge.
- Griffin G. (Ed.), (2013) *Research Methods for English Studies* (pp. 93-112). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Johnson, L. and Adams, S., (2011). Challenge Based Learning: The Report from the Implementation Project.
- Mackey, A. (1999). Input, interaction, and second language development: An empirical study of question formation in ESL. *SSLA*, 2 (4): 557-587.
- Ngugi, Lidya N K N and Thiguri, RW. 2014. To Establish the Extent to which Subject Mastery Enhances Quality Teaching to Student-Teacher during Teaching Practice. *International Journal of Education and Research*. Vol.2 No.7. July 2014.
- Nichols, M., Cator, K., Torres, M. and Henderson, D. (2016) Challenge Based Learner User Guide. Redwood City, CA: Digital Promise.
- Nichols, M. H., Cator, Karen (2009), Challenge Based Learning White Paper. Cupertino, California: Apple, Inc.
- Nordquist, Richard. "Language and Gender Studies." *ThoughtCo*, Feb. 11, 2020, [thoughtco.com/language-and-gender-studies-1691095](https://www.thoughtco.com/language-and-gender-studies-1691095).
- Nunn, R., Brandt C and Deveci, Tunju. (2016) Project-Based Learning as a Holistic Learning Framework: Integrating 10 Principles of Critical Reasoning and Argumentation. *The Asian ESP Journal*, No.12 Issue 2

- Nurhajati, D. 2018. Project-Based Learning used to Develop Supplementary Materials for Writing Skill. *The Asian ESP Journal. Vol 14 Issue 3 pp 6-11*
- Oliver, R. (2000). Age differences in negotiation and feedback in classroom and pairwork. *Language Learning* 50, 119-151
- O'Mahony, T.K. , Vye, N.J., Bransford, J.D., Sanders, E.A., Stevens, R., Stephens, R.D., Richey, M.C., Lin, K.Y., Soleiman, M.K. (2012). A Comparison of Lecture-Based and Challenge-Based Learning in a Workplace Setting: Course Designs, Patterns of
- Phillips, N. & Hardy, C. (2002). *Discourse analysis: Investigating processes of social construction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Santos, Alan R., Sales, Afonso, Fernandes, Paulo, Nichols Mark H. (2015). Combining Challenge Based Learning and Scrum Framework for Mobile Application Development. Proceedings of the 2015 ACM Conference on Innovation and Technology in Computer Science Education.
- Shehadeh, A. (1999). Non-native speakers' production of modified comprehensible output and second language learning. *Language Learning*. 49(4): 627-675.
- Skehan, P. (1998). *A cognitive Approach to Language Learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stoller, F. 2006. In *Project based second and foreign language education: Past, present, and future*, ed. G.H. Beckett and P.C. Miller, 19–40. Greenwich, CT: Information Age.
- Swain, M.(1985) Communicative competence: Some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development. In S.M. Gass and C.G. Madden (Eds.), *Input in Second Language Acquisition* (pp.235-253). Cambridge, MA.: Newbury House.
- Swain, M. (1995). Three functions of output in second language acquisition. In G. Cook and B. Seidlhofer (Eds.), *Principle and practice in applied linguistics* (pp.125-144). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Syarifudin. (2019) Compensatory Communication Strategies Employed by EFL Students in Taking Turns Talking of a Speaking Class. *Asian EFL Journal. Vol.26 No.6 pp.283-296*



- Universitas Lampung. 2019. Panduan Penilaian Essay Test bagi Mahasiswa Universitas Lampung.
- White, H., & S. Sabarwal (2014). Quasi-experimental Design and Methods, Methodological Briefs: Impact Evaluation 8, UNICEF Office of Research, Florence.
- Wood, L.A. & Kroger. R.O. (2000). *Doing discourse analysis: Methods for studying action in talk and text*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication.
- Yufrizal, H. 2000. The roles of negotiation of meaning in second/foreign language acquisition. *Aksara*, 2: 1-14.



## **Learner Autonomy: Enhancing Language Skills of EFL Learners Using Applications**

**Dr. Shifan Thaha Abdullateef**

Associate Professor, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, KSA

**Ms. Asma' Abdelhaleem Amer**

Lecturer, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, KSA

### **Bio-profiles:**

**Dr. Shifan Thaha Abdullateef** is an Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics at Department of English, Prince Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Alkharj, Saudi Arabia.

**Ms. Asma' Abdelhaleem Amer** is a senior lecturer at Department of English, Sattam Bin Abdulaziz University, Alkharj, Saudi Arabia.

### **Abstract**

EFL learners consider learning a target language as not only a matter of pride but also a challenge. However, heavy curriculum, time constraints and traditional ways of teaching dampen their spirits. It is imperative for teachers to provide innovative and interesting ways and offer an effective autonomous learning platform to train EFL learners to be responsible for their learning. In the digital age, using Applications is one of the best options to promote learner autonomy. This study investigated the effectiveness of using twelve Language Applications by EFL Learners to self-regulate their learning process. The sample comprised ninety students pursuing a CALL course at Prince Sattam

bin Abdulaziz University. These 12 language Applications were chosen to make EFL learning process flexible, and cater to individual needs. An Application evaluation instrument was designed to evaluate these twelve Applications for their technological, pedagogical, user-friendly and individualization features to support EFL learning a mixed-methods approach was adopted to collect and analyse data qualitatively and quantitatively. The results indicated that the learners became more responsible and improved their language skills to a great extent. The results further revealed that automated feedback and comments motivated the learners to take up learning tasks and tests independently. The results reflected that learning through Applications was a good learning strategy that can be used by the EFL learners in the fast progressing digital age to have confidence, a sense of autonomy and independence. Thus, eventually leading to enhancement of their language skills.

**Keywords:** *Learner Autonomy, EFL Learners, Applications , Language Skills, Extrinsic Motivation*

## **Introduction**

In recent years, due to business and communication needs, learning English language is inevitable. Learners in EFL situation need to adopt different strategies to hone their language skills. They need initial support and extrinsic motivation to overcome their anxiety and avoid any negative influence on their language learning efforts. An EFL learner may excel in one of the skills and struggle with others as each language skill has its own set of complexities. In all such cases, acquiring proficiency becomes a slow process, retarding the learning tasks and leading to disinterestedness, demotivation and consequently discontinuation of studies. In all such situations, course facilitators play an important role in choosing effective methodologies, to redeem learners' motivation and also boost their autonomy.

## **Language Skills**

EFL learners face many challenges related to spellings, punctuation, sentence structures, grammar, paragraph components, controlling ideas, redundancy and repetition

and a lack of description Tangpermpoon (2008). For instance, Arab learners make a variety of spelling errors in English due to non-phonetic nature of English spelling, differences between sound systems of English and Arabic language, inconsistent and arbitrary nature of English word derivation, errors caused by differences between British and American English spelling conventions and like Ibrahim (2013). Additionally, due to inadequate vocabulary, background knowledge, socio-cultural complexities, and insufficient reading practice, learners face difficulties in guessing meanings from the context, predicting, inferring and critically evaluating texts. Most of EFL learners are also incompetent in communicating orally in English due to anxiety, pronunciation errors, grammatical mistakes, lack of vocabulary, insufficient use of target language, lack of involvement in real-life situations, fear to face criticism, lack of motivation, different structural pattern, etc. Moreover, EFL learners find Listening skills to be difficult as they have to focus on what they are hearing since this involves many mental processes. Rintaningrum(2018).Learners face issues with inconsistent English pronunciation, fluency of speech, insufficient vocabulary, accent, and lack of concentration.

## **CALL**

Digitalization of learning process has led to incorporation of divergent approaches towards language learning. One of the most effective approaches today is Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) as it allows experimenting in pedagogy, democratizing classroom and engaging learners in a better way. CALL is becoming the trend in EFL due to interaction, feedback, individualization, collaboration, edutainment, variety, flexible learning styles, exploratory learning, real-life skill-building, virtual world to mention a few. Advocates of CALL argue that Applications can provide realistic, native-speaker models, language learning curriculum, assessment, recording and evaluation. Today, one finds several high-end packages with strong pedagogical features based on the communicative approach to teaching. This study has attempted to examine a few of these Applications to address to the learning issues faced in an EFL situation.

