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## **Blackboard: Enhancing Language Proficiency of EFL Learners**

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### **Abstract**

The show must go on. Though the integration of technology in the learning process has been on the rise over the last decade, COVID-19 has made a dependency on technology inevitable as educational settings change from in-person instructions to virtual instructions. Due to sudden challenging demands, the virus factor should not be considered a hindrance to the teaching /learning process. COVID-19 provides an opportunity to rethink transforming the conventional mode of teaching /learning. Thus, the critical challenge in this 'new era' is to evolve new pedagogical approaches that promote active learning. The research aims to explore the effectiveness of integrative features of Blackboard (Learning Management System) in the language learning of EFL learners. It is an empirical study, adopting a mixed approach. The sample of the study consists of 243 female students from Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University from the Department of English. An online questionnaire was distributed comprising sixteen questions categorized to measure five factors needed to use learning management systems effectively: literacy, learners' enthusiasm, learners' beliefs, tools, and, the challenges. In addition, data was collected from the instructors of the language skills courses to find out how Blackboard helped them in delivering the content and developing the skills of English as a Foreign Language learners. The results of the study indicate improvement in the performance of students and an increase in their level of interaction.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, divergent approaches, EFL, pedagogy, language learning, remote learning .

### **Introduction**

EFL students across the globe face many learning challenges. Since they start studying English as a Foreign Language at a later stage, a good number of them do not have adequate language proficiency skills. As a result, they struggle to improve their language skills. Motivation both intrinsic as well as extrinsic play a very significant role in the learning process. It has also been observed that due to a lack of confidence, they easily get distracted. As a result, some learners need a push from the teachers. However, the closure of educational institutions due to COVID-19 has aggravated the problems of English as a Foreign Language teachers and learners. COVID-19 has brought about significant changes in the attitudes and, perceptions of English as a Foreign Language learners. Academic challenges combined with psychological and, emotional challenges harm learners thus, increasing passiveness and anxiety. The learners who looked up to the teacher for comfort and,

acknowledgment of their efforts with a pleasant smile and a gentle pat, miss the emotional gestures of their teachers. Thus, a shift in place and affective filters getting lowered have thrown challenges before the teachers, making them rethink their teaching approaches. Therefore, it is imperative to discuss theories that support active learning.

### **Theoretical Background**

Shifting from in-person to remote learning opened up new opportunities to make English language learning process more interesting with a variety of tools to choose from. The advent of learning management systems like Blackboard (a type of software application useful for the delivery of educational courses and, training programs have paved the way for innovative teaching and learning methods. The conventional classroom boards have been replaced by white interactive boards to reinforce concepts with diagrams and illustrations. The concept of e-learning or electronic learning draws the idea of learner involvement from the theories discussed below:

The theory of constructivism introduced by Jean Piaget (1957) is also termed Cognitive Constructivism. It promotes active learning as it revolves around student-centered learning. The theory gives a lot of importance to previous knowledge or schemata to create something new. Hence, each learner based on his previous knowledge and experiences creates something unique when compared to his peers. The theory stresses learning as an active process. Real learning will take place when the learner participates and contributes. Mere listening to the lecture is a passive activity and will not be beneficial. Therefore, they need to engage themselves in discussions, activities, etc. The theory also stresses learning as a social activity. This means People around the learners have an impact on their learning. This suggests that group activities or peer learning can enhance learning. Conversations and interactions with group activities can be beneficial in retaining the information for a longer time. In addition, the theory gives a lot of importance to motivation. Teachers have to come up with innovative ways to engage the learners and keep them intrinsically and extrinsically motivated.

Collaborative learning Theory has been introduced by Vygotsky (1978). This theory is also called Social constructivism. It gained prominence in the twentieth century and research shows that the rate of learning and retaining was faster and longer among learners working in pairs and groups. According to Collaborative learning theory, community plays a central role, and the people around the student greatly affect the way he or she sees the world. The Zone of Proximal Development is based on the application of problem-solving skills at an individual level and in a pair or group. Therefore, it encourages active learning through discussions, debates, interactive instructional strategies, and individual learning projects.

Based on both the theories discussed above, Constructivist classrooms rely on four key areas to be successful: Shared knowledge between teachers and students, shared authority between teachers and students, teachers acting as a guide or facilitators, and learning groups consisting of small numbers of students.

Another theory based on similar principles is the "Community of Inquiry" (CoI). This concept was introduced by early pragmatist philosophers C.S. Peirce & John Dewey. It promotes teamwork and emotional connectivity among learners as learners support each other due to their collective

identity.

It also states that learners improve and are determined to give their best as healthy competition prevails among them. Also, appreciation and acknowledgment by peers could be a great source of extrinsic motivation thus, resulting in team spirit and strong interpersonal skills: necessities of the job market. This theory has been widely accepted and Garrison et.al.(2000) state that there is a relationship between the three presences and students' perceived learning, satisfaction with the course, satisfaction with the instructor, actual learning, and sense of belonging. Huang et al. (2020) state that to make the community of inquiry an effective learning process, teachers can introduce ice-breakers, and learners should be made to share anecdotes, and experiences on discussion boards. Collaborative activities could include projects, Discussions on case studies to come up with solutions, open-ended questions, introducing self-assessment activities, and providing audio and video feedback.

A byproduct of Collaborative learning theory is Problem-based learning (PBL). It promotes active learning through engagement in real-world and meaningful projects. It focuses on the demonstration of knowledge and skills by solving a real-world problem or answering a complex question. It encourages critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication skills: the most desired 21st century skills. According to (Duch et al.(2001) to make Problem based learning an effective learning process the teachers should take into consideration some factors while selecting problems for instance: The problem should sound interesting and motivate students to analyze., it should be closer to real-life situations so that the learners come up with authentic solutions and should be in a position to justify, it has been based on what they have learned before so that they can think logically and co-relate and to give the learners a direction to think a few open-ended questions should be asked.

Online Collaborative Learning Theory introduced (Harasim, 2012) is a concurrence of both constructivist approaches to learning and the development of the Internet. The theory is based on the concept that discussion is central to learning, and textbooks and other materials are supplementary. Students are encouraged to collaboratively solve problems through brainstorming. It supports student-centered learning and the development of high-level skills such as critical thinking, analytical thinking, synthesis, and evaluation. Harasim states that the construction of knowledge takes place in three phases: a) Idea generating: the brainstorming phase, where divergent thoughts are gathered b) Idea organizing: the phase where ideas are compared, analyzed, and categorized through discussion and argument and c) Intellectual convergence: the phase where intellectual synthesis and consensus occurs, including agreeing to disagree, usually through an assignment, essay, or other joint pieces of work. Since OCL focuses on conversational learning, it encourages online discussion forums as they have a few advantages, for instance, they are asynchronous and learners can log in anytime. Moreover, the provision of threaded connections enables the learners to follow multiple discussion topics.

All the theories discussed above are student-centered and promote active learning. The theories imply that the learner's initiative and self-determination should not be hindered by the limitations of teaching approaches. Teachers should strive to provide suitable platforms to bring out hidden creativity, knowledge development, and confidence to perform assigned tasks.

A sudden shift from in-person to virtual instructions has led to crisis management. The majority of the teaching fraternity is not prepared for the quick transition. They lack higher levels of technological competency as they never conducted online sessions. Teachers especially teaching English as a foreign language, when compared to ESL or Natives find it more challenging as student motivation and content designing and presentation have to undergo drastic change. Though many face-to-face contact modes could be adapted in the online context, yet "one size fits all approach" cannot be standardized in online learning setups. In addition, "dumping large amounts of text onto a website" cannot be the solution Islam et.al. (2015). Hence, the need of the hour is to evolve new pedagogical approaches with a range of structured options to engage EFL learners and provide suitable platforms for interaction, collaboration, and participation. In lieu of the new challenges, this paper identifies the problematic areas and offers pedagogical strategies to engage the learners in active learning. The study sets around the following research questions:

1-How does Blackboard support active language learning?

2- How can Blackboard be used in evolving Pedagogies ?

### **Literature Review**

The sudden shift from face-to-face to online sessions has a significant impact on the facilitators. There has been confusion about using different online tools as most of the teachers are not trained enough to handle online sessions. The confusion is marked by psychological stress and anxiety. Kamenetz (2020) in the study based on the experience of the Faculty of Education at the University of Colorado, calls their teaching "Panic-gogy" a combination of teachers' state of mind and the process itself. As most of the teachers lack higher technological skills it is hard to adapt easily. This state has been summarized by Collie et al. (2020) as a situation wherein teachers are thrown into "uncharted territory". The transition is sudden and the institutions are forced to shift to virtual sessions without prior training and strategies to be followed. The teachers struggle for the first couple of weeks as they are ill-equipped and lack confidence and motivation Mailizaret. et al. (2020) state that teachers struggle to acclimate to the new online platforms. Moreover, Lynch, Turner, et al., (2020) state that it has become essential to develop teachers' sense of online competence and confidence, as a core skill set for teaching and learning in the ongoing, and even post-COVID-19, world of education. Thus, teachers' readiness is a matter of great concern. Another crucial factor that requires consideration is pedagogy. Alaghbary (2021) states that Online learning has necessitated a digital update of Benjamin Bloom's original taxonomy of educational objectives (1956) and Anderson and Krathwohl's revised taxonomy (2001) thus emphasizing project-based learning to facilitate the acquisition of specialized content and skills. Orlando and Attard (2015) stated that a shift in pedagogy is inevitable as a "one size fits all approach" will not work out in online sessions. Al-khresheh (2021) suggested focusing on a special skill set which includes presuming, planning, preparing, and performing to reconceptualize teaching methods to sustain effective EFL teaching. The need of the hour for the teachers is to find creative and innovative approaches thus, demonstrating adaptability and flexibility in the contents and design of the courses. Today, there is a need to be more flexible and develop more didactic and structured content, and adopt a modular teaching method. In lieu of the changing demands of Remote teaching, the UNESCO Director-General has very aptly stated that this is a "new era" of teaching/ learning. Altameemy & Alrefaee(2021) suggest that though English language teaching underwent an



abrupt change due to the pandemic if necessary changes are made to the curriculum, students' performance evaluation, and pedagogy, the online learning of the English Language will be successful. (Zain et al., 2020) developed a module by integrating 21st-century skills into the core of learning and teaching and found that both students and teachers benefited from such a meaningful match in the 21st-century learning era. The inclusion of 21st-century skills into the curricula is supported by (Drake and Reid, 2018). In addition, Kristianto (2020) employed a project-based teaching model and found that students could sharpen their 21st-century skills: creativity & innovation, critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and collaboration apart from reading and speaking skills. (Torun; Stevani and Putro., 2020) emphasize collaborative learning and the incorporation of digital tools.

Though resolving academic challenges is given top priority, the facilitators cannot ignore the lowering of affective filters of the learners in this gloomy phase. It is being observed that virtual sessions are negatively affecting not only academic growth but also, mental state (Fordjour et al., 2020). The physical isolation has proved to be distressing, resulting in anxiety. A study conducted in Greece by (Karalis and Raikou.,2020); McCoole et al.; Kedraka and Kaltsidis., 2020) found that the whole process of remote teaching had an overall significant negative effect on students' motivation and emotions. Similar observations have been made by (Meo et al.; Charles et al.,2020). The participants were unhappy and unsatisfied; instead, shocked by the quick closure of educational institutions). On the other hand, a study by (Rorlinda. et.al., 2022) measured the effectiveness of online learning based on four learning areas: learning facilities, assignments, motivation, and computer skills. The results indicate that online distance learning is moderately successful. In addition, it also showed that urban students showed a greater potential for online distance learning than rural students. Research suggests that motivation among EFL learners in today's scenario is crucial. First, acquiring language skills is a major challenge and the shift in place has aggravated the situation. Moreover, managing the virtual sessions became challenging. Dealing with students' misbehaviors, was difficult particularly when students were late to enter the program or forgot to enter. (Mailizar et al., 2020).

Just as the teachers take time to adapt to new ways of teaching, so is the case with students. Hence, another challenge for the teachers is to compensate for the lack of physical presence and set up a virtual environment where all learners are made to feel comfortable and motivated. Studies indicate that students are uncomfortable and distressed by online learning strategies Al-(Tammemi et al., 2020). In addition, the facilitators have to persuade the learners to take up the responsibility of their learning more seriously and get them accustomed to the 'new situation'. It has been observed that due to reduced instruction time and limited opportunities for personalized interaction, there has been learning loss or COVID-19 slide. (Kuhfeld and Tarasawa.,2020). At times, teachers find it difficult to make the learning process effective due to timely disruptions and have a hard time retaining the focus of the learners. However, some facilitators consider online teaching to be daunting, others are taking it in their stride. They consider the shift to be a blessing in disguise. The shift is proving advantageous for independent learners who are getting opportunities to personalize their learning. (Redmond et al., 2018 ). Online sessions provide independent and self-directed learners to take control over their learning and understand what they want to learn, what they like, and what kind of support they need. Herold (2017). Educationists consider the shift from traditional to Virtual

sessions to be beneficial in terms of attaining and becoming proficient in 21st-century skills i.e. communication, collaboration, critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity Riegel et.al.(2016). However, the biggest challenge for the facilitators during the pandemic is online Assessment. Replacing traditional exams with online assessment tools requires awareness and a lot of preparation. Burgess and Sievertsen ( 2020) state that Internal assessments are perhaps thought to be less important and many have been simply canceled. Most of the facilitators fear inflation in grades. They feel it is better to call it an open-book exam. The syllabus had to be curtailed to some extent and the range of testing has to be minimized in place of internet connectivity issues, and scope to copy. As a result, many institutions have decided to change their assessment scales from quantitative to qualitative such as the pass-or-fail system Farrington( 2020). Within the argument favoring quantitative over qualitative, Dilanchyan (2020) critiqued that such change would detach the motivation that students need to strive for high grades. One potential alternative for the canceled assessments is to use 'predicted grades', but (Murphy and Wyness., 2020) show that these are often inaccurate. This is a new area for both teachers and students, and assessments will likely have larger measurement errors than usual. (Piopiunik et al. ,2020). From the research cited above, it is evident that the transition from face-to-face to virtual sessions has many issues that have to be attended to at the earliest as Online learning may stay for a time still not known.

### **Method**

The research aims to explore the effectiveness of integrative features of Blackboard (LMS) in the evolving Pedagogies. The sample of the study consists of 243 female students from Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University from the Department of English in the second semester of 2019-2020. It is an empirical study, adopting a mixed approach.

### **Instruments**

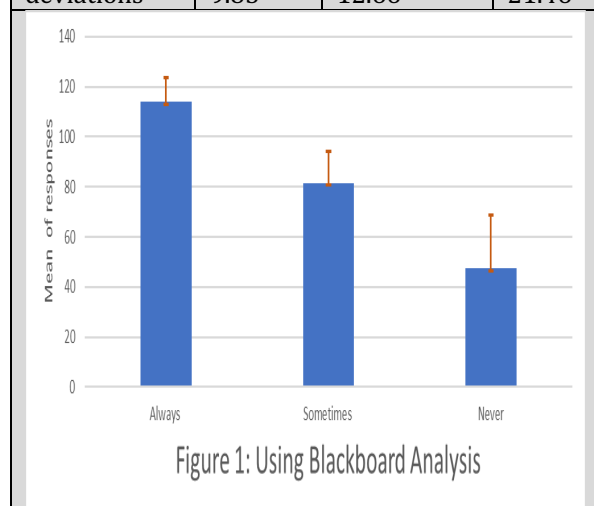
An online questionnaire was distributed comprising of sixteen questions categorized to measure five factors needed to use learning management systems effectively: literacy, learners' enthusiasm, learners' beliefs, Tools and, the challenges. In addition, data was collected from the instructors of the language skills courses to find out how Blackboard helped them in delivering the content and developing the skills of EFL learners.

### **Results**

The tables and figures on the next page illustrate the questionnaire responses that have been manually analyzed to find results.