## **Hypermedia**

EFL learners can be encouraged to adopt computer based learning only through 'Hypermedia' application. This feature makes the Language Applications highly interactive. It is easy to access due to the browser-based nature of the application. Features such as peer-review and comment modules are added advantages. When it comes to special Media attributes like audio and text alternatives, those are provided for transcripts. Graphics are used to convey meaning in some transcripts and exercises. Hypertext is used in video transcripts, writing and grammar sections, with links to explanations of meaning and examples of language use. A language Application also provides a range of grammar and vocabulary drills, contextualized graphics, audio and video recording. Hypermedia provides information in multiple modes: visual, aural and textual thereby enhancing recognition and recall. Apart from media attributes, a few Applications have numerous user-friendly attributes for example, providing an excellent layout for visual and auditory presentations. In some software, user-friendly components are integration of English-English dictionary, glossary, culture notes, and grammar reference book, which can be accessed throughout the programs. These components give learners a choice of content, level, task type, sequence, learning approach and pace. Moreover a few Applications provide greater control over learning to accommodate individual needs. For instance, Pedagogical features make an Application a powerful and effective aid for teachers. Most Language Applications provide instructors with templates ranging from empty free writing boxes to organized concept maps to customize writing experience. A few Applications offer multi-level programs to observe the development of language skills from one level to another.

## **Learner Autonomy**

Teachers who promote learner autonomy are greatly benefitted by Individualized learning software programs. One of the most influential ways of providing learner autonomy is Computer Assisted Language Learning and Applications(CALLA). These Applications enable teachers to turn their perceptions of teacher centeredness into student-centeredness. As every learner has different needs and abilities, modern educationists advocate individualized instruction and learning. Therefore, applications

have been designed in line with the concept of 'learner autonomy'. They give ample opportunities for learners to choose what to learn and how to learn. Hence, navigation within the Application makes learners independent. For slow learners, the Applications support small focused programs with additional time and assistance. This feature boosts morale and helps in developing confidence. The Applications also presents feedback that can be extremely beneficial in fostering students' motivation and ensuring linguistic accuracy. In some Applications , the key is provided to rectify their mistakes. Due to growing interest in Internet-based tools for language learning, it has become a pressing need for educators to locate, evaluate and select most appropriate language-learning digital resources that encourage more communicative and meaningful learning processes. This study has made an attempt to identify a few of such language-learning digital resources and their accessibility to learners in EFL situation.

### **Statement of the Problem**

EFL learning has been a challenge for learners as their culture, phonetics patterns, and sentence structures are too different from those of the target language. Moreover, in public schools in Saudi Arabia, English is taught at a very late stage; hence, when they reach university level, their language competency is still low. The learners do not have ample opportunities to hone their language skills in classrooms due to time constraints. Besides, sessions that are delivered from examination point of view are mostly teacher-centred and monotonous. Most of the traditional teaching approaches do not promote learner autonomy and learners indulge in passive learning as they do not get opportunities to apply metacognitive strategies, self-reflection, and self-assessment strategies. Traditional teaching does not provide stimulating learning environments resulting in increase in drop out rate . Mohammad (2018) and Nadhim,H. (2017) observe the availability of Applications but, some of them are designed with commercial interest. These Applications lack pedagogical features and may not provide effective learning, as also accepted by (Eslit (2017); Xu, Banerjee, Ramirez, Zhu & Wijekumar (2019). Due to digitalization, most of the educational institutions are shifting from convergent ways of teaching and adopting divergent ways. Yet, much is to be explored under the domain of Computer-assisted language teaching. Hypermedia has paved the way for innumerable

learning options and caters to almost all learning styles. The gap lies in maximizing use of Hypermedia applications and to make learning an interesting and effective process. Therefore, this research addresses the issue of efficiency of the Language Applications taking into consideration the competency level of EFL learners, individualization, autonomy, motivation, user-friendly and media attributes. The selection of the Applications is also recommended accordingly.

## **Literature Review**

### **Learner Autonomy**

There is a consensus among language educators and researchers that pedagogical practices aimed at increasing learners' motivation are beneficial. Promoting autonomous learning is the need of the hour as it imparts lifelong training. Autonomy provides opportunities to develop skills and attitudes by being organized, self-disciplined, showing readiness to accept constructive feedback and engaging in self-evaluation and self-reflection. Thomas, M & Janosy, R (2020) investigated a group of self-taught language learners in China and their learning strategies. The results showed that intrinsic motivation drove their learning styles. Participants adopted a variety of metacognitive strategies, motivation control strategies, and emotion control strategies to regulate their learning. The findings highlighted complexity of learner autonomy as displayed in new learning interface as well as the potential of self-efficacy for fostering learner autonomy. It has been observed that utilization of autonomy varies among learners.

A higher degree of autonomy has been witnessed among determined learners who have clear aims and goals. Learners who are supported with a variety of innovative and creative ways to stimulate language learning indulge in effective learning. Wan-Chen Chang, Chang-Yen Liao & Tak-Wai Chan (2019), included a game-based writing environment (GWE). Results indicated that experimental group performed better than control group in referential cohesion in terms of their affective, challenge, and qualified attitudes. The importance of motivation has been further elucidated by Kevser Hava (2019). This study explored effects of digital storytelling on student motivation and satisfaction levels in EFL learning setups. Results showed that there were significant improvements in students' self-confidence and personal use after digital storytelling

activity. Findings revealed that digital storytelling could be an effective way for vocabulary learning, writing and speaking skills.

## **CALL**

Computer-assisted language learning (CALL) is often used as an approach to foreign language teaching as it supports divergent learning practices. Interactive tools develop higher-level learning and skills. Moreover, different modes of delivery cater to varied learning styles to support individualization. Abrami, Lysenko, and Borokhovski (2020) ,evaluated (ABRA) interactive multimedia that engages learners in the development of core reading skills. Results showed positive effects of ABRA, ranging in magnitude from  $g^+ = 0.080$  for Vocabulary Knowledge to  $g^+ = 0.378$  for Phonemic Awareness and reaching statistical significance in four outcome categories. Further, Ter Beek, Brummer and Donker (2018) in the study analyzed the content, focus, provision, and effects of support (scaffolds) in computer environments concerning secondary school students' reading comprehension outcomes. Results revealed that most software provided cognitive support and some provided metacognitive support. Findings revealed the significance of Interactive tools in enhancing effective learning. Another advantage of CALL is that it can be a great source of motivation. Visualization and data transmission stimulate learning. Learners grasp concepts and skills faster and retain what they have learned longer. Kreutz and Rhodin (2015), focussed on the feeling of the learners towards ICT. Results showed that 87 % were positive towards writing texts on computer or tablet instead of pen and paper as it was more fun to use computers and tablets. The findings of the study revealed that CALL had a positive impact on the learners and CALL made learning exciting by developing learners' curiosity and motivation.

Another benefit of CALL is the provision for dynamic Immediate Feedback with a LMS. In a learner-centred education system, it is more important to monitor students' learning processes and give them instant feedback to make their learning effective. EFL learners through Automated writing feedback programs (AWE) like Grammarly, The Hemmingway App, Paper Rater, etc. can instantly revise written work to increase their final score. Corrective Feedback enables learners to identify their weak areas. Shu Huang, Willy, Renandya (2020); Zhang and Hyland (2018 ) Cédric Sarré, Muriel Grosbois,



Cédric Brudermann (2019 ). explored the integration of automated feedback among EFL learners. Results revealed a significant difference between the experimental group and control group in terms of writing accuracy following the adoption of AWE. Findings of the studies showed that learners who used AWE showed enhancement in writing accuracy and learner autonomy awareness.

### **Language Skills**

EFL learners find it hard to acquire proficiency in the target language. Seldom learners are found to be proficient in all four skills. Teaching approaches play an important role in the effective teaching-learning process. It is vital to identify effective and motivational strategies to promote individualization.

Listening skill is one of the difficult skills for EFL learners due to unfamiliar accent of native speakers, top-down processing: making use of expectations and background knowledge to understand what speakers intend to say and Bottom-up processing to recognize sounds and decoding in a linear manner to understand the meaning of the text. Further, the lack of socio-cultural, factual, and contextual knowledge of the target language aggravate difficulties. Due to these challenges, most students get unmotivated and act as passive listeners. It is imperative for teachers to provide both aural and visual environment. Studies have proved that Hypermedia has been an effective tool providing contextual, visual, and non-verbal input that minimizes comprehension difficulty in comprehending. Kim(2015) investigated the effect of video resources on improving listening comprehension. Results indicated that in intermediate and advanced proficiency groups, students' listening skills increased significantly. Findings revealed that students had positive attitudes towards the use of aural and visual tools in listening comprehension.

It pointed out that EFL learners require different approaches towards developing reading strategies. It has been observed that learners with difficulty in oral reading also have difficulties in comprehending texts. EFL learner's limited vocabulary knowledge slows down comprehension rate. It is imperative to provide ample practice in structured reading activities with immediate feedback. José, Raquel, Antonio, Ramón (2020) assessed how students could develop and improve the skills of listening and reading

through personalized feedback and motivational effects of the use of Audience Response Systems (ARS) in English lessons. Findings of the study revealed that structured reading activities with feedback support can improve the reading skills to a great extent. Another component that improves comprehension is Fluency. However, there is limited research pertaining to it. Fluency indicates reading competency of the readers. For EFL learners, fluency comes with practice as they need to be familiar with different types of sentence structures, reasonable vocabulary, and word attack skills. Pey, Min, & Wah, (2014); Schechter et al. (2015) determined the relationship between three sub-skills of fluency (accuracy, reading rate, and prosody) and reading comprehension. Results revealed that all three sub-skills of fluency were strongly correlated with reading comprehension. Findings revealed that reading fluency is closely associated with reading comprehension in ESL and EFL contexts. Apart from guessing meanings from the context and memorizing words, it is equally necessary to retain and use in appropriate situations. Khoshnoud & Karbalaie(2015); Maryam &Ahmed (2017), observed that the use of aural/visual storytelling had significant effects on the Iranian EFL learners' word retention. Results revealed that learners performed better on the retention test than those who underwent the conventional method of teaching vocabulary. Findings proved that visual tools could have an impressive impact on learning and retention of vocabulary knowledge.

It has been observed that EFL learners lack confidence when it comes to speaking in English.

Using the native language extensively acts as a hindrance. The traditional teaching methods have proved to be ineffective as students easily get disinterested . EFL learners cannot acquire conversational skills without face-to-face contact with an experienced teacher .Software tools such as Skype, Wimba and Gong facilitate synchronous and asynchronous oral communication and are already being used in distance-learning CALL environments. Batubara, I. P. & Wariyati. (2018) investigated and offered solutions to issues such as the access to media and technology as well as public speaking learning by English language students in Indonesia through computer assisted language learning mode. Results revealed that there was a significant effect of CALL learning on the public

speaking skill of the participants. Findings revealed that use of CALL can develop speaking skills of EFL learners to a great extent.

When it comes to writing, EFL learners find it quite challenging as it requires sufficient linguistic proficiency. Arab learners find it difficult due to differences in sentence structure and easily give up. It is important to provide interesting tasks and ways to hold their attention and motivate them. Zaini and Mazdayasna (2015) investigated the application and effectiveness of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) in teaching academic writing to Iranian EFL learners. The results of the post-test revealed that the students who were exposed to computer-based instruction outperformed their counterparts in terms of using appropriate articles, tense, plural forms and spelling. Moreover, the students in the experimental group produced paragraphs of higher quality. Bailey & Lee (2020) focused on the use of Grammarly as a new tool to foster writing and demonstrated that Automatic Writing Evaluation tools, namely Grammarly, can detect errors in writing almost as effectively as teachers. Thus, the studies confirmed the efficacy of computer-based instruction in the development of EFL learners' writing skills.

## **Methodology**

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach to collect, analyse qualitative and quantitative data and discuss the efficiency of language software for the development of EFL learners' language skills. The sample of the study comprised ninety students pursuing a CALL course at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University. Three instruments were used viz., individual reports, group discussions, and a five-point Likert scale questionnaire. The purpose of this study was to investigate the utility of 12 software chosen for improving EFL learners' language skills. Applications were chosen taking into consideration the competency level of EFL learners, individualization, autonomy, motivation, user-friendly and media attributes. The selection of the Applications is also recommended accordingly. These applications were divided into 4 categories. The Reading skills category comprised: *News in levels*, *BBC learning English* and *TED Talks*. While for writing skills, *Grammarly*, *PTE*, and *Andy* were chosen. For listening skills, participants worked on *Duolingo*, *Voscreen*, and *Busuu*. For Speaking, skills *Hello Talk*, *Cambly* and *ABA English* were used. The plan of the study was divided into three stages.

First, the trial stage where participants used the software daily. The second stage was group discussions with the researchers to reflect on the experience of using the software. In the third stage, the participants evaluated the software using a report and a questionnaire.

### **Findings and Results**

The results of the sample's group discussions and reports were analyzed manually, while the questionnaire's results were categorized in terms of the Application's attributes. Statements one and nine in Table 1 are to check the **pedagogical features**. Statements two, three and thirteen are to investigate the **technological features**. Statements four, ten and eleven are to reflect on the **individualization attributes**. Statements five, six, twelve, fifteen and sixteen are to view the **user-friendly attributes** like giving explanations, guidance, extra help, and extra practice. **Media attributes** are reflected in statements seven, eight and fourteen. Statement seventeen is to tell if participants recommend using the Application . The researchers aimed to determine the effects of participants' experiences on their autonomy that affect their language level.

Features	Statements	Reading software	Writing software	Listening software	Speaking software	Grand Total
Pedagogical Features	1. The level of the language is clearly indicated	74%	77%	74%	91%	79%
	9. The software includes cultural content.					
Technological Features	2. The icons are clearly indicated to move within the software.	69%	90%	87%	69%	79%
	3. It is clear to which point the learner has reached.					
	13. The learner can easily quit something that is beyond his/her ability.					

<b>Individualization attributes</b>	4.	It provides intrinsic / extrinsic feedback.	31%	74%	70%	62%	60%
	10.	The program includes scoring.					
	11.	The scoring encourages the learners.					
<b>User-friendly attributes</b>	5.	The learner can seek an explanation.	50%	49%	73%	78%	62%
	6.	The learner can seek help, e.g. on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation.					
	12.	The program gives extra practice.					
	15.	The learner needs to mentally process the program.					
	16.	The program offers a range of point-and-click activities.					

Media attributes	7.	The program includes video sequences that are of adequate quality.	73%	16%	85%	71%	61%
------------------	----	--------------------------------------------------------------------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

### Reading Skills Applications

The questionnaire results in figure 1 shows the EFL participants' point of view towards the Application