**Table1: Using LMS (Blackboard)**

Statements	Always	Sometimes	Never
1. Have interactive sessions in your courses.	122	84	37
2. Having adequate knowledge about using Blackboard.	117	93	33
3. It is easy to attend online sessions using Blackboard.	103	68	72
Mean	114.00	81.67	47.33
Standard deviations	9.85	12.66	21.46

**Table1: Using LMS(Blackboard) Analysis**

From Figure 1, the overall result reflects that 47% of the students use Blackboard regularly and can attend online sessions easily. 19% do not use Blackboard because of a lack of knowledge about it, and because they don't have the chance to attend interactive sessions in their courses. 30% of the sample claimed that they feel it is not easy to get access to online courses.

**Table 2: Learners' Enthusiasm**

Statements	Always	Sometimes	Never
4. Being motivated to use Blackboard.	103	84	56
5. Have more training sessions about using Blackboard.	88	66	89
Mean	95.5	75	72.5
Standard deviations	10.61	12.73	23.33

Figure 2: Learners' Enthusiasm Analysis

Table 2: Learners' Enthusiasm

Table 2 reveals students' enthusiasm toward using Blackboard and whether they are urged to learn more about how to use it efficiently. The results are close to one another 42% claimed to be motivated and 36% want to learn more about Blackboard. However, 23% showed no interest in using Blackboard, and 37% claimed that they didn't want to take training courses to enhance their knowledge about Blackboard. 31% of the sample were neutral.

Questions six and seven reflect students' opinions and if students consider Blackboard effective in improving their language skills.

**Table 3: LMS (Blackboard) Effectiveness**

Statements	Always	Sometimes	Never
6. Using Blackboard affects your language proficiency.	71	101	71

7. Attending online sessions more than regular lectures in college.	78	64	101
Mean	74.5	82.5	86
Standard deviations	4.95	26.16	21.21

Figure 3: Blackboard Effectiveness Analysis

Table 3: LMS( Blackboard) Effectiveness

In the above table, the results reveal that there is no big difference in students' perceptions to take online sessions or attend traditional lectures. The results are equal 29% claimed that it improves their language proficiency, and 29% responded that it didn't affect it. 42% of the sample was neutral being unable to decide or showing that there is no difference. On the other hand, 32% expressed that they tend to attend online sessions more than college lectures. 42% attend traditional ones more than online sessions.

**Table 4: Tool Analysis**

In the above table, the results reveal that there is no big difference in students' perceptions of taking online sessions or attending traditional lectures. The results are equal 29% claimed that it improves their language proficiency, and 29% responded that it didn't affect it. 42% of the sample was neutral being unable to decide or show that there is no difference. On the other hand, 32% expressed that they tend to attend online sessions more than college lectures. 42% attend traditional ones more than online sessions.

Statements	Always	Sometimes	Never
8. Reading announcements instructors send on Blackboard.	129	63	51
9. Taking online tests.	85	28	130

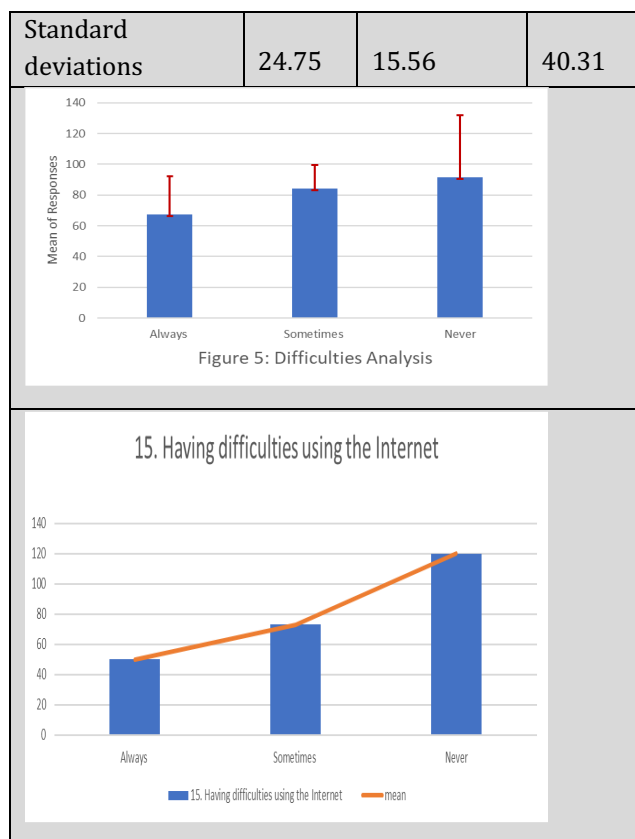
10. Using Blackboard to submit assignments.	169	43	31
11. Using Blackboard to download recorded lectures.	78	47	118
12. Instructors use the whiteboard to explain and draw figures.	112	66	65
13. Instructors chat privately to clarify doubts.	59	70	114
Mean	105.33	52.83	84.83
Standard deviations	39.91	16.24	41.05

Table 4: Tools

Questions eight to thirteen are about using six facilities provided by the Blackboard system, which are reading announcements, having online tests, submitting assignments, downloading lectures, using the whiteboard option to get things explained to them, and chatting with instructors privately if they have questions. Reading the results in Table 4 above reflects that the most used feature is submitting assignments with a percentage of 70%, despite that 13% of the sample didn't submit assignments this could refer to the reason for the lack of knowledge about Bb. The second common use of Blackboard is reading announcements 53%. However, 26% of the sample claimed that they sometimes read them, and 21% didn't read the sent announcement. The third commonly used feature appears in the 46% who use the whiteboard in online sessions. 53% of the students and 49% of the students stated that they have never taken online tests and they have never downloaded recorded lectures this could refer to having no chances presented by their instructors to make use of these two features. The least used feature of Blackboard evaluated was chatting privately with instructors for more clarifications receiving 24%. By calculating the average of using the features of the Bb we get to have a similar result that proves that around 33% of the students are using Bb effectively as an aid to the learning processes.

**Table 5: Learning Challenges**

Statement	Always	Sometimes	Never
14. Have difficulties using Blackboard?	85	95	63
15. Having difficulties using the Internet	50	73	120
Mean	67.5	84	91.5



### **Table 6: Technical Challenges**

Questions fourteen and fifteen are about the learning and technical challenges of using Blackboard as an alternative teaching method for Blended Learning. The results of question fourteen revealed that 35% of students always have difficulties using Blackboard at the time of learning. 39% of the sample sometimes faced difficulties when learning online. Only 26% of the students did not have difficulties. Though Blackboard is considered to value-add to the e-learning system in terms of saving time, effort, and money, students found the learning process to be challenging as it was overloaded with content and consumed a lot of time for answering essay questions. Most of the learners did not comprehend the information provided by the instructor as the sessions were purely audio. The assignments could not be submitted after the deadline. The discussion boards were not very beneficial as a good number of students did not know how to create threads.

The assignment submission process was also not much appreciated by the students and they preferred to submit the assignments through WhatsApp groups. Other issues included: difficulty in finding assignments and downloading lectures. A few learners faced difficulties due to a lack of knowledge and proper training about accessing the system.

The results of question fifteen about the technical challenges showed that 20% of the learners always face network issues. 30% of the learners had connectivity issues at times and, 43% did not have any network issues. The sample of the study mentioned several difficulties related to technical issues due to server overload caused by heavy user traffic between 8:00 am through 2:00 pm, such as poor and

slow connection, and frequent logout of sessions. Additional technical challenges are the quality of the online session where slides are not clear, not able to see the whiteboard, and the poor voice quality. In addition, the continuous interruptions and upgrading issues made students' access to Blackboard limited. Financial issues include the cost of the Internet and the need for well-developed devices with high storage systems to use the features smoothly. One of the issues raised is that it takes a lot of time and effort to be able to join a session. Thus, due to pedagogical and organizational limitations, 74% of the learners faced two types of challenges: learning and technical.

To observe the effects of using the Blackboard system on the development of students' language skills. The grades of first-year students were compared in the skills courses in term one where regular classes were applied and in term two where virtual classes were conducted and students were assessed online.

**Figure 1: Language skills grades. First-year students - Terms 1&2 /2020**





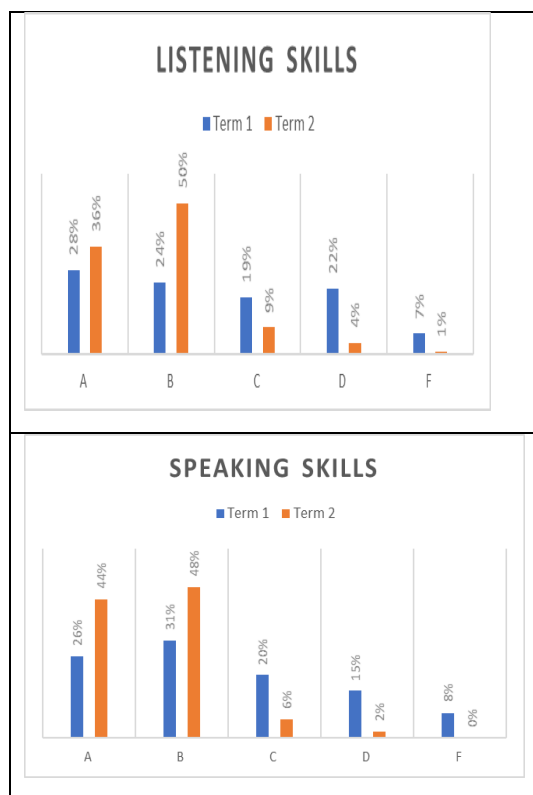


Figure one shows a comparison between the performance of the students in terms one and two: 'A' stands for excellent performance, 'B' for very good, 'C' for 'good', 'D' for satisfactory, and 'F' for Fail.

The blue graphs indicate the regular sessions in –person in term one and the red represents the online sessions in term two. The results indicate an improvement in the results which affected students positively. The reasons for this increase are: that the level of anxiety was lower when reading comprehension passages, writing an essay, listening to lectures, and presenting a presentation. Another reason is working in a more comfortable atmosphere away from the pressure of college, instructors, and colleagues. Having more tasks to perform regularly helped them to concentrate more and get extra language practice. Students participated in discussion platforms, wrote journals, and submitted assignments via Blackboard which developed their language skills. Having sufficient time to do an activity was another advantage as students rehearsed, reviewed, and edited their work before submission.

Having virtual classes also developed students' communication skills using the English language to ask and answer questions, comment on their peers' work, negotiate their points of view, and even organize their ideas in advance. To sum up, having online courses gave students the lead to control their learning which affected their self-esteem that they can learn English smoothly with guided practices to achieve better results.

### Discussion

The results of the current study displayed that there is a shift towards e-learning in PSAU. There is an increase in the use of the Blackboard system for teaching-learning in terms of presenting content,

collaboration, and assessment. The effective utilization of the Blackboard learning system depends on user readiness and sufficient knowledge. In the study, the majority of the sample obtains minimum knowledge about Blackboard that allows them to connect easily to online sessions that are applied in the department. However, it is noticed that students who interact via Blackboard tend to use it more often than those who don't.

The results showed that students preferred hands-on experience and showed a tendency to be trained to use it efficiently. Thus, training is an important factor to facilitate maximum utilization of Blackboard which is reflected in the gained knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward blended education. Also, training serves to implement educational technology.

The results of using Bb's features showed that students accessed this virtual learning environment to interact with their instructors using synchronous communication through online sessions, using the features of the whiteboard, having a conversation, sharing files, and participating in discussion boards. Moreover, in asynchronous communications using the university mail to receive announcements and send assignments. This reflects that students found using the LMS (Blackboard) to be essential, useful, and effective.

The research's results also shed light on some difficulties that prevent them from efficiently using the system as Students can't always use the Blackboard Collaborate due to bad access to the net. Difficulties related to cultural and financial issues students may encounter due to the use of technology go with the suggestion of Lee, Y. and Choi, Y. (2011) that environmental factors such as non-availability of financial and social support from family and friends cause difficulties to student utilization of online courses. Other barriers students claimed to have are their lack of knowledge about Blackboard and insufficient experience with online learning. The findings of the research also found the Blackboard system time and effort-consuming.

The findings showed that students are satisfied with using LMS (Blackboard Collaborate) and Blended Learning as it is helpful to them, they can access, and download lectures and learning materials any time they want, and they feel confident, and confidential by having their exam results individually, moreover, they can learn according to their learning styles, however, absence of aspects such as training, financial, and technical support are factors that limit the use of e-learning technology.

Results showed that there is a significant difference in using the Blackboard Collaborate for Blended Learning as there was a noticeable increase in students' grades in language skills courses.

We cannot deny that face-to-face lectures have their advantages but also, we can't deny that the Blackboard learning environment assists students to be able to communicate, interact, to be assessed. Accessing Blackboard at any time, anywhere using different learning tools was also found to be highly significant to students.

### ***Conclusion***

To conclude, students in PSAU Students and teachers access virtual learning environment together to make effective interactions with one another using synchronous situations through online

sessions, using the features of the whiteboard, having a conversation, sharing files, and participating in discussion boards. Moreover, having asynchronous situations using the university mail to receive announcements and send assignments. Blackboard is one of the tools that facilitate e-learning. The adoption of Blackboard has revolutionized the traditional teaching system, resulting in effective usage of Blackboard Collaborate for Blended Learning to learn according to their understanding level, learning style, and time which was an aid to feel independent despite the barriers that hinder its application. Blended Learning is one of the most modern types of education that combines old and new in one frame of work, preserves traditional methods, and makes use of technological invention to get students who have already become addicted to digital media in their social lives. Further studies are suggested to study the topic from the teaching staff's perspective: faculty's attitudes toward using the Blackboard system in blended classrooms and its effect on students' performance. The role of this Learning management system in developing students' study skills and language proficiency is also recommended for further studies.

### **Recommendations**

Blackboard as a learning management system could be used as a tool for communication through emails, announcements, discussion boards, podcasts, etc. Instructors should adopt constructivist pedagogy that promotes learner autonomy and keeps the learners extrinsically motivated. Instructors should design personalized learner-focused content and activities.

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## Alternative Assessments: Perspectives of Saudi EFL Learners at College Level

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### Abstract

Recently, calls for adopting different forms of assessments in EFL classes (English as a foreign language) other than standardized traditional exams have increased noticeably. This study examined the use of alternative assessments in EFL classes from the perspectives of Saudi EFL learners. The participants were 11 college-level male and female Saudi students attending a large public university in the west of Saudi Arabia. Qualitative research methods were employed to investigate the participants' perspectives and experiences in relation to the use of alternative assessments in their college-level English courses, in addition to the impact of such assessments on the participants' language learning and enhancement. Data were collected via a short questionnaire along with three different types of interviews: one-on-one, focus group, and follow-up. The findings showed that the participants experienced a variety of alternative assessment forms in their English courses at college. They appreciated the use of alternative assessments to assess their English language performance. They also found alternative assessments to be more helpful and rewarding compared to traditional exams. Overall, the participants had positive attitudes towards the use of alternative assessments, which contributed to enhancing their English language learning and performance. Pedagogical implications to inspire effective use of alternative assessments in assessing EFL learners were elicited accordingly.

**Keywords:** English as a foreign language (EFL), alternative assessments, language assessment, Saudi EFL learners.

### Introduction

Assessing the performance of language learners in formal learning settings is an integral part of the process of learning a language. It is a systematic process that aims to collect information about learners' knowledge and competencies with respect to language for the purpose of modifying teaching methods and enhancing learning outcomes (Richard & Schmidt, 2010; Shohamy, 1997). This process also helps to identify learners' strengths, weaknesses, and needs in order to provide them with proper assistance (Alhareth & Al Dighrir, 2014; Petty, 2004). There are two major approaches of language assessment: summative and formative. Each approach has its own distinguished ultimate purpose, timing, and tools.

Summative assessment aims to assess the overall knowledge and performance of the learners comprehensively by the end of a given period of time (Gardner, 2010). Midterms and final exams are typically used for summative assessment. For a long period of time, traditional examinations have been the most prevalent, and often the only, measure for assessing language learners. However, the evolution of language-learning theories led to heated arguments regarding the adequacy of traditional testing as the primary approach for assessing language learners, suggesting the need for alternatives (Brown & Hudson, 1998; Hamayan, 1995; Huerta-Macías, 1995).