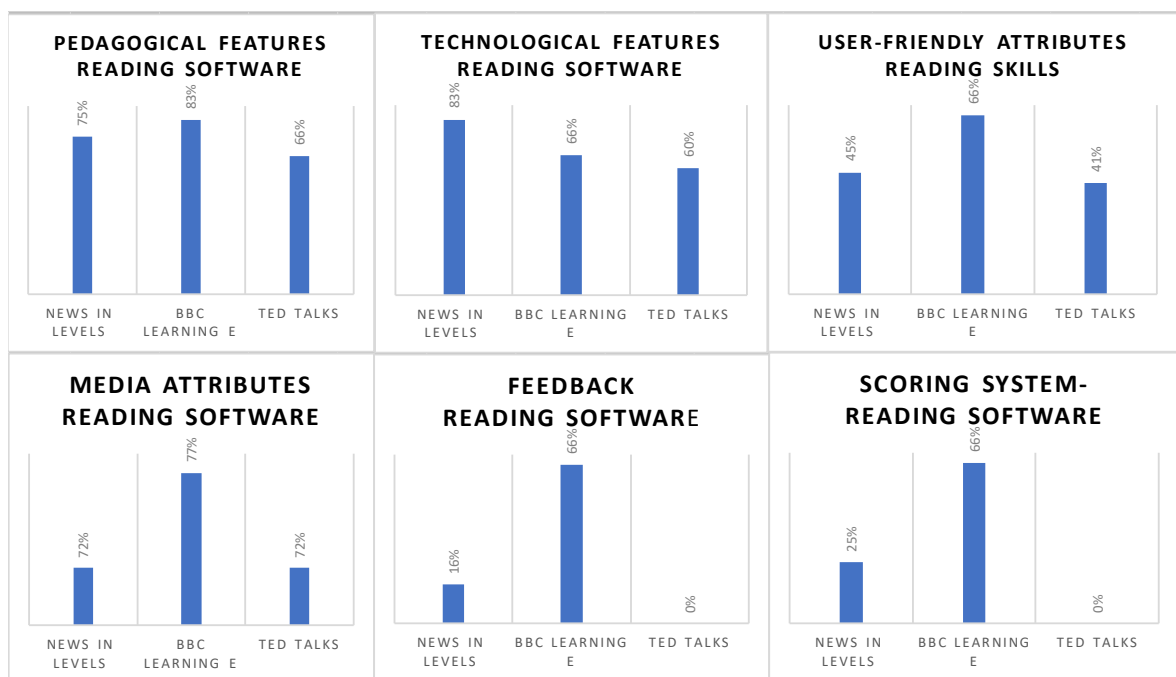


Figure 1: Reading Software analysis

News in levels showed a high percentage in all four attributes, but low percentages in the features of feedback (16%) and scores (25%). Participants found it effective. They stated that its pedagogical features (75%) allowed them to read varied and short news items, which made reading time interesting. They noted that technological features made their experience easy where the news items are organized in terms of topics and difficulty. Participants also enjoyed the media attributes (72%) like watching videos

of the same news items, recording their voices and having a translation option. The user-friendly attributes (45%) such as having the translation option, dictionary enriched their vocabulary background. The feedback and scoring system received low percentages. Participants suggested offering communicative exercises to be scored. Moreover, giving users feedback to encourage their progress.

Figure 1 also illustrates that participants found **BBC Learning English** useful, it received a high percentage in the four attributes along with giving feedback and scores (66%). The software is integrative. It includes lessons, videos, and short quizzes. The Application's user-friendly attributes (66%) and media attributes (77%) facilitated the grammar sections that present eight-minute videos about syntactical structures. Everyday English section displayed two-minute videos about topics that participants found motivating. Users claimed that reading the transcript of the video helped them to improve both reading aloud and silently to answer comprehension questions. They concluded that it made the learning process productive and fun. The Application was most preferred by the learners.

**TED TALKS** received adequate percentages in pedagogical (66%), technological (60%) and media attributes (72%). Media attributes of the software offered participants good input to learn vocabulary, focus on pronunciation and practice reading aloud. The Application presented videos based on authentic topics that motivated participants to improve their reading skills through the repetition feature. The pedagogical attributes were clear in the topics presented by professionals. Despite that participants praised attributes like having the translation option, the reading script and its subtitles, 41% was given to the user-friendly attributes. This could be because the reading parts were lengthy. Figure 1 displays that it provides neither feedback nor scores because there were no tests, questions or activities. Researchers advised participants to try the communicative activities. For instance, writing posts to receive and send comments about the text. Users recommended the software as it gave them a chance to practice reading aloud, focusing on intonation and reaching an adequate level of fluency.



*Writing Skills Applications*

Figure 2, represents participants' views of the attributes of Grammarly, PTE, and Andy Applications.

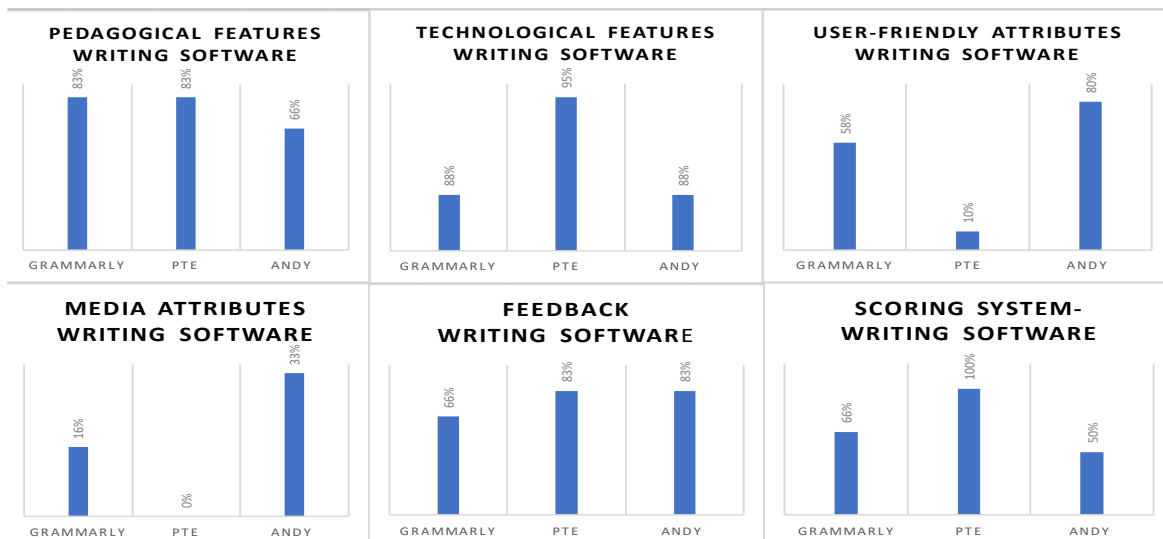


Figure 2: Writing software Analysis

**Grammarly** showed adequate levels in the pedagogical (83%), technological (88%) features which appear on participants' comments that the purpose of using the Application is mainly to check their sentences, paragraphs, and essays. The sample claimed that the Application helped them to edit their writing mechanism, spelling, punctuation marks and developed their ideas by avoiding repetition of words using alternative vocabulary. The individualization attributes appear in feedback and scoring where both received 66%. Feedback is presented in grey and scores to edit spelling, punctuation or fragment sentences. The media attributes received the least 16% because it was not based on media. User-friendly attributes present 58% despite that the application offered help, dictionary, and lists of synonyms. Participants described their experience beneficial as the Application motivated EFL participants and increased their enthusiasm for writing well. It gave them an opportunity to check their assignments and posts on the Internet before submitting them. The technological features allowed users to copy the text they wanted to check from their PCs or import from their documents.

**PTE Application** is designed for learners who want to have standardized test . Participants used it to practice the writing section. Figure 2 displays that it received 83%

on its pedagogical features for topics related to academics. EFL participants praised its technological features as the Application was available and accessible to accomplish the long writing tasks which they described difficult and time-consuming activities. The individualization attributes received 83% feedback and scoring received 100%. Users responded in detailed feedback highlighting their strong and weak points along with a score, which made them do one task many times using correct spelling, punctuation marks, paying attention to ideas to get a higher score. The Application did not support media in the writing section. On the other hand, participants gave 10% for the Application's user-friendly attributes claiming that the exercises are monotonous. Participants suggested setting a pre-test to determine users' level to go through suitable writing exercises.

The third Application was **Andy** which is based on a chat either written or spoken with a robot named 'Andy'. Participants practiced the written chat. The pedagogical features displayed 66%. This can be explained because topics are not fixed, participants wrote about daily, personal, cultural topics. The technological features received 88%. They praised having the freedom to write and communicate with Andy at any time on computers or mobile phones. Andy gives positive feedback on one's writing which encouraged learners to communicate freely using EFL with confidence away from tests. The scoring bar shows 50%. It gave evaluative score after participating in language games where they reviewed vocabulary and grammatical structures. Participants described communicating with the robot was like dealing with a real person without being embarrassed or afraid of mistakes. The Application's user-friendly attributes (80%) made users continue writing even when they are stuck for a meaning. Andy's media attributes bar shows 33%. Users sent and received media about the topic of discussion. The writing results showed that each Application has its features. No Application can be considered the best for writing and this could refer to the difficulty of the skill compared with other language skills.

*Listening Skills Software*

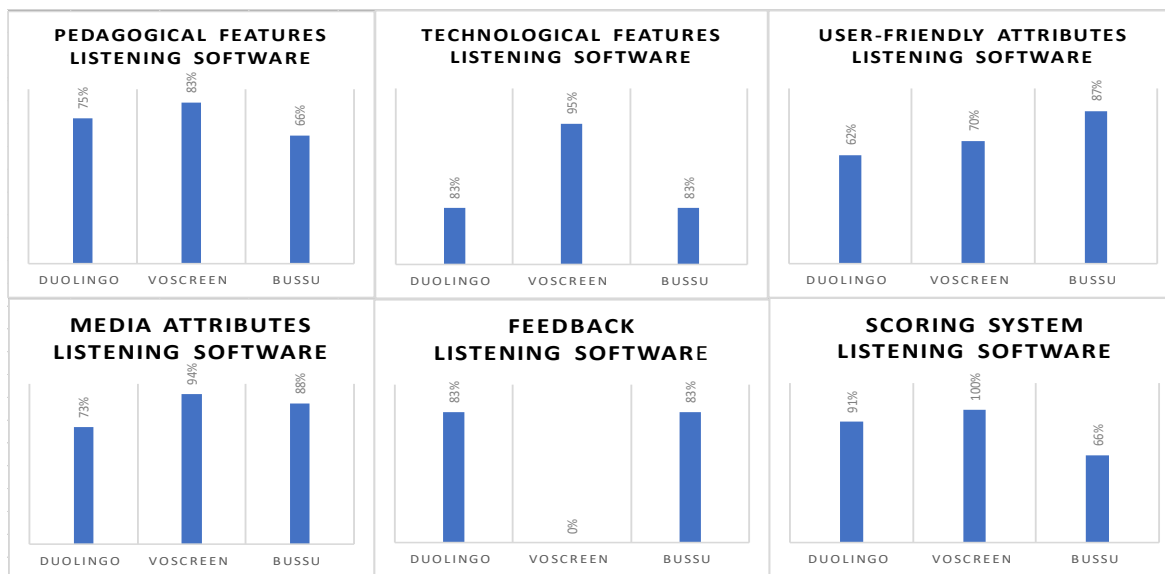


Figure 3: Listening Applications analysis

75% of the respondents strongly liked the pedagogical features .It helped participants to set a plan to achieve their goal of learning EFL. The topics practiced were varied focusing on vocabulary. Figure 3 shows 83 % was given to technological features. Some participants commented on its user-friendly attributes (62%) claiming that Duolingo offers extra practice but the exercises follow the same pattern and require a lot of repetition. This makes the exercises monotonous and the improvement in the tasks slow. On the contrary, participants benefited from the translation feature. The Application’s individualization features display 83% for feedback and 91% for the scoring system. The Application tracks individuals’ progress by keeping answers, recordings, and feedback in their profile. 73% is forApplication’s media attributes. Users found recording their pronunciation helpful to pronounce vowels and consonants clearly with confidence. Participants stated that Duolingo affected both their listening and speaking skills positively.

In figure 3, **Voscreen** Application presents 94% for **media** attributes as it consists of questions about short scenes. 100% for the scoring system where a score comes immediately after each answer. Users’ scores are saved in their profiles. No feedback is given this explains 0% in the feedback bar. TheApplications ’s technological features (95%) allow EFL users to work on their pace by watching the videos many times before

answering. The pedagogical features (83%) appear in the various topics presented that made the learning time a motivating experience to improve listening skills in terms of interpreting the meaning and focusing on intonation. Voscreen's user-friendly attributes 70% gave users an option of reading the transcript, the question, and the choices before answering. There is a timer for each question; this feature encouraged some participants, but it affected others to answer randomly.

**Busuu** reflected a positive impact on EFL participants. Figure 3 shows that its pedagogical features received 66%. The Application offers a language course with lessons based on vocabulary, grammar using interactive exercises about different topics. the individualization features urged users to use Busuu regularly as it sends reminders on one's device to practice language skills offering challenging tasks. 83% was given to feedback while the scoring system received 66%. The sample took a pre-test to determine their levels. Participants praised the technological features (83%) stating that the Application is easy to use, it is well-organized, it presents listening activities followed by different types of comprehension questions. 87% was given to user-friendly attributes. Users who asked for explanations received pictures, audio, text or videos. Media attributes (88%) helped users to view clear videos and sound recordings that created positive remarks throughout their experience.

### *Speaking Skills Applications*

Figure 4 presents the sample's evaluation of Hello Talk, Cambly and ABA English applications. They have used the application focusing on tasks that support speaking skills.

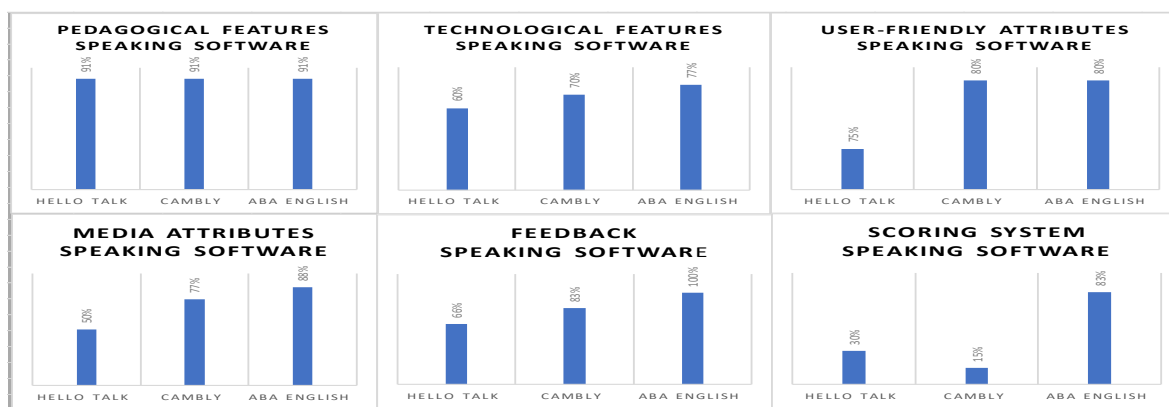


Figure 4: Speaking software analysis

**Hello Talk** displays 91% in the pedagogical features. Participants stated that chatting with native speakers about topics like education, university life, specializations, hobbies, and different cultures added value to their communication skills. Participants recommended having feedback (66%) where the speakers give positive feedback emphasizing on participant's good qualities. 41% describes the scoring system despite that the Application does not include any tests or activities. It is possible that users considered evaluative feedback like a score. The media attributes (50%) appear in shared audios, pictures or videos users sent and received in the conversation. One of the difficulties participants faced was due to the technological features (60%) as it requires a strong Internet connection. The user-friendly attributes 75% gave participants the choice of the speakers by viewing their profiles. Participants communicated individually and created groups to take part in conversations that improved writing, vocabulary, and spelling.

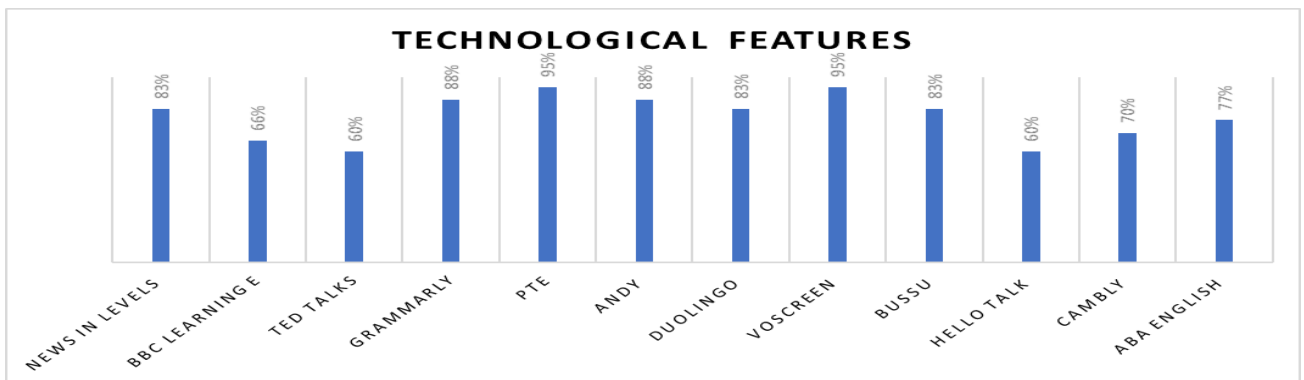
Despite that **Cambly** requires a subscription, limited time is given for free, participants described using it useful. They considered the Application as an opportunity to communicate with professionals. The pedagogical bar shows 91%. Participates talked about college, university life, different cultures, countries, and medical topics. Moreover, Participants liked the technological features of the Application (90%) as they can view speakers who are connected and who are offline. Regarding the scoring system (15%) because the Application has no tests. Cambly gives users positive feedback (83%) that motivated them and nourished their self-confidence. Participants started talking without fear of mistakes and without being embarrassed. The media attributes 77% appear in being able to download the conversation for reviewing purposes. 80% was given to the user- friendly attributes. Participants previewed speakers' CVs, many subscribed to reserve appointments and participate in conversational activities that develop speaking skills.