As a result, formative assessment has been introduced. In contrast to summative assessment, formative assessment aims to improve the learners' performance via identifying their areas of strengths and weaknesses and adjusting teaching methods accordingly (Black & Wiliam, 2010, Taras, 2005). Thus, it utilizes other low-stakes forms that are more diagnostic in nature such as short essays, small projects, and peer-assessment. Hence, forms of formative assessment are also known as alternative assessments (AAs henceforth).

In other words, AAs can be defined as a wide range of assessment forms beyond traditional exams (Huerta- Macías, 1995). Hamayan (1995) defined AAs as “procedures and techniques” that can be embedded in instructions and practiced everyday during classroom activities (p. 213). Some examples of AAs include: checklists, self-assessment, peer-assessment, role-play, journals, portfolios, video and audio recordings, conferences, and projects (Brown & Hudson, 1998; Huerta- Macías, 1995). These forms of assessment have been shown to make several contributions to the teaching and learning of English as a second/foreign language in the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Brown & Hudson, 1998; Fulcher & Davidson, 2007; Huerta- Macías, 1995; Shohamy, 1997).

For many decades, traditional midterms and final exams have been dominant in assessing English language learners in Saudi Arabia. However, calls for re-considering traditional ways of teaching and assessing EFL learners in the country has increased for the sake of promoting the learners’ competence and proficiency in English (Al Hazmi, 2017; Al Sadaawi, 2010; Assulimani, 2019).

There is an acute need for a new assessment approach that is “diagnostic” and more effective (Assulimani, 2019, p. 1630). Therefore, attention has been given to the importance and gains of AAs in Saudi EFL classrooms. For example, as demonstrated by multiple studies, AAs in college-level EFL classes in Saudi Arabia reduce learners’ anxiety (Rana & Zubair, 2019; Umar & Ameen, 2021); enhance their autonomy (Alam & Aktar, 2019; Alqarni & Alshakhi, 2021); and help them to identify and improve their weaknesses (Umar & Ameen, 2021; Umer & Omer, 2015). Nevertheless, the literature considering the use of AAs in this context is sparse. According to Al Hazmi (2017), there is a need for more “systematic research” to guide revisions and refinements to EFL education in Saudi Arabia (p. 147). However, these refinement efforts are less likely to be effective unless the perceptions of learners are investigated, as well as those of instructors (Althaqafi, 2018; Borg & Edmett, 2019). Hence, investigating the forms of AAs that Saudi EFL learners have experienced, along with their viewpoints regarding those forms, is much needed in order to enhance the use of AAs in this designated context. Therefore, the current study investigates the following research questions:

1. What forms of alternative assessments have Saudi EFL learners experienced in their college-level EFL classes, and what attitudes do they have towards them?
2. What perspectives do Saudi EFL learners have regarding the use of alternative assessments in relation to their English language improvement and learning?

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework informing this study is built on two key sources: Krashen’s (1985) *Affective Filter*—part of his *Second Language Acquisition Theory (SLA)*— and the framework of *Dynamic Assessment (DA)* (Poehner, 2008).

#### ***The Affective Filter Hypothesis***

This hypothesis pertains to the emotional status of language learners. It suggests that learners’ attitudes and feelings have an impact on their language learning and improvement. Particularly, it focuses on learners’ feelings of anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence. For instance, a high level of anxiety with low motivation and low self-confidence would raise the affective filter and, consequently, hamper the learners’ ability to absorb the language. In contrast, a low level of anxiety with high motivation and high self-confidence would lower the learners’ affective filter, and as a result, enhance their language learning.

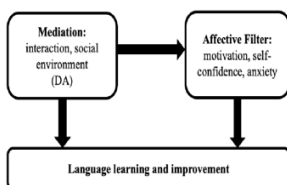
#### ***Dynamic Assessment***

Dynamic Assessment (DA) is a framework that integrates instruction and assessment. It is based on the idea of providing learners with assistance through mediation in order to identify their weaknesses and help them to reach

their maximum potential (Lantolf & Poehner, 2010; Poehner, 2008). This mediation can take the form of suggestions, prompts, or feedback provided by the instructor or another person such as a peer (Poehner & Lantolf, 2005). The mediator's role is to interact with learners and assist them in stretching "beyond their current capabilities" (Poehner, 2008, p. 176).

Combining the *Affective filter Hypothesis* with the *DA framework* is to leverage their complementarity. They can be used together in order to create an ideal safe learning environment: an environment that is motivating, stress-free, and student-centered.

Figure 1  
Connections Between DA, Affective Filter, and Language Learning and Improvement.



## Review of the Literature

### *Traditional Testing vs. Alternative Assessments*

Testing, also known as traditional assessment, occurs at a single specific time and mainly includes reciting knowledge. The results are used to quantitatively measure what students have learned (Hamayan, 1995). Examples of test designs include fill-in-the blanks, cloze, true/false, MCQ, etc., in which the responses are usually drill-based, prepared, and predicted.

The quantitative and structured nature of such testing led to their being praised for a number of merits such as objectivity, economicity, practicality, efficiency, and being easy to administer and score (Bailey, 1998). Yet the quantitative nature of tests impeded language learning in that it shifted the focus and aim of language learners from improving their language proficiency and the quality of their learning to improving their test scores (Biggs, 1999; Genesee & Hamayan, 1994; Williams, 2014). Improved test scores, however, do not necessarily reflect "significant learning outcomes" (Herman et al., 1992, p. 5). Indeed, tests have been shown not to accurately measure the integrated competencies that language learners possess. Suwaed (2018), for example, investigated the perceptions of EFL learners towards writing tests in Libya and found that they did not perceive traditional testing as a true measure of their writing skills. Similarly, EFL learners in Turkey had negative attitudes towards traditional tests because they were not sufficient for evaluating their competence or their language knowledge, and, moreover, tests lacked opportunities for collaboration (Cirit, 2015). By the same token, many scholars confirmed that traditional tests did not reflect learners' actual abilities. Tests assessed only lower-level cognitive skills, while upper-level cognitive skills such as critical thinking were overlooked (Al Sadaawi, 2010; Alhareth & Dighrir, 2014; Taras, 2005).

Other drawbacks of testing that have contributed to the increased demand for AAs include a heavy reliance on memorization; making the teacher, instead of learner, the center of the classroom (Anderson, 1998; Denman & Al-Mahrooqi, 2018); decontextualized, discrete test items (Baily, 1998); a lack of authenticity (i.e. how language is used in the real world) (Gronlund, 2006); a lack of feedback given to learners (Baily, 1998; Baily & Garner, 2010), anxiety (Cirit, 2015); and finally, yet importantly, concerns about equity in learning (Hamayan, 1995).

In response to the shortcomings of testing, AAs were introduced. This new approach to assessment acknowledges the complexity and interwoven nature of language skills, and therefore, includes a variety of skills that cannot be evaluated with traditional assessment (Shohamy, 1997). In other words, AAs are more comprehensive. They enable language



instructors to assess the myriad competencies that language learners possess, rather than focusing on a few skills or narrow aspects of the language as with traditional assessment. AAs include providing learners with comprehensive feedback, promoting problem solving and higher-level cognitive competencies, creating a student-centered learning environment, emulating how language is used in real-world contexts, assessing students on the basis of actual performance or production, creating contextualized and meaningful tasks, using the results of assessment to inform instruction, and focusing on the learning process along with learning outcomes (Bachelor, 2017; Baily, 1998; Brown & Hudson, 1998; Inbar-Lourie & Donitsa-Schmidt, 2009; Poehner & van Compernelle, 2011).

In short, the overall purpose of AAs is to alternate traditional tests with other forms of assessment that are seen as relatively “non-threatening” (Shabaan, 2001, p. 8); motivating (Alkharusi, 2008); promoting of learning (Inbar-Lourie & Donitsa-Schmidt, 2009); valuing the complexity and diversity of learners’ performances and competencies (McNamara, 2001; Shohamy, 1997); fostering a reciprocal, interwoven relationship between teaching, learning, and assessment (Anderson, 1998); and considerate of “the learner as social being” (Mitchell et al., 2013, p. 47).

### ***Advantages of Using Alternative Assessments***

Following the recognition of this approach of assessment, considerable benefits of AAs have been acknowledged in the literature. Unlike traditional testing, AAs have been praised for their practicality (Cirit, 2015) and for being “task-based, direct, functional, and authentic” (Shohamy, 1997, p. 143). Their authenticity has been attributed to the fact that they prepare learners to communicate in the target language by having them replicate the use of the language for communication in the real world (Alkharusi, 2008; Fulcher & Davidson, 2007). Moreover, they acknowledge learners’ diverse potentials and efficacies and take into account learners’ individual differences and needs. When well-planned, AAs therefore help to foster equity in learning environments (Hamayan, 1995).

This approach to assessment also fosters a collaborative learner-centered environment. For example, Uymaz (2019), found that peer-assessment enhanced learners’ collaboration and independence. The author argued that peer-assessment disputed the dominant perception of instructors “as the only reliable source of feedback” that learners could receive (p. 31)—a perception that is highly associated with teacher-centered education.

Hence, using AAs created a more collaborative learning environment and encouraged learners to be engaged and to participate in classroom activities (Abu Rahmah & Al Humaidi, 2012). Such collaboration and engagement helped the learners to enhance their existing competencies and skills and to gain new ones by working with peers. Due to the use of AAs, learners revealed that they had developed better teamwork skills and that collaborating with others enhanced their abilities and skills in giving feedback and evaluating each other’s work (Hosna, 2013; Nawas, 2020). More recently, Alqarni and Alshakhi (2021) explored the impact of negotiation and collaborative work when using peer-assessment in Saudi EFL writing. The authors indicated that participants had to work collaboratively and interact with each other while assessing their peers, which had a positive impact on their writing.

Additionally, the use of AAs requires learners to be active rather than passive, which results in fostering learning autonomy. This autonomy has been reflected in multiple ways such as enhancing learners’ creativity and encouraging them to share their opinions and monitor their own learning progress. For example, the use of AAs led to promoting high-level cognitive competencies like problem-solving and critical thinking (Cirit, 2015; Hosna, 2013).

Contrary to traditional tests, which have been subject to criticism for causing high levels of anxiety and low motivation (Arabai, 2014; Arabai, 2016), AAs have been praised for the opposite. The use of a variety of AAs (e.g. portfolios, reflections, peer-assessment, self-assessment, etc.) has proven to reduce learners’ anxiety and improve their motivation, along with increasing their self-confidence by allowing them to perceive themselves as efficient language

learners (Alam & Aktar, 2019; Gurbanov, 2016). According to multiple studies, AAs also engaged learners in the process of language learning and significantly motivated them to learn (Abu Rahmah & Al Humaidi, 2012; Hojeij & Baroudi, 2018; Moqbel, 2018).

### ***English Language Education in Saudi Arabia***

English is taught in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a foreign language, and its role in the “educational, economic, socio-cultural and political life of Saudis” (Al Hazmi, 2017, p. 132) has been increasing significantly. The growing prominence of the English language in Saudi Arabia is an expected response to the fact that it is an international language, and mastery of English has become a “global need” (Al Nasser, 2015, p. 1615). With a constantly growing demand for English language education, Saudi EFL learners’ low levels of English proficiency and performance have been a serious concern (Alharbi, 2015; Alrabai, 2016; Al-Seghayer, 2014). For instance, employers have expressed great dissatisfaction and frustration with college and university graduates’ lack of competency to professionally write and communicate in English (Al Hazmi, 2017). In spite of the fact that the English language is used as a medium of instruction in many colleges and universities in Saudi Arabia (Al Hazmi, 2017), several scholars and studies have attributed this poor performance to the overall approach of English education and assessment in the country (Al Nasser, 2015; Al Sadaawi, 2010; Al Sadan, 2000; Assulimani, 2019).

For many decades, English Education and assessment were designed based on the teacher-centered approach — also known as the *banking-model of education* (Freire, 2009). This approach to education prioritizes an ability to memorize and recall knowledge over an ability to comprehend and think critically (Al Alhareth & Al Dighrir, 2014). Moreover, it gives instructors full authority to dominate the classroom (Freire, 2009) and makes them the center of the teaching/learning process. In turn, it trivializes the participation of learners who come to assume that their learning is completely the responsibility of their instructors (Al Hazmi, 2017). Many EFL instructors have complained about struggling with unmotivated language learners (Fareh, 2010), but they have failed to acknowledge that a lack of interest in learning English in the classroom is not always the learners’ fault. Al Nasser (2015) reported that some Saudi EFL learners were anxious and disappointed because their instructors did not welcome their questions and inquiries in the classroom. According to the author, learners’ participation was discouraged and perceived as “an unnecessary interruption” (p. 1616).

In addition, practices of this approach have led to the domination of a “teaching to test” culture (Al Alhareth & Al Dighrir, 2014, p. 884), which puts the focus on quantity rather than quality. That is, instructors and other stakeholders become primarily concerned with the number of learners who pass final examinations (Al Sadan, 2000), along with learners’ final grades rather than whether they actually learn or improve. The high-stakes nature of testing has also resulted in increasing levels of anxiety, which is a critical concern. This issue of anxiety is of paramount importance because it raises learners’ affective filter, which significantly hinders their ability to learn English (Krashen, 1985). This is exacerbated further when anxiety is added to lack of motivation and self-confidence. In fact, Alrabai (2016) examined the reasons for EFL learners’ poor performance in Saudi Arabia, finding that low motivation, lack of confidence, and high levels of anxiety were some of the key factors. Language tests, along with fears of negative assessment, were primary reasons for Saudi EFL learners’ anxiety (Alrabai, 2014). As a result, calls demanding significant improvement of English education in the Kingdom have been growing (Al Seghayer, 2014; Althaqafi, 2018; Assulimani, 2019)

### **Methodology**

***Research Context:*** A large public university in the west of Saudi Arabia.

***Participants:*** A convenience snowball sampling procedure (Creswell, 2015) was used to recruit 11 Saudi male and

female EFL students studying English courses at college-level.

**Data Collection and Analysis:** A qualitative design was employed to conduct this study. Data were collected via a short questionnaire and three different types of interviews: semi structured one-on-one, focus group, and follow-up interviews. Data were transcribed, open-coded and classified into categories in order to fit larger themes.

### Findings and Discussion

This qualitative study explored the use of AAs in college-level English courses from the perspectives of Saudi EFL language learners. The learners' experiences with AAs illuminate how they perceive the use of AAs compared to the dominant "culture of testing" (Villarroel et al., 2018, p. 841). These experiences also reveal how the learners' perceptions of AAs are influenced by the quality of mediation (e.g. interaction, collaboration, feedback) when using particular forms of AAs. Such perceptions contribute to developing their attitudes towards using AAs—raising or lowering their affective filters—and demonstrating how issues associated with mediation and affective filters facilitate or hinder their language learning and advancement.

Language enhancement and assessment are inextricably linked, and Saudi EFL learners seem to be aware of the ways that language assessment affects their language learning and improvement. For example, one of the participants said that:

رامى: "الاختبارات كانت ملغى أي حماس ل اللغة. بالعكس خوف".

*Rami: [With exams there was no motivation to (learn) the language. But fear].*

This awareness plays a key role in forming their perceptions and attitudes towards each approach to assessment. Compared to traditional exams, Saudi EFL learners attributed improvements in their language proficiency and self-improvement to the use of AAs.

There are a variety of AAs that instructors can use to assess Saudi EFL learners in college-level English courses, but learners might enjoy some more than others depending on their personal traits, levels of English proficiency, and learning styles. It is most beneficial to use forms of AAs that learners find appealing, which also helps to foster an inclusive learning environment. However, it is understandable that applying forms of AAs that every learner finds appealing can be difficult, given the large number of learners in English courses at the college level, along with other existing challenges. That said, the difficulty associated with choosing the most appealing forms of AAs should not discourage instructors from using AAs because standardized exams are not the only solution.