**ABA English** participants recommended the Application and encouraged colleagues to try it out. Its technological features (77%) allow users to use it smoothly. 80% was given to user-friendly attributes. Learners were guided by tutorials and offered explanations when needed. It has a good scoring system (83%) in the pre-test that determined their levels. The feedback bar shows 100%. It gave continuous detailed

feedback that encouraged participants to take part in many communicative tasks. The pedagogical features received 91%. Each unit begins with a listening part presented in a video of good quality followed by ten questions. The questions move gradually from the easiest to the most complex. The media attributes (88%) motivated Participants to record their voices taking part in role-playing activities to complete the listening audio. They noticed that the Application improved their pronunciation and fluency.

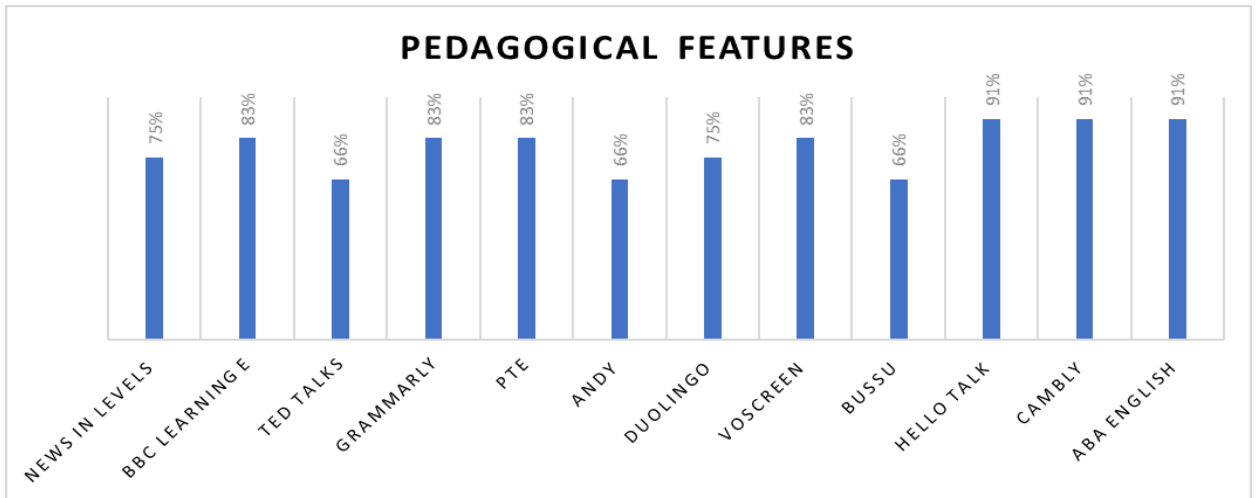
*Feature analysis*

In figures five to nine, applications are compared in terms of the attributes from the perspective of the EFL participants.



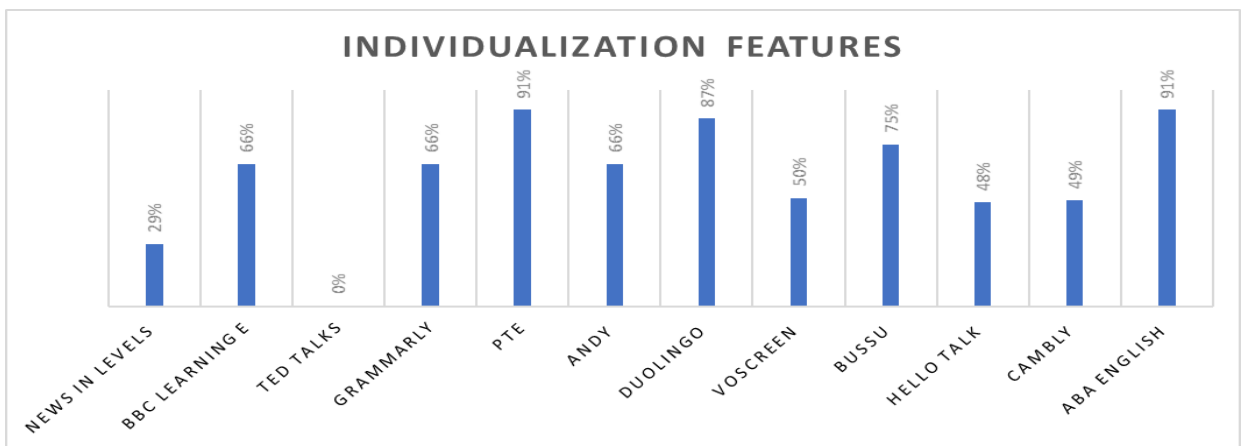
**Figure 5: Technological features analysis**

It was noticed that Applications used simple language to encourage users to utilize technology in language learning and to encourage them to install applications on their devices. PTE Application and Voscreen showed the highest percentage. This refers to the fact that they focused on one specific result at a time. Other applications were also smoothly organized to direct users through the learning time. The least percentage was recorded for o TED TALKS and Hello Talk that are not task-oriented applications.



**Figure 6: Pedagogical features analysis**

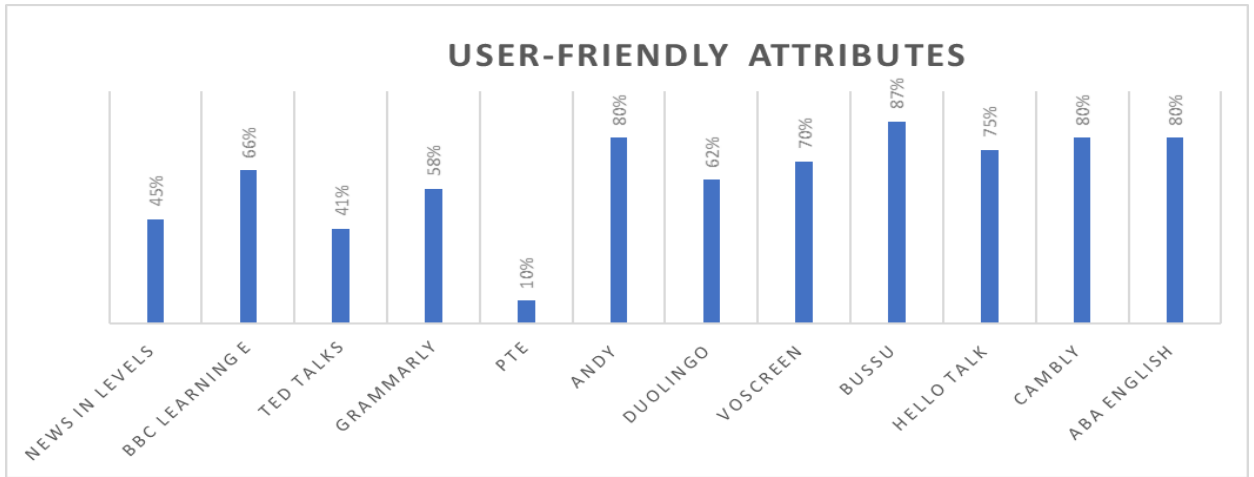
The speaking Applications received the highest percentage. This could be explained because users have the lead to communicate using topics of their interest. The Applications includes cultural content. The reading applications give users a choice of what to read. The writing topics are fixed in Grammarly and PTE applications. Listening applications include authentic materials.



**Figure 7: Individualization features analysis**

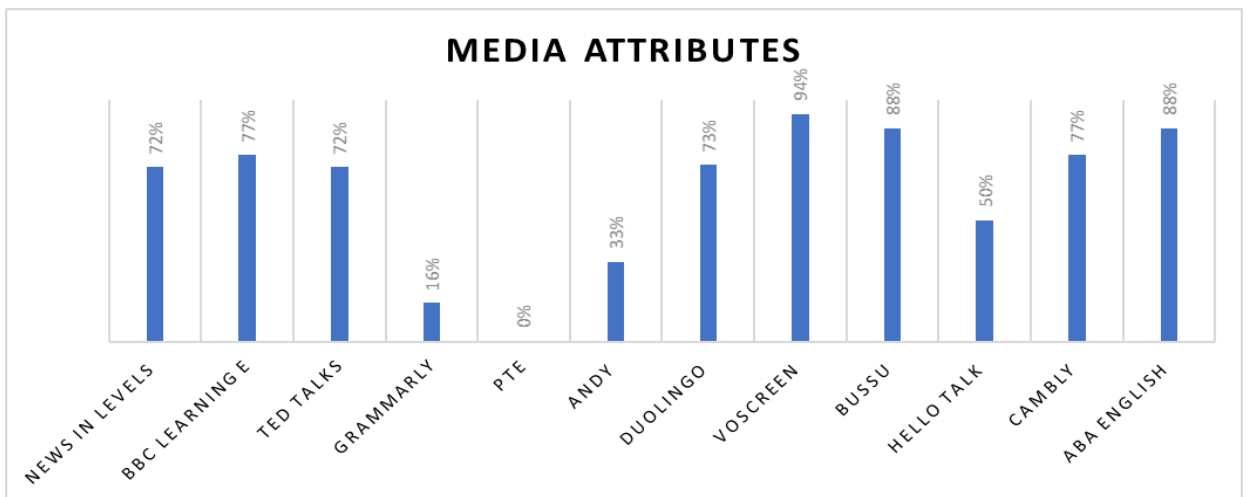
Giving Feedback and scores are calculated to get the individualization features' percentage of the Application. Despite that the two points are different, they complete one another. PTE and ABA English show the highest percentage. Both are task-oriented applications that score answers along with giving detailed feedback for users to redo the

task in a better way. The least was TED TALKS and News in levels where there are no questions to answer. Users have the option of reading and getting involved in discussions either written or spoken.



**Figure 8: User-friendly attributes analysis**

ABA English, Camby, Busuu, Andy got the highest percentage of giving support and guidance. The tutorials in ABA English, the robot in Andy application, the written option in Cambly and the translation features in Busuu. It is noticeable that listening and speaking Applications offer more guidance and practice than writing and reading Applications.



**Figure 9: Media attributes analysis**



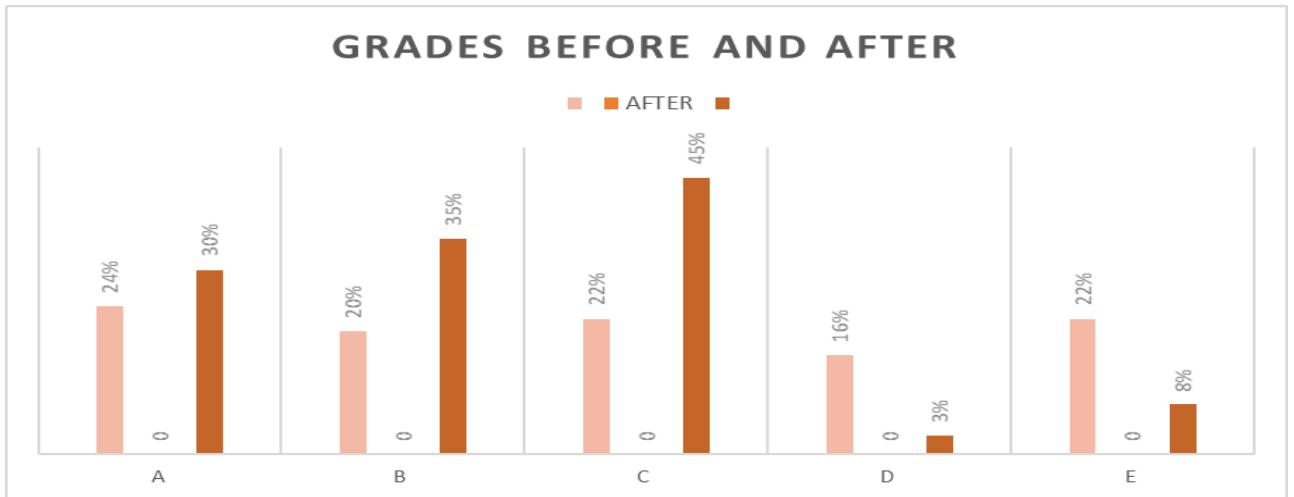
Voscreen received the highest percentage as it is mainly based on media followed by listening questions. The least percentage was given to the writing Applications: PTE, Grammarly and Andy. Despite that Andy allows its users to send and receive pictures, videos, and sound recordings, it received 33%. The examined reading application show adequate percentages of media attributes that help to simplify the reading process and make the reading time more interesting.



**Figure 10: Recommendation analysis**

ABA English, Busuu, BBC English were highly recommended by the participants of the study. These three Applications received the highest percentage 100%. These Applications present integrative tasks where users can move on their pace, do exercises, repeat videos, redo wrong questions without being under the stress of marks or the supervision of teachers. Cambly, Andy, Duolingo, and Grammarly were the second to be recommended because of the benefits one gets from practice. Each has one main purpose. Grammarly checks writing. Cambly and Andy's main purpose is to develop communication skills away from being anxious. Duolingo affected listening and speaking skills positively with a focus on vocabulary which is the interest of EFL learners. TED TALKS, Hello Talk, and Voscreen received the same percentage and were the thirdly recommended. The least preferred was PTE because of the difficulty of writing practices.

To check the efficiency of software on EFL participants. Their grades in the course's exams were compared before and after using the Applications.



**Figure 11: Grades Analysis**

The results showed that about 70% of the students have done better in the exam after applying the study. The researchers explained that after applying the independent learning experience, EFL Learners gained self-confidence and broke the barriers of using the language. About 30% of the students achieved no progress.

## Discussion

From the results obtained, it was evident that using Applications regularly for a specific time provided learners with fruitful language learning settings in the form of multiple tasks, feedback, motivation, and authentic communication. Researchers totally agree with Kreutz and Rhodin (2015) who studied the effect of CALL and reported effective learning. Thus, boosting learner autonomy.

With regard to reading skills, participants found **News in Levels** to be effective as it presented news items categorized in terms of topics and difficulty. Using the Application allowed them to read one news item in three different versions of ranging from beginner to advanced which enriched their vocabulary knowledge. As for **BBC Learning English**, the learners were able to improve their pronunciation and the pace of reading. The quizzes encouraged them to focus on the main ideas, trying to guess the meaning from context. Regular use of Application and the availability of short videos motivated them to practice reading. This is in line with observations of Shu Huang & Renandya. (2020. According to them learners' performance on the tasks in the different

situations showed more effective comprehension and recall while using multimedia due to efficiency of delivery and the effect of the on-line feedback.

From **TED TALKS**, the participants acquired new vocabulary, improved their pronunciation and practiced reading aloud. Moreover, the repetition feature enabled to repeat the video many times. The learners were driven to learn through interesting topics. The researchers observed that the students had enriched their vocabulary, were able to guess meanings of unfamiliar words from the context, developed their schema and improved their reading pace. Thus, the researchers share similar views as discussed by Khoshnoud and Karbalaei (2015); Maryam & Ahmed (2017). The studies concluded that computer-supported glossing formats and a variety of annotations for words through visual media were highly beneficial for the learners.

As for writing skills, the participants found **Grammarly** to be very effective in developing their writing skills. They were able to frame better paragraphs. The feedback proved to be an added advantage for slow and shy learners as the learners received feedback with colored signs. The practice time of **PTE** was described as monotonous because of fixed topics, the nature of the activities required writing a summary or an essay to get a percentage out of one hundred along with feedback on their strengths and weaknesses. The researchers observed that the regular practice helped learners to produce longer texts as opined by Chang & Chan (2019) who stated that students produce longer texts when they are engaged in digital educational environments than texts which are produced by hand.