Ultimately, the use of AAs generally entails many advantages and merits that significantly contribute to promoting language learning and proficiency. The key point illuminated by participants' experiences is that the effective implementation of any form of AAs—which requires effective mediation—will yield the desired results. The most critical aspects of effective mediation include creating an interactive learning environment, supporting learners emotionally by praising their work and effort, scaffolding them when needed, discussing forms of AAs with them, and providing them with explicit instructions and helpful feedback. For instance, a participant complained that:

هنا: "يعني ما كانت تقول لي هنا عنك خطأ إملائي كذا... ما عرفت أنا تحسنت في ايش أو فشلت في ايش"

*Hana: [She (the instructor) did not tell me that I have a spelling mistake or things of that sort; I did not know in what areas I improved and in what areas I failed].*

Feedback, in particular, should be continuous and constructive, with constructive meaning that it should help the learners to monitor their progress and learn from their mistakes. Indeed, these factors represent the core principles of

AAs and DA. Most remarkably, these factors shape how Saudi EFL learners perceive AAs as an approach to assessment and how they engage with each form of AAs they experience.

Effective mediation, then, should be reflected in the learners' affective filters. To illustrate, effective mediation increases learners' motivation and self-confidence and decreases their feelings of anxiety, and vice versa. This would then be reflected in the learners' overall language enhancement and learning. With that in mind, AAs should be thoughtfully planned and implemented, considering all of the factors that have been discussed in this study. Otherwise, the mere use of AAs will be pointless or even lead to undesirable results such as developing negative perceptions and attitudes towards AAs and English learning.

### ***Saudi EFL Learners' Experiences and Perceptions***

Relying solely on exams as an approach to assessment reflects an outdated and ineffective teacher-centered education. The findings here indicate that traditional exams are still dominant as an approach to assessment in college-level English courses in Saudi Arabia, and the use of AAs was infrequent.

The use of AAs in this study was affected by two major factors: the Covid-19 pandemic and instructors' variable inclination to apply AAs. The first factor, the declaration of a global pandemic followed by shifting to online modes of education, resulted in a significant increase in the use of AAs:

سارة: "للأسف كان الاختبارات ولكن بعد ما جات كورونا وصرنا ندرس اونلاين الوسائل البديلة صارت أكثر.. توه بدت الفكرة حقت الوسائل البديلة ولا أول كانت الاختبارات".

*Sara: [Honestly, exams (she means were used mostly). But after Covid-19 and shifting to online mode, AAs were used more. The idea of AAs has just started, but before that it was all about exams].*

Upon shifting to online education, the ministry of education in Saudi Arabia encouraged the use of different forms of assessment other than exams (Alqurshi, 2020), which could to some extent explain the increase in using AAs after Covid-19. In the context of higher education in particular, other authorities such as heads of departments, deans of colleges, and the Deanship of Admission and Registration also have a say in how to assess learners. In this research context, the Deanship of Admission and Registration recommended the use of alternative forms of assessment in addition to final exams. This could be an attempt to help learners cope with the sudden shift of moving online. Even though the majority of instructors complied, participants stated that some of their instructors still did not use any form of AAs. Those instructors' attitudes could be explained through the second factor that impacted the use of AAs: instructors' attitudes about using AAs. Their attitudes were influenced by their age, their knowledge and experience of using AAs, and the number of learners in the classroom. Those who were younger, had studied abroad, taught fewer learners, and had positive experiences with AAs were more likely to use them. On the other hand, seniors with bigger classes and less experience (or interest) in using AAs were much more reluctant to use them.

Notwithstanding the limited use of AAs compared to exams, participants were able to realize significant differences between the two approaches to assessment in relation to their affective filters and language performance. This realization led to developing positive attitudes towards AAs, contrary to their attitudes towards exams. All of the participants, except two, preferred AAs over traditional exams. Those who preferred exams found this approach to assessment more comfortable because they were shy, and they did not want to risk their grades or embarrass themselves in front of others:

أحمد: "أنا أفضل الاختبارات لأنه الأسئلة التي تجي من الأسئلة اللي انتي أخذتها يعني كنا تكوني دارستها وفاهمتها وتجي الأسئلة وتجاوب عليها".

*Ahmad: [I prefer exams. Because exams come from the questions you have (he means the textbook), I mean, you have studied them*

*and understood them; then, you get the questions and answer them].*

This accords with the finding that interactive forms of learning and assessment tend to be uncomfortable for those “who are less willing to expose themselves to risks and linguistic failures” (Pyun et al., 2014, p. 61).

In contrast, participants who preferred AAs indicated that they were not afraid of making mistakes because they perceived it to be an integral part of their learning progress. For example:

هنا: ”في وسائل التقييم البديلة فيه فرصة للتحسين واضحة، يعني الغلط يعتبر تطور“.

*Hanaa: [With AAs, there is an obvious chance to improve, so making mistakes is regarded as enhancement].*

In fact, learners’ perceptions of making mistakes were formed in relation to their experiences with each approach to assessment, which consequently had an impact on their language advancement. As Lou and Noels (2019) explained, learners’ perceptions of “failure as debilitating” or “failure as enhancing” have a significant influence on their learning progress (p. 544). The former makes learners resent making mistakes and perceive mistakes as obstacles that hamper their learning. The latter, on the other hand, makes learners more willing to make mistakes and to perceive mistakes as a chance to improve and learn. The findings of the current study revealed that most participants had a perception of failure as debilitating with exams and a perception of failure as enhancing with AAs.

The participants who disliked exams perceived them to be invalid and unfair assessment tools that triggered their anxiety. These perceptions of exams should not be surprising, since exams: 1) do not consider sudden life circumstances that might affect learners’ performance; 2) do not take into account the variety of competencies that language learners possess; 3) do not consider learners’ individual aptitudes and needs; 4) do not provide learners with opportunities to interact with others in order to promote their language proficiency; and, most importantly, 5) do not provide learners with opportunities to practice the language (Al Sadaawi, 2010; Alhareth & Dighrir, 2014; Biggs, 1999; Herman et al., 1992; Williams, 2014). Because exams focus on marks rather than actual learning, participants did not perceive them to be useful, especially for those who were competent language users but not good test takers. Given the high-stakes nature of exams, some participants questioned their abilities and skills and blamed themselves for making mistakes in response to getting low grades. As a result, their feelings of anxiety increased while their motivation and self-confidence decreased. This combination of high anxiety, low motivation, and low self-confidence, in addition to a lack of opportunities to interact with others, hampered language learners’ abilities to promote their English language proficiency because language learning is facilitated by learners being less anxious, more motivated, more confident, and surrounded by an interactive environment (Antón, 2009; Krashen, 1985; Poehner & Lantolf, 2005; Vygotsky, 1978).

Also, taking the psychometric nature of exams into account, it is likely that language learners would not be provided with comprehensive feedback, which is a significant form of mediation. Consequently, they would not be able to monitor their learning or language production, as the ultimate focus of exams is the learners’ final grades and passing rates, rather than their actual learning progress (Al Sadan, 2000). In short, the heavy reliance on exams as assessment tools in EFL classes has a negative impact on learners’ language proficiency.

On the other hand, participants perceived AAs to be valid, flexible, more beneficial, and more equitable. Interestingly, even the two participants (out of 11) who said they preferred exams over AAs had these perceptions. The participants formed them based on several factors and merits associated with using AAs. First of all, the variety of AAs provides participants with multiple ways of expressing their language knowledge and competencies. Those with learning styles other than memorization found this variety to accommodate their individual abilities, needs, and concerns. This

further contributed to promoting participants' individuality by using different forms of AAs such as presentations, discussions, and essays, since participants were able to express themselves, have their voices heard, share their perspectives, and reflect on their own identities.

The participants' abilities to express themselves and share their viewpoints with others indicate that AAs offer them ample opportunities to interact with their instructors, on the one hand, and with their peers, on the other. Both experiences proved to be crucial for enhancing language learning and proficiency (Antón, 2009; Poehner & Lantolf, 2005; Umar & Ameen, 2021; Uymaz, 2019; Vygotsky, 1978). Interactions with instructors and peers were represented in myriad ways, including but not limited to: participation, having discussions, receiving feedback, receiving compliments, asking questions, and seeking guidance and support when needed. Such interactions maximize language learners' chances and abilities to practice their English.

In addition to promoting language learning, this approach to assessment helped the learners "learn how to learn" (Moss & Brookhart, 2019, p. 7). Indeed, the participants of this study confirmed that instead of being entirely dependent on the instructor, they became more autonomous learners due to the use of AAs. They learned how to do research, navigate databases, and make connections between the real world and what they were learning in the classroom. They also learned how to identify their own strengths and weaknesses and monitor their progress. Moreover, the participants were able to enhance their social skills, collaborate with others, and share their thoughts and work with others, which was reflected in their ability to think critically and take others' ideas and perspectives into consideration.

#### ***Interconnection between Learners' Perceptions of AAs, Mediation, Affective Filter, and Language Performance:***

The findings of this study, provide a firm body of evidence revealing the interwoven relationship between multiple components of learners' affective filter: motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety. Furthermore, these findings, along with those from several other studies, underscore the impact of affective components and elements on learners' language performance and learning outcomes (Alghamdi, 2021; Choi et al., 2020; Krashen, 1985; Lou & Noels, 2017, 2019; Pyun et al., 2014). Attitude and motivation are strongly related, and this is reflected in learners' overall improvement (Oroujlou & Vahedi, 2011). This explains the correspondence between participants' attitudes towards exams and AAs and the impact of their attitudes on their levels of motivation to learn the language and enhance their proficiency. As the findings of this study indicate, most participants had positive attitudes towards AAs and negative attitudes towards exams. Correspondingly, they were motivated by AAs and demotivated by exams. When the forms of AAs participants particularly resonated with were used, their levels of motivation and performance increased.

For instance, a participant explained that:

حامد: "فائدة المناقشات و فائدة العروض التقديمية تخليك إنه أنت تتطلق وتمارس اللغة ، ف هذا الشيء اللي خلاني تزيد ثقفي في نفسي في اللغة الانجليزية".

*Hamid: [Discussions and presentations benefit you in that you go ahead and practice the language, this increased my self-confidence in English (he means when he speaks in English)].*

Importantly, motivation and self-confidence are integrated (Pyun et al., 2014); that is, the actors that increase learners' motivation also improve their self-confidence. According to the findings of this study, the participants experienced a noticeable improvement in their motivation and self-confidence when using AAs due to several factors. For one, having prior experience with using AAs, being offered a variety of AAs, and using forms that participants resonated with all led to maximizing participants' chances of getting better grades. AAs also enabled participants to practice their language, and as a result, they were able to see what they were capable of doing and experience tangible evidence of

their advancement. These factors gave participants a sense of achievement, which in turn boosted their self-confidence and motivation to do their best. The existing literature offers additional support for these findings (Alam & Aktar, 2019; Alqarni & Alshakhi, 2021; Hojeij & Baroudi, 2018). Even more importantly, participants were able to receive quality mediation in the form of feedback. The participants saw this as indispensable in helping them to promote their language proficiency, and it enhanced their sense of accomplishment, which other studies have also found (Knight & Yorke 2003; Poulos & Mahony, 2008). The participants felt that their work was appreciated and valued by those who gave them feedback. In fact, Harlen (2012) reported that receiving feedback, especially from instructors, is crucial because it enhances learners' feelings of self-confidence and achievement, in addition to reassuring them of their instructors' support and attention. Further, participants perceived feedback as a means of communication with their instructors and peers, which serves as a means of interaction (Evnitskaya, 2018).

In addition to feedback, the findings of this study suggest that interactions associated with AAs were present in different forms such as receiving compliments, asking questions, class discussions, and peer-assessment, to name a few. Given the concept of mediation, as described in the framework of DA, such interactions are crucial for learners to succeed in language learning and for assessing their performance (Antón, 2009; Poehner & Lantolf, 2005; Poehner & van Compernelle, 2011; Vygotsky, 1978). In this study, interactions with instructors and peers were found to give participants a sense of support, which in turn raised their self-confidence and motivation to take risks, and to some extent helped them to develop a tolerance for making mistakes in front of others. These interactions also pushed them to reach their potential and do their best to avoid embarrassment in front of their peers.

By the same token, participants' feelings of self-confidence were connected to their feelings of anxiety, with their anxiety decreasing when their self-confidence increased, and vice versa. Their willingness to take risks and make mistakes is a manifestation of this connection. For instance, the findings indicated that the issue of grades was one of the main reasons for participants' anxiety. Given the variety and flexibility of AAs, participants had more confidence in their abilities to find forms of assessment that were suitable for them so that they could get better grade. This, in turn, contributed to reducing their anxiety over grades. For that reason, and contrary to their perceptions of making mistakes on exams, they viewed making mistakes on AAs as opportunities to learn and improve their language performance.

In spite of that, some participants experienced elevated levels of anxiety from using AAs. As the findings of the study suggested, some of the main triggers of participants' anxiety when using AAs were a fear of public speaking a fear of making mistakes in front of others, a lack of time, a lack of language proficiency, and a lack of experience with AAs. However, those participants' anxiety levels decreased eventually with time, practice, and proper scaffolding. Some participants were also less anxious when AAs were used online rather than face-to-face.

Overall, the advantages of AAs were mostly related to the way in which AAs were applied, demonstrating a remarkably desirable influence on participants' affective filters and other affective variables. In contrast, challenges associated with the use of AAs had an opposite influence on participants' affective filters. For example, participants were very anxious when the use of AAs was associated with issues such as poor internet connection, low levels of English proficiency, and shyness. Some other challenges were more severe in their consequences, as they resulted in increasing participants' anxiety and decreasing their motivation and self-confidence. These challenges included a lack of clear instructions, lack of constructive feedback, using forms of AAs that the participants disliked, not assigning grades to AAs, and subjective grading. Most of these challenges reflect ineffective mediation. A lack of clear instructions or constructive feedback, for example, demotivates learners by raising doubts about the purpose and value of using AAs. Similarly, subjective grading makes learners question both their performance and the validity of AAs. Even though a majority of participants perceived

AAs as a valid approach to assessment, this perception could be threatened if learners continued to experience subjective grading. Likewise, participants were more anxious, less motivated, and less self-confident because of the following challenges: instructors' attitudes towards the use of AAs, instructors' lack of experience regarding the use of AAs, and a lack of interaction between instructors and learners.

Apparently, instructors' attitudes towards AAs and their expertise in using AAs determines how they will implement AAs, or whether they will use AAs at all. In cases where learners were not satisfied about the way a given form of AAs was implemented, they tended to develop negative attitudes towards it. Consequently, they would be anxious and lack motivation to complete the required task.

Instructors' attitudes also have an impact on how language learners perceived using AAs. According to the findings of this study, the participants were afraid of making mistakes when their instructors were not in favor of using AAs. Nevertheless, the participants admitted that AAs in general helped them to accept their mistakes as part of their learning. A lack of interaction (mediation) between instructors and learners, however, could promote learners' anxiety and demotivation in various ways. For example, learners could be hesitant to ask for assistance or feedback when needed, and as found in this study, some participants may prefer forms of AAs as peer-assessment because they see asking their instructors for detailed feedback to be a waste of the instructors' time. This perception can be understood in relation to Al Nasser (2015), who found that learners' contributions were viewed by some instructors to be "an unnecessary interruption" (p. 1615). As suggested by this study's findings, a lack of interaction between participants and their instructors increases their feelings of confusion and frustration, which elevates their anxiety and lowers their motivation to work on required tasks. Participants' lack of motivation to complete required tasks makes them feel disappointed and incapable (see Figure 2).

In short, this study employed a theoretical framework linking the role of mediation in language learning to language learners' affective filters in order to explain how Saudi EFL learners perceive the advantages and challenges of AAs in relation to their language learning and improvement. Understanding the ways that Saudi EFL learners perceived and experienced AAs within this framework can help instructors in Saudi contexts to use AAs more effectively in order to enhance learners' language learning and proficiency (see Figure 3).

Figure 2  
Interconnection Between Mediation, Affective Filter, and Learners' Perceptions of AAs:  
Preferring Feedback from Peers Over Feedback from the Instructor.

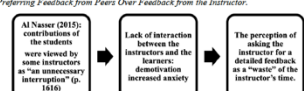


Figure 3  
Interconnection Between Mediation, Affective Filter, and Language Performance and Improvement.



## Conclusion

Overall, while AAs yield many benefits, merely using them will not be effective unless they are planned and implemented thoughtfully, keeping in mind that effective implementation also requires effective mediation. In the Saudi context, in particular, English education should be revised in order to align with the most recent instructional practices of the field (Al Seghayer, 2015), provide learners with quality mediation, and meet their concerns and needs. Hopefully, the findings of the research can serve as a means of hearing and heeding the voices of learners themselves. Not only would these help to guide instructors and other stakeholders to personalize the implementation of AAs in



order to address learners' concerns and desires, but they also invite instructors to understand their roles and responsibilities when applying AAs.

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## Developing Language Skills through Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) by Online Learning for 1st B. Students

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### **Abstract**

The points of this exploration is to describe the process of perfecting the students' listening skill and vocabulary mastery through contextual tutoring and literacy (CTL) by using online literacy at the 1st B. Tech students at St. Martin's Engineering College, Secunderabad, it's one of the combined societies of JNTUH. This study also attempts to find out the enhancement of the students' skill in listening and vocabulary mastery through contextual tutoring and literacy (CTL) by using online literacy. The system used in this exploration was qualitative exploration system by enforcing classroom action exploration (Auto). This exploration was conducted in two cycles conduct in cycle I, cycles and 2. The result of the exploration is the use of contextual tutoring and literacy (CTL) by using online literacy can ameliorate the scholars' listening skill and vocabulary mastery. The finding of the exploration were (1) the process of tutoring and literacy using CTL through online literacy was conducted successfully in terms of the feeling of happiness and enthusiasm of the scholars, (2) there was an enhancement of the students' listening skill from the increased mean of score from 57,85 in pre-test came 81,11 in post-test. This study suggests that the English schoolteacher may ameliorate her tutoring strategy by optimizing the use of accoutrements at academy; the schoolteacher should be creative in opting, developing and giving accoutrements at class.

**Keywords:** Perfecting, vocabulary mastery, listening skill, contextual tutoring and literacy, online literacy

### **Introduction**

At St. Martin's Engineering College is designed to prepare the scholars to continue their interest right after their scale. The fresh graduate *students* of St. Martin's Engineering College are anticipated to master the accoutrements of their interests. Either, English becomes veritably important since utmost of the major of the university faculty put English proficiency, both written and speaking, as one of conditions. Also, the development of global communication and information period brings a strict competition among the job campaigners. The students will get advantages if they master English of their movie. In terms of education, English is always considered as one of the subjects to be tutored in nearly all situations of education considering the data over; English has come an important skill to master by scholars of St. Martin's Engineering College. The St. Martin's Engineering College students to be observed are especially from the eleventh grade. They're in the alternate grade; the scholars are in their competition of B. Tech program, so their quality of English language of St. Martin's Engineering College students can be attained. The chosen of the graduate scholars are from students who studied

At St. Martin's Engineering College, St. Martin's Engineering College is one of the B. Tech societies under JNTUH. It provides scholars with numerous kinds of study programs to master a specific capability of their interest, the study programs handed are Specialized and Life skills. In this case, the experimenter only concerns tutoring English on those study programs. As stated over, English is one of the important subject

to help students to face the global competition. Regarding these, the English for specific purposes is needed to support their English proficiency grounded on their moxie. thus, the schoolteacher should consider English literacy accoutrements which are suitable for the ward needs.

English has become an important subject to be tutored and should be learnt totally. There are several macro-skills that must be understood and comprehend to the scholars of St. Martin's Engineering College. They're listening, speaking, writing, and reading skills. The listening skill is one of those macro skills that are veritably important and useful for St. Martin's Engineering College students. The listening skill can help the scholars to understand some English words that they may find in their conditioning outside the academy. still, learning listening for St. Martin's Engineering College students isn't a simple matter. The students should be suitable to understand not only the meaning of the words, but also how the words spelled. These conditions of learning harkening might be still considered uneasy effects for utmost St. Martin's Engineering College students. As the substantiation, utmost of the scholars of St. Martin's Engineering College students occasionally get bad marks as the result of these difficulties in learning listening. In this case, preceptors have responsibility to help scholars to achieve listening skill. One thing that preceptors can do to break the problems is to educate the scholars using an applicable approach for tutoring listening classes grounded on scholars' position and scholars' capability.

Grounded on the observation, the experimenter finds that the students' problem related to vocabulary mastery. Their vocabulary is still less so it's delicate for them to understand colorful types of textbooks for illustration song lyrics. Numerous students of get incontinently wearied and cannot understand what the lyrics mean when given certain English songs. Their tedium and not knowing fluently leads them either into lost provocation or low mindfulness.

Likewise, the experimenter is as the schoolteacher, she set up that she had a problem in tutoring harkening. The school teacher does not give the listening subject grounded on the students' interest, infrequently used colorful ways and media in the tutoring process, so that the scholars feel wearied, when they've to hear to song, that the song uninteresting lyrics. In the class, some students occasionally lean over their heads on the table and talked to each other. Thus, applicable approach ( n tutoring listening of song to break problem is necessary. According to Johnson ( 2004), CTL is an education process which has a purpose of helping scholars seeing scholars, seeing the meaning inside the academic material that they learn by connecting the academic subjects with the surrounds of their diurnal lives.

## **Theoretical Review**

### ***The Definition of Listening***

Listening is veritably important exertion in mortal life. This is due to the data that substantially get information through listening and to help scholars gain access to numerous different kinds of knowledge, information, and ideas. Also, listening has numerous benefits for scholars because it can ameliorate student's social skills and open up new words for them. The students must see harkening as an pleasurable exertion in order to truly profit from it. Not only related to academy. The students will use listening to learn about all subjects. There are numerous experts who give the description of listening. There are so numerous delineations of listening stated by experts from different point of views. According to Nunan ( 2001) listening is a six- offered process, conforming of hail, attending, understanding, flashing back , assessing and responding.

Listening is the first skill that the students have to master before learning a foreign language. Listening is the skill that acquire first, especially if they've not yet learnt to read. This is added by Scott and Ytreberg (200075) who say when the pupils start to learn a foreign language, it's going in substantially through their cognizance and what the pupils hear is their main source of the language. So in language chops, harkening is the main point of studying language before other chops. Listening is an active and creative process which requires mastery of skills, listening is the dominant means of sensitive appreciation, because in listening, the listener plays a veritably active part in connecting the overall dispatches which are ultimately changed between listener and speaker. It's egregious that listening requirements allowing and memory. This statement comes from Morley (1976) who says that listening is entering, entering requires thinking and thinking requires memory. There are no ways to separate listening, thinking, and memory.

### ***The Definition of Vocabulary***

According to Richards (2002 -255), vocabulary is the core element of language proficiency and provides much of the base for how well learners speak, hear, read, and write. Jackson and Amvela (2000-11) say that the terms of vocabulary, lexis, and wordbook are synonymous. Vocabulary is one of the language factors that can affect macro skills. Some description of vocabulary is proposed by some experts. Nunan (1999- 101) states that vocabulary is a list of target language words. likewise, Jackson and Amvela ( 2000 11) say that the terms vocabulary, lexis, and wordbook are synonymous. In addition, Richards and Schmidt ( 2002 580) state that vocabulary is a set of lexeme, including single words, emulsion words, and expressions.

Word meaning is also governed by conceits and expressions, e.g., the word hiss refers to the noise of snake and to someone " s trouble to others. In expression, a word goes with each other, similar as, headache, earache, and so on. In addition, style and register is applied by scorning the language to be used by someone either in a formal or informal environment, for illustration welcome ( formal) and hi( informal). Also, word conformation may also produce word meaning by seeing them on their grammatical surrounds. It means that we look at how the suffixes and the prefixes work ( I 'm-, or in) similar as in amiss and perfect, unhappy and applicable.

Vocabulary as one of English element and it's veritably important to learn. Before the pupil master the four skills, they must know some vocabularies to support them in learning English. English vocabulary as one of the language skill elements has an important part for elderly high pupil in learning foreign languages. Vocabulary literacy is an important and necessary part of any language literacy process. Fisher and Frey (2014) state that vocabulary is at the core of all knowledge. Without it, scholars would not be to comprehend anything they hear.

Vocabulary is all the words which live in a particular language. Vocabulary functions as a foundation without which any language couldn't live. The word "vocabulary" generally represents a summary of words or their combinations in a particular language. Vocabulary can be defined as "the collection of word that an individual knows (Linse, 2005).

"Vocabulary can also be defined, roughly, as the words we educate in the foreign language. ( Thorburry, 2002). Still, a new item of vocabulary may be further than just a single word for illustration, post office, and mama - in- law, which are made up two or three words but express a single idea. According to barricade (2000). In learning a foreign language, vocabulary plays an important part. It's one of the most important aspects of the foreign language literacy. Rich vocabulary helps people to understand and learn new words. Vocabulary can simply be defined as the total number of words, which makes up language.

The vocabulary constructs rulings we use from lower part of the words. Every word uttered in the acquiring process of an existent. Thornbury (2002) stated that vocabulary is veritably useful for anyone who studying a foreign language. In this case that vocabulary is one important are that shouldn't be neglected in language and literacy and it's veritably communication with other people in spoken or written form.

There are two types of vocabulary; they're active and unresisting vocabulary (Read, 2000). While learning new word, people need a lot of practice and environment connections to learn them well, store the vocabulary in the memory and recall it when speaking or writing. Therefore two main groups of person's vocabulary are active and unresisting vocabulary. According to Richard (2001- 40) vocabulary is one of the egregious factors of language. He adds that vocabulary is the core element in language complete and provides much of the base for how learners speak, hear, read, and write. It's the introductory skill to know about the other skill of language. Brown,( 2001 91).

### ***The Description Of Contextual Teaching And Learning ( CTL).***

Contextual tutoring and literacy (CTL) is a study conception that motivate preceptors to connect between the material which has been tutored and the situation that the students' real life ( Contextual Teaching and Learning refers to a proposition of education expounded by Nurhadi). According to Johnson (2004), CTL is an education process which has a purpose of helping students looking the meaning inside the academic material that they learn by connecting the academic subjects with the surrounds of their diurnal lives. thus, the meaning of CTL forms the opinion of the below experts, we can conclude that CTL is a study conception which helps preceptors to connect between the situations of the scholars' real lives and motivate scholars to make a relationship/ connections between the knowledge that they've with the perpetration in the diurnal lives. Some preceptors authorize that wisdom point of view, about the macrocosm isn't alive, not silent, and the macrocosm is supported by the three principles of depending on to another, isolation, and tone- organized that absorb the view with the new way of study about literacy and tutoring. According to Johnson (2004), the three corridors of CTL's system are:

#### *CTL Reflects the Principle of Depending One to Another*

Depending on the tools ourselves similar as, when the scholars common to break the problems and when the schoolteacher hold a meeting with their mates, it's egregious when the different subjects are connected and when the cooperation combines the academy with the business world and community.

#### *CTL Reflects the Principle of Isolation*

When CTL against the scholars to admire one to another the unique of themselves, to recognize the difference, to be creative, and to unite, to produce ideas, and new different result, and also to realize the diversity is the sign of greatness and the strength.

#### *CTL Reflects the Principles of Tone-Organized*

The tone-association is visible for scholars to search and find the capability and their own different interests, getting advantage from the given feedback by the authentic value, reviewing their trouble in guidance of egregious purpose and high standard and share in conditioning that are centered at scholars which make their hearts singing.

### **Method**

This chapter developed the exploration methodology that's employed in this study. The elaboration



covered the description of point and schedule, actors of the exploration, the setting of the exploration, approach and system of the exploration.

As we know from the title above the exploration was conducted at St. Martin's Engineering College is located in strategic enough because it's easy for the stranger scholars to take public transportation or lift motorcycle. The experimenter was fairly easy to do exploration there. This council consists of three grades, videlicet B. Tech 1st and 3rd years. Each grade consists of five classes. For 1st consists of 34 until 35 students. For 3rd year consists of 36 students. The exploration was conducted through tutoring literacy process in the Google classroom at the 1st time studnts in the academic year of 2019/2020; this exploration was held by perfecting students ' listening skill and vocabulary mastery by using online literacy through contextual tutoring and literacy( CTL).

The experimenter observed the students' English capability start from as a discussion college teacher. The exploration was conducted in March 2020 for several weeks to apply the probes of listening capability test, vocabulary mastery tests, applying contextual tutoring and literacy observation, interview, questionnaire, and posttest of harkening capability tests and vocabulary mastery tests. This exploration will be carried in the alternate semester of the academic year of 2019/2020. The experimenter will conduct by considering the academy timetable, the English college teacher's schedule and syllabus of English assignment which tutored in 1st time.

The experimenter involved 1st time students of St. Martin's Engineering College. The subject of the experimenter was the students correspond of 34 scholars, 14 boys and 20 girls. Substantially they had limited appreciation listening skill and vocabulary mastery also. This situation 3rd year was comfortable enough to study. The experimenter focuses in using contextual tutoring and literacy (CTL). To ameliorate students' listening skill and vocabulary mastery. The experimenter observed students' progress in their listening skill and vocabulary mastery;. The experimenter was conducted the exploration at the 1st time of St. Martin's Engineering College. The experimenter chose 1st year as the pace for conducting the exploration because 1st year has a good delegation ( B delegation) and has a good installations( computer and TV) to support in tutoring literacy process. Either, the experimenter wanted to know how 3rd year students' achievement in listening skill. The time allocation for English subject is 1 x 45 minutes, once a week. In conducting the conduct, the experimenter will follow the academy time - table, which the English Subject was tutored once a week. The duration was 90 minutes in every session. The experimenter arranges in three cycles. One cycle comported of two meetings, so the whole section was six meetings.

In this exploration, the experimenter used the classroom Action Research. According to Wallace (2006), classroom Action exploration is a type of classroom exploration carried out by the college teacher in order to break problems or to find answers toward environment-specific issues. It means that before enforcing the exploration, the experimenter demanded to identify any problem real set up in the classroom. This classroom Action exploration (Auto) was conducted by pertaining to a qualitative approach and using a descriptive approach to data collection. This is in agreement with what manufactories (2000 21) has defined, " Acton exploration is systemic inquiry done by preceptors( or other individual in the tutoring/ literacy terrain) to gather.

The thing of action exploration is to understand some rudiments of classroom by collecting data. Action exploration is exploration done by preceptors, for themselves it isn't assessed on them by someone differently. Action exploration engages preceptors in four step process

It means that before exploration began. A plan was in place that described what the data to collect and when, how, and how frequently the schoolteacher collected the data. Relating an area concentrate; Collecting data; assaying and interpreting data: Developing an action plan ( Milla 2000; 7).

### **Results**

There was an enhancement of using Contextual Teaching and Learning( CTL) toward the students ' listening skill and vocabulary mastery from cycle I to cycle II. The experimenter set up some progress. In cycle I, the experimenter held post- test I with multiple choice kinds of questions. It had ten figures of questions, and the test was conducted on March 31st, 2020.

The mean score that had been gained were still low. The mean score was 57, 85. The experimenter used Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) to educate English on online literacy concerning listening and vocabulary mastery.

The mean score was still veritably low due to it was related to the student' listening skills during the tutoring leaning process. Some factors which contributed to the lack of the students' listening skills were the college teacher used whether the textbook from runner to runner or through Google classroom continuously, the tutoring aids and media that maximally used, the schoolteacher who infrequently used English in tutoring-literacy process, the students who lost their attention fluently, the students who were wearied and unresisting during the online tutoring and literacy process, due to the college teacher infrequently gave listening conditioning during the English tutoring- literacy process, the scholars who were still strange with the use of English as the medium of instruction and the scholars didn't hear and respond to the schoolteacher's questions and instruction well.

Using contextual tutoring and literacy (CTL) as the main conditioning to ameliorate the scholars' listening skills and vocabulary mastery and to make them involved in the tutoring literacy process since children liked to sing and connected it with their real lives and got wearied fluently, it was important to produce different conditioning during the tutoring literacy process.

These conditioning must attract the pupil's intention toward the assignment, so they would involve laboriously and this would lead to the students' listening and vocabulary enhancement. They used the videos on YouTube to introduce the scholars to some simple lyrics and familiarize them to English. When the scholars allowed that English was a delicate subject, it was necessary to familiarize English over their cognizance.