The most learner-friendly Application for writing skills was **Andy Application** as it created excitement among learners to chat with Andy. It gave them an opportunity to apply more vocabulary and sentence structures in their writings. It also encouraged them to write freely with confidence because there was no scoring system. Thus, the observations of the researchers are in line with the results of Zhang and Hyland (2018). The study proved that using computers in the writing class enhances writing skill and decrease the mistakes of learners.

Participants found **Duolingo** a great help in improving their listening and speaking skills. They found recording their pronunciation helpful without being anxious. Another user-friendly Application was **Voscreen**. Learners enjoyed its learning process as it displayed

short scenes from movies followed by a question. Participants claimed that it improved their ability to interpret authentic texts while paying attention to intonation. In addition, **Busuu** was found to be equally useful and interesting. The researchers agree with observations made by Hava,K. (2019). Favorable attitudes were observed. learners believed they could learn effectively from multimedia and that it delivered a high-quality independent learning experience.

When it comes to speaking skills, the participants were benefitted by **Hello Talk** in terms of vocabulary and pronunciation. Participants found chatting with native speakers fruitful. **Cambly** provided opportunities to the learners to talk about diverse topics, record and download their conversations for further review. Eventually, EFL participants gained exposure and confidence to a great extent. **ABA English** stimulated their learning as they played different roles to complete the listening audio by recording their voices. Thereby, they improved their pronunciation and fluency.

## **Conclusion**

In the fast progressing digital age various innovative technologies are being introduced in educational sectors to provide autonomy to the learners. Therefore, providing a range of Applications with multiple inputs based on the needs of the learners is crucial and involves evaluative skills on the part of the facilitators. By encouraging learners to use language Applications, the facilitators to a great extent reduce language anxiety among EFL learners eventually leading to language development. In this study, participants had the lead to be responsible for their learning time. The group discussions results reflected that they moved at their comfortable pace, skipped difficult tasks, expressed feelings of interest and boredom. Some started using the Applications from beginner level while others from intermediate. Some preferred to take the Applications's pre-test to know their level. This indicates that using Applications increased Learner's autonomy and increased learners' confidence. The researchers concluded that the EFL learners need to determine the language goal, set their own plan, and fix a time to practice a suitable Application that appeals to their learning style. in order to have personal confidence, a sense of independence, autonomy that lead to enhance their language skills.

## Implications of the Research

Despite the positive results of this study, authentic applications need to be carefully chosen to minimize difficulties and to ensure that their content is of general interest. Moreover, due to increase in number of language applications, further research is needed to evaluate their efficiency. In addition There is a need to design and recommend productive applications that enable users to design language interactive activities. The limitation of this study is its small sample size which restricts the generalization of its findings. The results cannot be generalized to EFL settings, due to the fact that the participants were selected from the female section of Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, Alkahrj, KSA. Thus, there is an essential need for further research in this area with wider samples from both genders and in various age groups.

## References

- Abrami, P., Lysenko, L., & Borokhovski, E. (2020). The effects of ABRACADABRA on reading outcomes: An updated meta-analysis and landscape review of applied field research. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*. 1– 20.
- Amin, M., & Ahmad, M. (2017). The Effect of Aural and Visual Storytelling on Vocabulary Retention of Iranian EFL Learners. *English Language Teaching*, 10(4) :92-99.
- Bailey, D. & Lee, A. (2020). An Exploratory Study of Grammarly in the Language Learning Context: An Analysis of Test-Based, Textbook-Based and Facebook Corpora. *TESOL International Journal*.
- Batubara, I. P., & Wariyati. (2018). Role of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) in Developing Public Speaking Skills of Indonesian EFL Learners. *International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies*. 6(4). 149-153.
- Chang, W., & Chan, T. (2019) Improving children's textual cohesion and writing attitude in a game-based writing environment, *Computer Assisted Language Learning*,
- Edgar, E. (2017). *Computer Assisted Language Teaching: Learning without Dust*. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329554745\\_Eslit\\_dissertation\\_2017](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329554745_Eslit_dissertation_2017).
- Hava, K. (2019). Exploring the role of digital storytelling in student motivation and satisfaction in EFL education, *Computer Assisted Language Learning*.

- Huang,S.,Renandya,W. (2020) Exploring the integration of automated feedback among lower-proficiency EFL learners. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching* 14:1, pages 15-26.
- Ibrahim,M.G.(2013). *The Effect of Using Facebook on Improving Students' Writing Skills in English*. Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Al-Najah National University, Palestine.
- Jaime ,J., Ruiz,R.,Calero,J& Gutiérrez,R. (2020) The effect of personalized feedback on listening and reading skills in the learning of EFL. *Computer Assisted Language Learning* , 1-23.
- Khoshnoud, K., & Karbalaeei, A. R. (2015). The Effect of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) program on learning vocabulary among EFL left and right hemispheric dominant learners. *European Online Journal of Natural and Social Sciences*, 4(4), 761–777.
- Kim,H.(2015). Using Authentic Videos to Improve EFL Students' Listening Comprehension. *International Journal of Contents*. 11. 15-24.
- Mohammed,H. (2018). Challenges of Learning English as a Foreign language (EFL) by Non-native Learners. *International Journal of Social Science and Economic Research*.3(4).
- Nadhim,H.(2017). Arab Learners' Problems in Learning English Language: A Teacher Perspective. *Asian Journal of Social Science*.
- Pey,K.C.,Min,L.H., & Wah, L. L. (2014). Relationship between oral reading fluency and reading comprehension among ESL students. *Journal of Language Studies*,14(3): 9-13.
- Rhodin,N., & Kreutz, J. (2016). Degree Project in English and Learning the influence of ICT on learners' motivation towards learning English. *CALL-EJL*.
- Rintaningrum. R. (2018). Investigating Reasons Why Listening in English is Difficult: Voice from Foreign Language Learners. *Asian EFL Journal* 20(11):06-15.
- Sarré,C., Grosbois, M. & Brudermann,C. (2019) Fostering accuracy in L2 writing: impact of different types of corrective feedback in an experimental blended learning EFL course. *Computer Assisted Language Learning* , 1-23.

- Schechter, R., Macaruso, P., Kazakoff, E. R., & Brooke, E. (2015). Exploration of a blended learning approach to reading instruction for low SES students in early elementary grades. *Computers in the Schools*, 32: 183-200.
- Sydorenko, T., Smits, H., Evanini, K. & Ramanarayanan, V. (2019) Simulated speaking environments for language learning: insights from three cases, *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 32: 17-48.
- Tangpermpoon, T. (2008). Integrated approaches to improve students writing skills for English major students. *ABAC Journal*, 28(2): 1-9.
- Ter Beek, M., Brummer, L., Donker, S. & Opdenakker, M. (2018). Supporting secondary school students' reading comprehension in computer environments: A systematic review. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*. 34: 557– 566.
- Thomas, M. and Janosy, R. (2020). Self-Taught Language Learners in China and Their Learning Strategies: A Multiple, Instrumental Case Study of Approaches in Contextual Situations. *Asian EFL Journal*.
- Thye, G., Sun, H. & Yang, B. (2019) Microfeatures influencing writing quality: the case of Chinese students' SAT essays. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, pages 1-27.
- Wang, H.Y., Lin, V., Hwang, G-J. & Liu, G.Z. (2019). Context-aware language-learning application in the green technology building: Which group can benefit the most?. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*. 35. 359– 377.
- Xu, Z., Banerjee, M., Ramirez, G., Zhu, G. & Wijekumar, K. (2019). The effectiveness of educational technology applications on adult English language learners' writing quality: a meta-analysis, *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 32:1-2,
- Yan Ding & Huizhong Shen (2019) Delving into learner autonomy in an EFL MOOC in China: a case study, *Computer Assisted Language Learning*.
- Zaini, A., & Mazdayasna, G. (2015). The impact of computer-based instruction on the development of EFL learners' writing skills. *Journal of Computer Assisted Learning*, 31. 516– 528.
- Zhang, Z. V. & Hyland, K. (2018). Student engagement with teacher and automated feedback on L2 writing. *Assessing Writing*, 36, 90–102.

Zhe,Z.(2017).Student engagement with computer-generated feedback: a case study, *ELT Journal*, 71(3), 317–328.