#### *Cycle -I*

Using Contextual Teaching and literacy (CTL) in the alternate cycle made the score adding . It was known from the score that was gained in post- test II, the type of the test was still the same, it was multiple choices. The test was conducted on May 14th, 2020.

In the alternate cycle, the scholars still had difficulty with lists of new vocabulary and judgment structure at the same time, the scholars must crack wards and spark what they had or faced in the real lives as what CTL or Contextual Teaching and Learning process was hoped for. In addition, they should maintain their attention and provocation during listening. Hence, scholars needed a listening approach in their listening conditioning. Effective listeners are harkening with an approach to overcome their harkening difficulties.

In this cycle, the English college teacher as elderly high academy had to educate some types of song

textbooks through online literacy and through YouTube infected numerous scholars in 1st year.

The mean score was still veritably low due to it was related to the scholars harkening chops during the tutoring leaning process some of the scholars' harkening chops were the schoolteacher used whether the textbook from runner to runner or through Google classroom continuously, the tutoring aids and media that maximally used. In cycle II, the experimenter held post-test II with also multiple kinds of questions. It had ten figures of questions, and the test was conducted on May 14th, 2020. The mean score that had been gained was developing. The mean score is 73, 97. The experimenter still used Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) to educate listening and vocabulary mastery through online literacy.

### *Cycle -II*

In the second cycle, using contextual tutoring and literacy (CTL) made the scores adding significantly. It was known from the score that was gained inpost-test III. The type of the test was still also the same, it was still multiple choices. The test was conducted on May 23rd, 2020

In cycle II still had problems in comprehending a song textbook it was still because of lack of vocabulary and judgment structure. Grounded on the schoolteacher's observation, the scholars demanded participation in their listening conditioning. English preceptors generally tutored the listening, integrating it with reading or speaking and applied dictation ways in class – but in this Covid- 19 epidemic situation, those kinds of processes couldn't be taken. Due to the difficulties of how to educate directly.

To overcome the problem, the experimenter had to find the applicable approach that allowed students to be active in the classroom, especially in harkening class. The approach must have the purpose of CTL, which are meaningful to 1st time experience motivate them to learn English more and ameliorate their listening appreciation.

By conducting the approach, there was veritably tremendous significant enhancement in the students score, the experimenter had done the three cycles of tutoring and literacy process successfully. The approach of CTL or contextual tutoring and literacy by connecting between the song and their real lives could make their students' listening capability and vocabulary mastery was getting much better in every cycles. The experimenter had made the exploration fully finished successfully.

### **Conclusion**

This exploration tried to describe about how is the process of tutoring listening, to show the enhancement using CTL in tutoring listening, to show the enhancement using CTL in tutoring English listening skill. The major conclusions of the study can be described below. The process of tutoring listening and vocabulary mastery through Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) by online literacy gave so numerous advancements. In the first cycle, the average score that the students got inpre-test is 57, 85. The result was still veritably low. Thus it indeed to be held the alternate test. In the alternate cycle, the scholars got enhancement in the score. The score was 73, 97 in post-test II.

In the last cycle of tutoring listening and vocabulary mastery was the significance of gaining score that the scholars got. The score was 81, 11 in the post test III. The system of using Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) was salutary to ameliorate scholars listening and vocabulary mastery capability. It means that CTL can be used to ameliorate students listening capability and vocabulary mastery. It's proven by the enhancement from the increased mean score of pre-test 57,85 came 81,11 in post-test.

It's suggested that Contextual tutoring and literacy (CTL) in Classroom Action Research (CAR) can be used

to educate the song,

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## Impact of COVID-19 on English Learners at a Japanese University

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### Abstract

This research centers on English language majors at a Japanese university, exploring their perceptions of online and in-person classes within the same English course over a 15-week semester. The study aims to scrutinize the impact of COVID-19 on these students by providing an overview of the social and psychological factors that influenced their educational experiences.

Classes within the 15-week course are based on a 'Presentation Discussion and Reaction' (PDR) method, a teaching approach based on small-group discussions that allow students to improve their language skills while talking about issues based on given articles or videos.

As students experienced both online and in-person classes, two 90-minute classes were created grounded in the PDR method, allowing students to discuss online education's merits and demerits based on a flipped language approach. The classes were followed up with a Likert-scale survey that elaborated further on the issues and topics covered in the lessons.

Results showed that psychological factors such as loneliness, technological aspects, and the inability to connect and interact with peers caused students considerable distress. However, the move back to in-person classes was not entirely embraced by all the students, with some preferring a more flexible hybrid approach to their education that combines both online and face-to-face instruction. These results carry potential pedagogical implications for how education at Japanese universities is delivered under this 'new normal' since the outbreak of COVID-19.

**Keywords:** Online classes/in-person classes/student perceptions/social and psychological issues

### Introduction

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 prompted universities worldwide to either halt in-person education conducted on-campus or transition to online formats, utilizing on-demand lectures or real-time classes through platforms like Zoom and Google Meet. In contrast to universities in the UK and the US, Japanese higher education institutions implemented more stringent regulations regarding how classes should be taught. This was influenced, in part, by the academic year in Japan commencing in April, coinciding with the initial spread of COVID-19.

According to a survey conducted by Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT), over 90% of universities opted to defer the commencement of the 2020/2021 academic year (Huang, 2020). The delay in providing regular classes was experienced by 90.7% of national universities, 82.9% of local public universities, and 87% of private universities. Nearly all institutions that did not postpone classes in April resorted to online teaching and learning activities or employed alternative methods of remote instruction.

This had a profound effect on new Japanese students entering universities for the first time and on teachers who had to learn how to conduct classes online with platforms they had, until then, never used.

Research on the psychological effects of how students coped with having their university education pushed online during the COVID-19 pandemic is still relatively rare, and studies that have compared student in-person and online experiences and perceptions of their classes are underrepresented.

This research centers on English language majors at a Japanese university, exploring their perceptions of online and in-person classes within the same English course over a 15-week semester. The study aims to scrutinize the impact of COVID-19 on these students by providing an overview of the social and psychological factors that influenced their educational experiences.

### **Reception to the Online Learning Environment**

In the ongoing discourse about online education, Spar (2020) argues that the shift to digital learning has been in progress since 2010, presenting an opportunity for efficient and high-quality higher education, regardless of the 2020 COVID-19 outbreak. However, some educators, as Conlon (1997) points out, express reservations about online instruction, viewing it as an insufficient substitute for face-to-face teaching. As Cole et al. (2019) highlighted, the absence of regular in-person interaction may leave instructors struggling to gauge student engagement and respond effectively and accurately. Verene (2013) contends that online education “lacks the rhetorical impact of face-to-face lectures, potentially reducing students to mere consumers of globally available information and decontextualizing content into a one-size-fits-all model” (p. 303). Gallick (1998) similarly criticizes online instruction, suggesting that it isolates students and faculty, possibly lowering educational standards. Concerns surrounding online education often revolve around technology-related issues and reliability. The crash of the teleconferencing platform Zoom on the first day of classes for numerous universities and schools, as reported by Lumpkin and Svrluga (2020), exemplifies these challenges. Nevertheless, when technology functions effectively, it can positively impact student learning experiences, as Roblyer and Ekhaml (2001) found. They discovered that student satisfaction increases when the technology adopted is transparent, reliable, and convenient, and if the course is designed to support learner-centered instructional strategies, and the teacher’s role aligns with that of a facilitator. Despite various advantages and disadvantages, along with differing opinions on online education, global technological advancements make it inevitable that technology will remain an integral component of higher education, even in a post-COVID-19 world.

Within the Japanese context, in the first year of the COVID-19 outbreak, reports of financial hardships and waning motivation led a quarter of Japanese university students to contemplate dropping out (Kyodo News, 2020). These challenges were also echoed in student reactions on social media, notably by manga artist Maki, who depicted the frustration of being unable to attend campus lectures and being isolated at home (Tokyo Web, 2020).

On a larger scale, educators and students expressed concerns about the quality of online education, citing issues like increased preparation time and the inability to replicate hands-on experiences, particularly in fields such as engineering and the arts (Mainichi, 2020; Shoji, 2020). In addition to the struggles faced by students, faculty members at 66 institutions in Japan reported challenges in maintaining course quality through online classes, with concerns about the use of technology for both students and teachers (Mainichi, 2020). Part-time lecturers in Japan faced the arduous task of spending seven to 10 hours filming and editing a single video for an on-demand class, all while earning a fixed fee of approximately ¥10,000 per class (Japan Times, 2020). Therefore, the discontent with an online approach to education was not

only limited to students but resonated among educators grappling with the challenges posed by the sudden shift to online education during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Research on COVID-19 and Its Impact on Students Well Being**

Numerous studies have attempted to illuminate the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental well-being of university students. In a study conducted by Gómez-García et al. (2022), 1873 university students in Spain were found to have been negatively influenced by COVID-19, particularly evident in reduced life satisfaction and increased occurrences of depression, anxiety, and stress. Similarly, an online survey by Chen & Lucock (2022) involving 1173 students from a university in the North of England showed heightened levels of anxiety and depression among students as a direct consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Shiratori et al. (2022) investigated changes in the mental health of university students before and during the pandemic using data from depression screening at the University of Tsukuba, Japan. Comparing 2020 to previous years, they found a doubling in the percentage of students experiencing mental health problems, with the most significant effect observed in sleep difficulties. Stress-coping strategies to deal with the COVID-19 situation, including physical activity and online communication, were identified through student open-ended responses. While the findings underscore the heightened mental health challenges, the study suggests that many students adopted appropriate coping measures. Collectively, these studies emphasized the importance of prolonged monitoring and mental health support for university students during the impact of the pandemic.

This study centers on a semester within the 2021/22 academic year at a Japanese university and aims to explore the perceptions of English language majors who experienced a combination of online and in-person classes during the COVID-19 pandemic. The 15-week course was divided into two distinct phases: the initial seven weeks conducted online, followed by a shift back to on-campus classes in a traditional classroom setting as COVID-19 lockdown restrictions eased. Diverging from studies primarily focused on mental health aspects, this paper examines student opinions regarding these contrasting experiences, emphasizing social, psychological, and technological considerations that are often underrepresented in the existing research literature. Employing a methodology involving classroom-based discussions and a survey, students provided their perceptions and opinions by comparing the benefits and drawbacks of online and in-person university education and extending their evaluations to general and English classes.

### **The Course**

The course comprises 15 classes in the first and second semesters of the academic year, specifically designed for first-year students.

Classes within this course are based on a 'Presentation Discussion and Reaction' (PDR) method (Eichhorst et.al, 2016). The PDR Method conducts learner-centered discussion classes and aims to help develop learners' language, communication, and critical thinking skills.

It is called the PDR Method because it consists of three steps:

- 1) Preparation - involving written or video input in English about an assigned topic and completion of assigned questions, and creation of original questions about the topic.
- 2) In-class Discussion - in which groups of three or four learners engage in three 10 to 15-minute discussions, each of which is done in a new group of students.

3) Post-discussion Reaction writing - a 15-minute period in which learners write a summary/reflection in English about the topic discussed.

The PDR method is based on a flipped classroom approach whereby students watch a given video or read a specific online article (vocabulary glossaries provided) for homework and react to it by answering five given questions. Students ask each other these questions and use their prepared answers to help them actively participate in the three discussions in class. In the first discussion, students can refer to their answers for support, but by the third discussion, they do not look at their written answers.

### **Background and Aims of the Study**

Semesters start in April in Japan, and because the local government initiated a 'soft' lockdown in April 2021 on businesses by asking them to shut down early to prevent the spread of COVID-19, many universities in the area followed suit and continued their classes online. This 'soft' lockdown, however, was lifted seven weeks into the academic year, and classes then resumed to an in-person and on-campus format.

The online classes were conducted via ZOOM from April 15th to June 3rd (7 classes) during the 'soft' lockdown. After the soft lockdown was lifted, in-person classes were reinstated from June 10th to July 29th (8 classes). Eighteen first-year students took this course. As these 1st-year students experienced both online and in-person classes within the same course and semester, this allowed them to examine how they viewed these classes as they transitioned from online to in-person classes.

### **Research Questions and Methodology**

Research on the social and psychological effects and how students coped with having their university education pushed online is still relatively rare. This study aimed to address this gap and examine how online English language education is perceived by students from a social, technological, and psychological point of view. The main questions this paper tries to answer are:

How have students responded to the use of new technology for their online classes?

What are the social, environmental, and psychological effects of the lockdown on university students?

What are the educational implications, and what is the possible direction for the future?

Two specially created 90-minute classes (Class 14 and 15) were created grounded in the PDR method, which aimed to get students to discuss the merits and demerits of online education based on a flipped language approach and write a reaction paper based on their discussions. The classes were followed up with a Likert-scale survey in the last class of the course (class 15) that elaborated further on the issues and topics covered in the lessons.

### **Class 14**

In class 13 of the course, I told students that I would like them to discuss their ideas about what they thought about the first half of the course being taught online and the second half being taught on campus and in the classroom and to compare these two experiences.

As this is a PDR course, I gave students the following articles to read in preparation for the discussions



in class 14.

- Japan's students struggle to embrace online learning amid COVID-19 (Shoji, 2020)
- <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/11/07/national/media-national/students-online-coronavirus/>

In this online newspaper article by Shoji (2020), he examines student postings from Koukouseishinbun.jp, a platform for teenagers and college students to share their sentiments about tertiary education. Student comments include the following:

“I miss seeing my friends and attending lectures with other people” and “I miss the days when I could just go up to professors and talk to them about my major or inquire about overseas study programs”. Other students state, “I spend more than 10 hours a day at my computer, attending lectures and working on assignments” and “There’s no time for anything else. I never get to see anyone or go outside. I don’t know why I even bother with the university experience”. Another is quoted as saying, “My lecture was supposed to be 90 minutes, but the professor left after 10 minutes and just gave everyone stacks of assignments. Is this what university learning should be like?”

- The daily lives of university students are also important. (Tokyo Web, 2020).
- <https://www.tokyo-np.co.jp/article/45091>

This article in Japanese discusses a student who using the username maki@D6H y1q0FQJuxtPO who created a manga series with the hashtag #大学生の日常も大事だ (“The daily lives of university students are also important”). In her manga, she conveyed frustration about being unaware of how her classmates look, never having set foot on her university campus, and spending each day in front of a computer screen for online lectures (Tokyo Web, 2020). Maki's work also expressed her discontent with the discrepancy that while school children attended classes in-person at schools and office workers dined out, university students like herself remained confined to their homes, attending lectures virtually. The manga gained significant traction in July 2020, amassing 300,000 likes and nearly 120,000 retweets. It garnered media attention, with various news outlets covering the story. Maki, the artist, earnestly implored, “Please heed the voices of university students. As a freshman who has yet to experience a traditional lecture, I find myself at the breaking point.”

After students read these articles, they answered the following five questions:

1. What did you think of the news article and the manga? Could you relate to the content?
2. What are the positive and negative points of online education?
3. What were the positive and negative points of having the first half of this English course on ZOOM?
4. Did you like turning the camera on for your ZOOM classes?
5. What are the positive and negative points of coming back to university for on-campus classes in the middle of the semester?

Below is a sample of some of the answers given by students, which are edited for length.

What are the positive and negative points of online education?

**Table 1** Positive and Negative Things about Online Education

<b>Positive things</b>	<b>Negative things</b>
I can get up late	I cannot enjoy University life and meet friends
I can have a flexible schedule	I don't feel like a student.
I can have free time	I can't focus on my class in my house.
No commuting stress	feel lonely
I can save travel expenses	I feel face to face class is more fun than online class
I don' t have to worry about coronavirus	We can get more chance to talk English than online
I don' to have to worry about my daily clothes	There is a lot of homework to be done
I can get up late	I can't stay healthy
I can make and enjoy own time	I get tired when I'm facing the screen for a long time
I can save time by studying at home	I lose concentration

This question aimed to address online education to include their other classes that were conducted online, including seminars and teacher-fronted lectures.

According to the student responses, online learning presents several positive aspects, including the flexibility to wake up late and maintain a flexible schedule, providing additional free time without the stress of commuting, and offering cost savings by eliminating travel expenses and daily clothing concerns. Some students also perceived the health benefits of avoiding possible infection with COVID-19 and the ability to save time while studying at home. However, the negative aspects of online learning were characterized by social isolation and the limitations put on enjoying university life and meeting friends, leading to feelings of loneliness. Many students felt a diminished sense of being a student, finding face-to-face classes more enjoyable than their online counterparts. Academic challenges included difficulties in focusing on classes at home, leading to issues of concentration and tiredness. These results may suggest that while online platforms offer opportunities for English communication, they may not fully compensate for the loss of face-to-face interaction.

**Table 2** Positive and Negative Points of Having the First Half of the English Course on ZOOM

<b>Positive points</b>	<b>Negative points</b>
I can get up late, so I can have a relaxed breakfast	I can't enough speak English, and sometimes I can't listen the voice because of network problem
I feel face-to-face is more fun because I can speak	I didn't like to turn the camera on

to my friend directly and it was very fun to discuss in small groups in class	
I can sleep up to 20 minutes before this class	I didn't understand what I should do
I can save the money, so I use it other things.	There is a possibility that oversleep
It's difficult to communicate online.	I can talk my classmates on ZOOM, but I can't see face-to-face

This question was related to their English course rather than their overall online classes, but responses were similar. Again, this included the flexibility to wake up late, allowing for a 'relaxed breakfast' and more sleep before classes. In addition, the students deemed the social aspect of meeting friends necessary and important.

However, some of the downsides mentioned by students included challenges in English communication and occasional difficulty in hearing or understanding classes due to network problems. The difficulty in online communication, despite established platforms like Zoom, can raise concerns, as face-to-face interactions are not fully replicated online. Understanding specific tasks or instructions during online learning was also a noted challenge. In essence, the positive aspects of online English classes suggested by the students centered around convenience, but their negative experiences revolved around communication barriers and potential drawbacks in the virtual learning environment.

The fourth question was whether students liked turning on their cameras during their Zoom classes. Below is a sample of student answers in edited form.

- I didn't like to do it because I didn't like to show my face to everyone.
- Almost everyone turns off the camera, so I am ashamed that only my face show everyone.
- I don't like turning on the camera because I don't like to keep looking at my face during class.
- I don't like to see my room for classmates.
- It is embarrassing.
- I want to protect my private life.
- I get nervous about turning the camera on for my ZOOM classes.
- I care about if other people turn on their camera or not.

Findings showed that the feelings towards turning on cameras during Zoom classes was predominantly negative among students. Many expressed discomfort in showing their faces to everyone, particularly when most classmates opted to keep their cameras off. Concerns ranged from not wanting to continuously look at their own faces during class to feeling embarrassed about revealing the state of their rooms to their classmates. The desire to safeguard privacy emerged as a common theme, with students expressing nervousness and a preference for keeping the camera off to protect their privacy. There was also a pattern where if other students did not turn on their cameras, then other students did not, which led to almost a collective decision not to use their cameras.

**Table 3** Positive and Negative Points of Coming Back to University for On-campus Classes in the Middle of the Semester

Positive points	Negative points
It is more fun than ZOOM classes	It is hard to get up early and prepare to leave the house
It is easier to concentrate	Expensive transportation costs
I can meet friends	I'm worried about coronavirus
I feel more fun than online class because we can discuss a lot	I feel tired
I can receive teacher's advice directly	I worry that if the weather is too bad, transportation system is late, and I am late for the class

Returning to on-campus classes in the middle of the semester presented a mix of positive and negative student opinions. On the positive side, the in-person experience was deemed more enjoyable and engaging than Zoom classes, fostering a sense of fun and enabling lively discussions with classmates. It also facilitated more effortless concentration and direct communication with the teacher was accessible.

Meeting friends in person was again considered a valuable social benefit. However, the negatives included the challenge of getting up early in addition to concerns about transportation costs. Some students were also concerned about the ongoing pandemic. Therefore, while returning to on-campus classes offered social and educational advantages, some health-related issues contributed to the mixed feelings about the transition.

Once the students finished their three discussions, they were asked to check the statements that they agreed with, as shown below. They could tick as many as they wished.

Please check the statements you AGREE WITH

- For English classes, we must have face to face on campus lessons **50%**
- Online English classes can never be better than on-campus classes **11%**
- Learning online can be lonely **62%**
- On-demand, classes are better than real-time classes **11%**
- I don't like using a camera for online classes because of privacy issues **56%**
- Meeting friends and talking with other students on campus is important to me **89%**
- I can learn from other students and my seniors on campus at university **62%**

Based on the student's choices, most respondents (89%) strongly agreed that meeting friends and conversing with other students on campus is important to them. Additionally, a significant portion (62%) agreed that learning online can be a lonely experience. A notable percentage (56%) expressed discomfort with using a camera for online classes due to privacy concerns. Regarding instructional preferences, 50% agree that face-to-face on-campus lessons are necessary for English classes. However, there is a relatively lower agreement (11%) on the belief that online English classes can never be better than on-campus classes. Similarly, 11% expressed a preference for on-demand over real-time

classes.

### **Class 15: The Last Class**

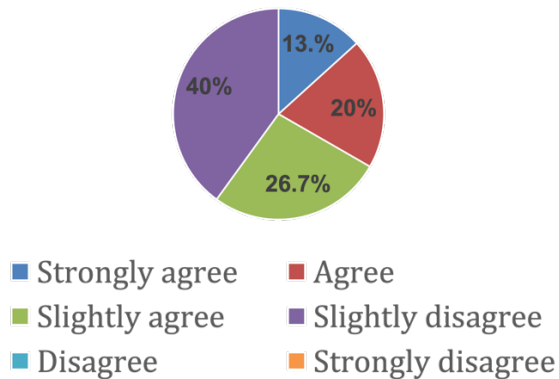
A survey of 12 Likert item statements and two closed questions were given as homework to students in their penultimate class, and in the last class of the course, they were asked to go through each statement and give reasons for their choices.

The Likert scale statements were divided into the main areas of

- *Technological issues and online education*
- *Social/environmental issues*
- *Psychological issues*
- *Educational issues*

#### **Part 1: Technological Issues and Online Education**

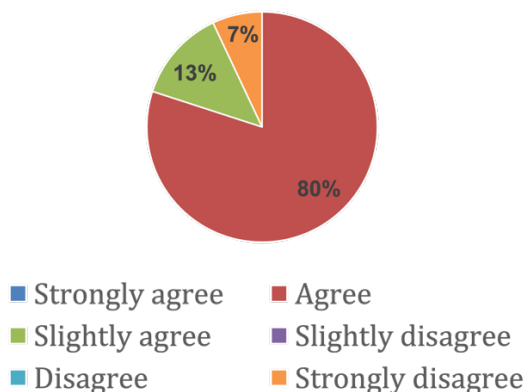
I have good computer skills and knowledge to manage and organize my online learning and classes



#### **Figure 1 Computer Skills**

60% of students agreed they had good enough computer skills and knowledge to manage and organize their online learning and classes. This may not come as a surprise considering that these students can be considered part of the digital native generation who grew up with the internet and online technology.

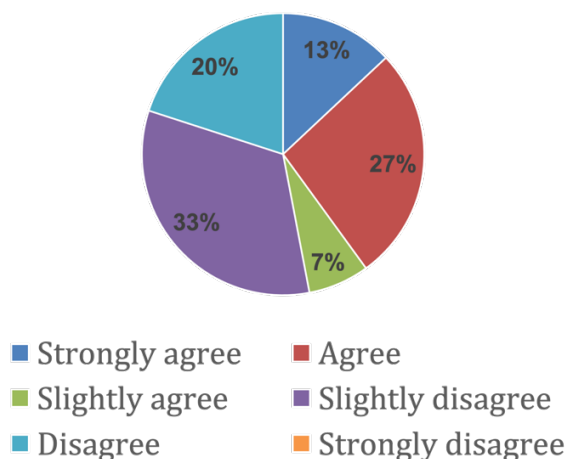
Online tools like Google classroom, Zoom etc are easy for me to use



**Figure 2 Online Tools**

The students also had no problems (93%) using Google Classroom or Zoom, which were used for the online classes. This may be the result of tutorials they received as the university adopted Zoom for their online classes.

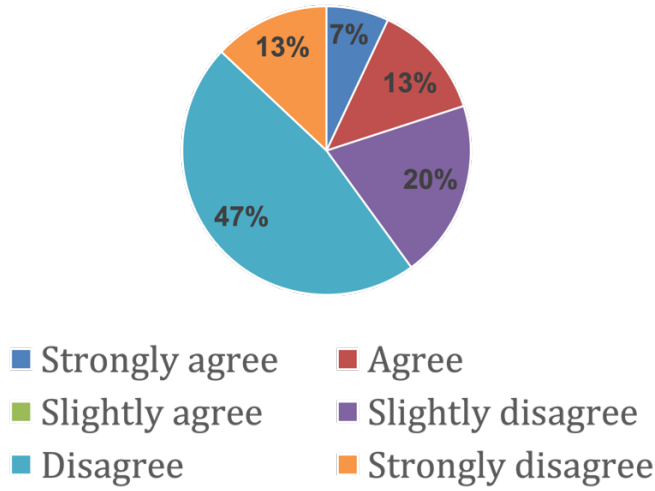
Using Google forms were easy for me at first



**Figure 3 Google Forms**

Homework was administered throughout the course via Google Forms, and this is where students had to write in their responses to questions about a given article or video. These results illustrate that students were divided on how well they could use these Google Forms. Advice and guidance on how to use them were therefore given in class on a regular basis.

I never have computer trouble when I have online classes

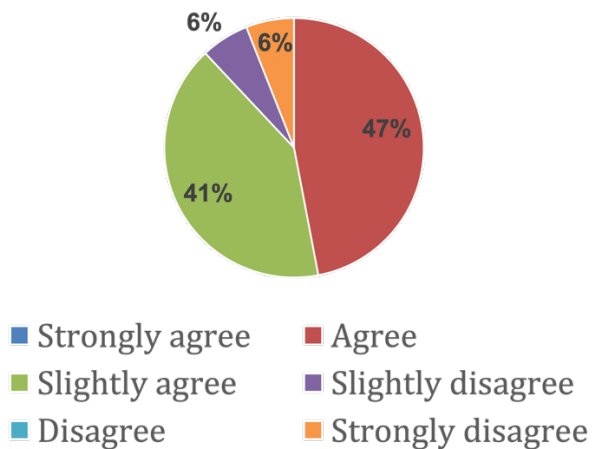


**Figure 4 Computer Trouble**

The majority of students (80%) disagreed with this statement, and evidence for this could be seen weekly with students having Wi-Fi connectivity issues and microphone and camera trouble. Students who could not attend class also emailed me to say they had technical difficulties and could not join Zoom.

**Part 2: Social / Environmental issues**

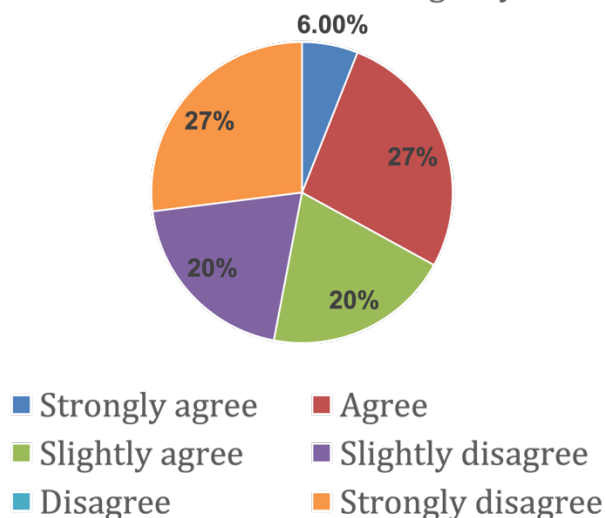
There is a lot of flexibility with online classes and education



**Figure 5 Flexibility**

Most students agreed to various extents (47% agree, 41% slightly agree) that there is a lot of flexibility with online classes. This was mainly because of time management. Online classes gave the students more flexibility to study as travel and commute times were eliminated. On-demand classes offered by some teachers whereby students watched a pre-recorded lecture that could be watched at the students' leisure were also reasons why students stated that online education was flexible.

### Online classes means I can manage my time well

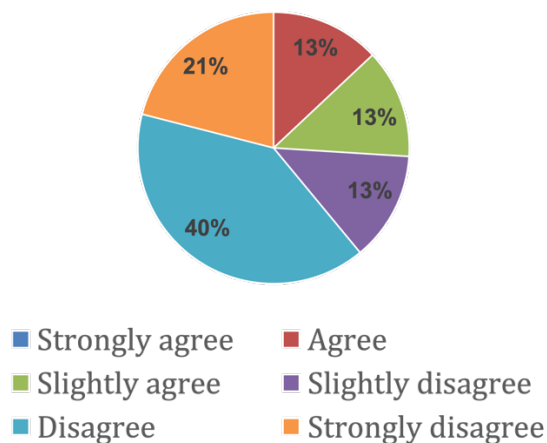


**Figure 6 Time Management**

Many students commented that they could 'sleep in' or take their time in the morning if they had the first-period class online at 8:50 am. Some students admitted that this led them to become increasingly lazy. Some students admitted to still being in their pajamas when they took classes, especially lecture-based classes that did not require them to turn on their cameras.

### Part 3: Social / Psychological Issues

#### I made many friends through classes online

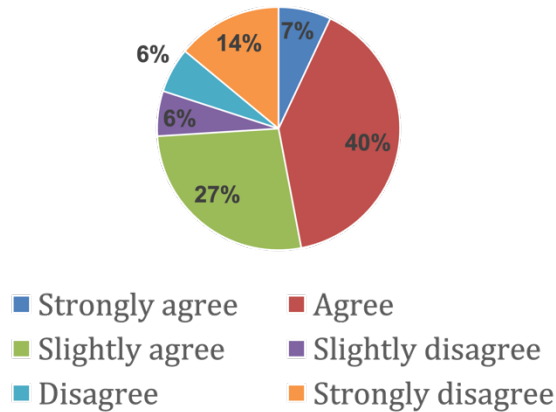


**Figure 7 Friendship**

As mentioned in the discussions in the student's previous lesson, making friends and meeting people was one of the major concerns for students. The fact that they couldn't join university clubs and network with people of a similar age left many students feeling despair and disappointment with the advent of their university life.



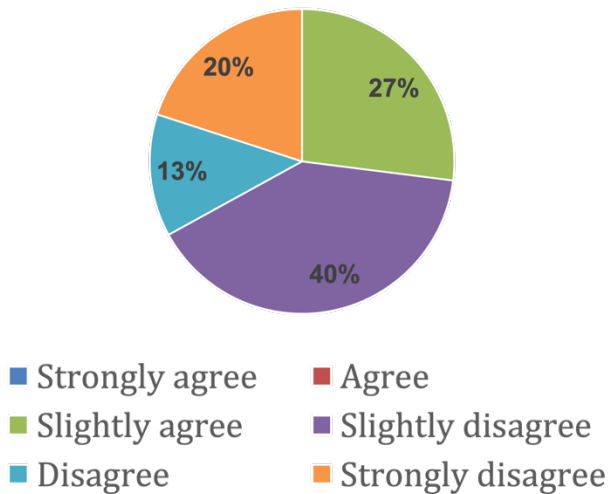
Because I could not attend campus it felt like I was not a real University student



**Figure 9 Student Identity**

The findings showing that the majority of the students (74%) felt that not attending campus led to feelings of not being part of the university. This is mirrored the literature and social media postings at the time, which led to many students to rethink their university career and dropout (Kyodo News, 2020). This was especially annoying for students when school children’s education and classes were relatively unscathed by the COVID-19 virus.

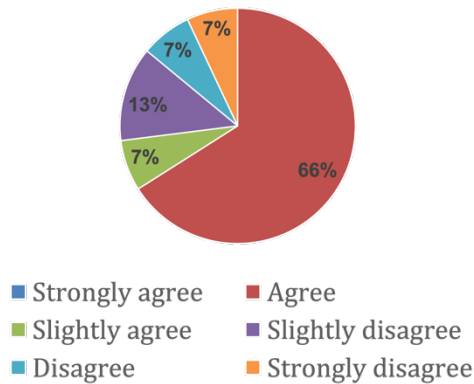
Online classes make me more motivated



**Figure 10 Motivation**

The majority of students (73%) disagreed that online classes made them more motivated and suggested that the reverse happened due to technological issues and health-related concerns such as eye strain and headaches from excessive use of their computers.

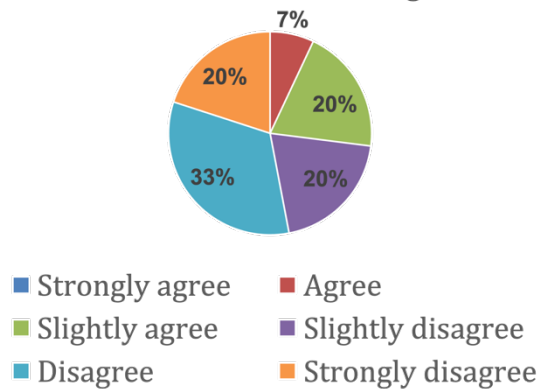
Online classes make me more lazy



### Figure 11 Laziness

Although online classes were considered to be unmotivating by the majority of students, a majority also stated that online classes made them lazier. Students mentioned they were less concerned about their appearance, even though they suggested they had more time and slept more.

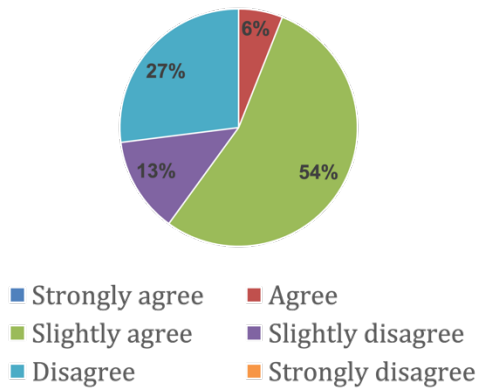
I can communicate with my teacher well with online lessons and can ask questions if I do not understand something



### Figure 11 Teacher Communication

Many students had to rely on email communication with me as they had no face-to-face access to me for the first part of the course. However, some students used the chat option to ask me questions during lesson time or felt comfortable asking me questions when students were allocated to break-out rooms. However, most students (73%) felt that they couldn't communicate with teachers in general through online lessons.

Being taught online is stressful for me

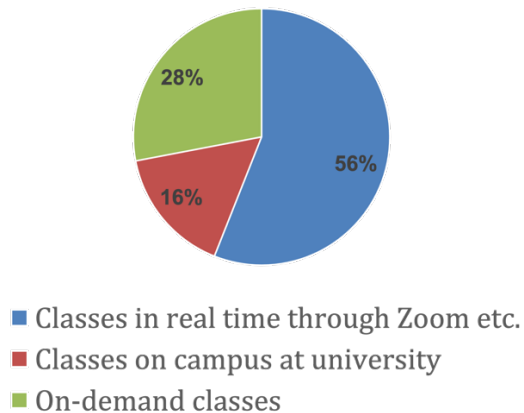


**Figure 12 Stress**

60% of students felt, to varying degrees, that being taught online was stressful for them. However, this was dependent on what subject was being taught. Teacher-fronted lectures were described as stress-free by students as they only had to listen and not actively participate. Classes such as seminars, whereby students had to give presentations and be the focal point of a class, were classified as extremely stressful because of the environment they were held in and the fear of the technological issues that may occur.

#### **Part 4: Educational**

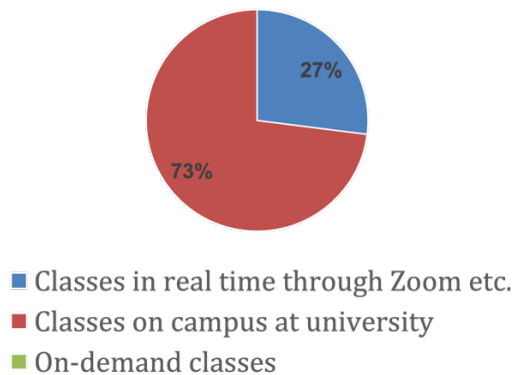
For university classes, which do you prefer?



**Figure 14 Preference**

Interestingly, student responses to this question showed that students preferred classes in real-time through Zoom. However, this does not tell the real picture. Many of the students stated that their answers were in relation to lecture-based content, which was better for them as it gave them the flexibility to stay at home when those lectures took place.

For English speaking classes, which do you prefer?



### Figure 15 English Class Preference

Students overwhelmingly suggested that English classes should be taught on campus and in person, which differs from their views on lecture-based classes, which they prefer to be conducted online. Reasons for this include the ability to gauge student reactions when conducting discussions with one another in-person, the lack of technological issues, and the sense of rapport and camaraderie the students felt when participating in these classes.

### Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the experiences of English language majors at a Japanese university during the 2021/22 academic year, examining their perceptions of both online and in-person classes within the same course amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Unlike studies primarily focused on mental health, this research explores the broader social, psychological, and technological aspects often underrepresented in existing literature. The findings reveal a nuanced perspective among students regarding online education. While recognizing the flexibility and time management benefits offered by online classes, students expressed concerns about social isolation, the impact on friendships, and a sense of disconnection from the university community. The transition from online to in-person classes presented a mix of positive and negative aspects, with students highlighting the enjoyment of face-to-face interactions, engaging discussions, and direct communication with teachers.

However, challenges related to early morning classes, transportation costs, and pandemic-related worries also surfaced. Technological proficiency varied among students, with a majority demonstrating confidence in managing online tools like Google Classroom and Zoom. Nevertheless, technical issues, such as connectivity problems and camera-related discomfort, were common concerns, impacting the overall online learning experience.

Socially and psychologically, the study unveiled the importance of campus life, interaction with peers, and the sense of belonging to the university community. The students expressed a desire for on-campus English classes, emphasizing the value of face-to-face communication to learn English.

The study also brought attention to the impact of online learning on motivation and student identity. Many students reported decreased motivation and feelings of laziness, raising concerns about the effectiveness of online education in maintaining student engagement and enthusiasm. In the context of

ongoing debates about the future of education post-COVID-19, these findings underscore the multifaceted nature of student experiences in a blended learning environment. Recognizing the diverse needs and preferences of students is crucial for shaping effective educational strategies that balance the advantages of technology with the social and psychological aspects. As universities continue to navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by evolving educational landscapes, understanding student perspectives will be paramount in fostering a resilient and adaptive learning environment.

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## Examining the Correlation between Walking Patterns and Student Academic Outcomes

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### **Abstract**

The aim of this study is to provide educational actors with alternative teaching practices and planning perspectives. We aim to establish this through our quest to answer an odd, yet plausible question. During our investigation, we learnt that the demonstration of "Problem Walk" may be used as an indicator to anticipate students' academic performance degradation. We selected 30 students who exhibit signs of a "problem walk," looked up for their records and prepared a dossier to examine. The results showed that 80% of students who demonstrated "problem walk" appeared to have weak academic performance. The findings revealed that students who walk in the same way have had a history of troubled relationships with their teachers in addition to their low school performance.

**Keywords:** Classroom management, behavior, problem walk, social learning

### **Introduction:**

As educators, we understand that multiple factors such as intelligence, motivation, academic behavior, learning styles and habits have had the upper hand determining students' performance in school (Camille A. Farrington, Melissa Roderick, Elaine Al, 2012). However, there are other aspects that if they don't link directly to student's performance, they still affect it. Our perception of ourselves, society, and the modern world affect our physical appearance.

As teachers, it is our responsibility to assume various roles inside the classroom, including serving as facilitators, instructors, and observers (Harmer, 2015). We observe the slightest forms of our student's behavior and analyze them and based on this practice, we have developed a cognitive catalogue to interpret their body language. We are capable, to a reasonable extent, of knowing when they fake, act foolish, or just want to show off. In addition, we are aware when they try hard, genuinely fail and sincerely want to catch-up and improve. Furthermore, as teachers who are based in small areas, we frequently encounter our learners outside the school and therefore we have a greater opportunity to understand them even more. We see how they talk, and walk.

During the few years I have thought English as a foreign language, I noticed a small thing but still too controversial to ignore. I noticed that students who tend to fail their classes, act noisy and disregard their teachers' instructions have something in common. They walk the same way. Our investigation may lead us to link students' academic performance to the way they walk. This would encourage non-educators to take part in the learner's learning process.

### **Literature Review**

The role of non-cognitive factors in shaping learners' performance is viewed with considerable optimism. Their success in school depends fairly on factors such as their attendance, work habits, and social skills that allow them to manage what is referred to as problematic situations inside and outside the classroom

(Furkas, 2003). It is asserted by prominent psychologists that a key determinant of academic performance lies in students' self-control or conscientiousness (Duckworth, 2005). In other words; 'self-control' is a key factor behind failure to exert self-discipline.

Brian Jacob (2002) observes that academic challenges learners encounter are frequently linked to deficient "non-cognitive skills," encompassing issues like "inattention in class, difficulty collaborating with others, struggles in organizing and managing homework or class materials, and a reluctance to seek assistance from others." (Camille A. Farrington, Melissa Roderick, Elaine Al, 2012).

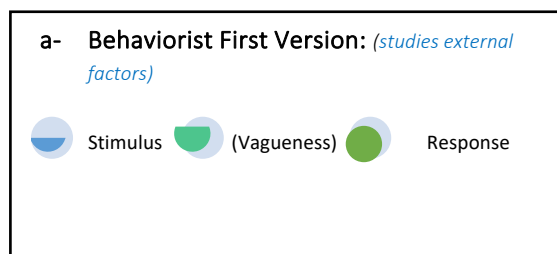
On the other hand, a wide spectrum of research studies in the fields of sociology, psychology, and neurology advocates the basic idea that 'physiology informs psychology'. The influence of thought on behavior is of supreme authority. The profound impact of one's mental state on shaping behavior is highlighted, as actions are strongly swayed by the prevailing frame of mind (Darwin, 1872).

Moreover, recent studies in Social psychology assert that behavior is under the influence of both situation and personality (S. T. Fiske, D. T. Gilbert, & G. Lindzey, 2010). Our interactions and actions are immediately framed by our surroundings and environment ( Richard, Bond, & Stokes-Zoota, 2003). Even the way we dress informs a great portion of who we are (Baumgartner, 2012).

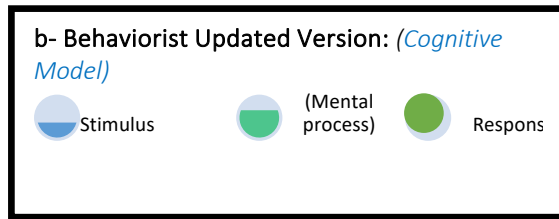
Research on non-cognitive factors often concentrates on a particular skill, mindset, or behavior in isolation. This approach introduces ambiguity regarding the interplay of these factors and their collective impact on student outcomes. Moreover, all these studies target an audience with expertise in the fields of psychology, sociology, and education, raising questions about the feasibility of identifying non-cognitive signs that don't require an expert to notice and examine. What we offer here is, to a great extent, original, since we link students' performance to the way they walk. But there is still a great concern about the way it is.

Our physical appearance has strong ties to our perception of society and of us as members of this society. Each one of us is assigned a status and a role (Merton, 1940) . The role of the student is supposed to align with the school's values and objectives. However, when the school fails to be what it preaches, the deviance occurs. Consequently, some students would choose to rebel on existing societal norms (الزعل، 1993), and adapt roles that doesn't confirm to that of a student. These changes are justified and we assume they are linked to their physical appearance. "Problem walk" is one way the student rebels against the school's values and express different priorities in society.

First of all, let's start by explaining Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory and why it differs from the behaviorist approach. Bandura's upgraded Social Learning Theory (1986) is set apart by its emphasis on cognition, distinguishing it from his earlier theory (1977) as well as Jhon B. Watson's theory (1913).







The mental aspect of the Social Cognitive Theory refers to the phase in which the subject unconsciously internalizes, analyze and reinforce targeted behavioral details. Usually, the targeted behavior is selected through means of attraction or admiration (Bandura 267). Put simply, learners first observe the behavior of individuals they look up to as role models, paying close attention to the consequences that arise from their actions (Albert Bandura, 1963). This marks the occurrence of vicarious learning phenomena which consequently leads to the occurrence of imitative learning (Albert Bandura. Richard H Walters, 1963). It is worthy to note that the imitative learning occurs when the consequences are rewarding, as it is important to recognize that the conception of young people to what is rewarding is not the same as adults.

*Why do we decide to imitate certain behavior in particular?*

We assume that in order for a child to selectively imitate specific details of a behavior, the behavior (person) must be within sight of the child and must be frequently observed (Bandura, Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory, 1986) (Zimmerman, 1978). Additionally, the behavior must be rewarding, such as being attractive to the opposite sex, and must have distinguishable features that are observable, such as a unique tone of voice, clothing, or walking. These features may pertain to an individual's gait or accent (Bandura 1977).

"Consequently, their conceptions of social reality are greatly influenced by vicarious experiences—by what they see, hear, and read—without direct experiential correctives." Bandura 271.

Our objective is to illustrate the applicability of a unique perspective in research studies closely examining the influence of non-cognitive factors on school performance. We advocate for recognizing the 'Problem Walk' as a valid pattern in education, integral to the teaching-learning process. Furthermore, our aim is to offer an intervention plan that is easily applicable to all educational participants, including parents.

### **Research Questions**

This study aimed to investigate and explore the following questions:

1. Is it possible to predict students' academic performance by observing the way they walk?
2. Why we decide to imitate certain behavior in particular?
3. How can parents, educators, and teachers collaborate to address signs of 'Problem Walk'?
4. What counter measures or intervention plans can be implemented in response?

### **Methodology**

In order to demonstrate how the way young learners walk linked to their academic performance, we selected 30 high school students, ages range from 16 to 18, the majority of them we teach or have taught who show signs of problem walk. Once the list is finalized, we brought their transcripts, record of high school final grades, and study their academic scores.

### Research method

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach to gather both qualitative and quantitative data. This includes observational data on 'Problem Walk' as well as detailed examination of 30 students' school records that exhibit signs of problem walk.

### Observational Data Collection (non-cognitive factors framework)

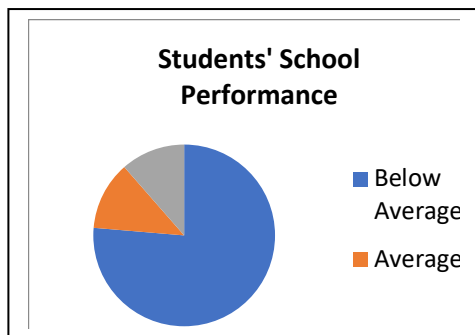
Elements with problem walk exhibit the following signs: Forehead back, chin up, body pushes forward, mainly the weight pushes to the stomach, shoulders sway forward left and right in a rhythmic manner. They deliberately tend to drag their feet on the floor, to move slowly and give an impression of strength and carelessness. For the sake of our research we are going to refer to this behavior pattern as "Problem Walk".

### Record Examination

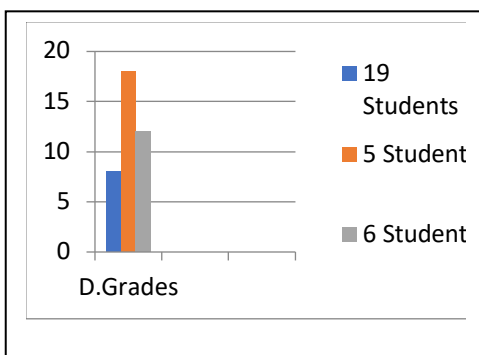
We have collected 60 academic records from 30 students of the current year of this research study and the previous one; the records also include disciplinary grades as well as teachers' observations.

## Analysis and Findings

Graph 1: Examination of students' school records



Graph 2: Representation of students' Disciplinary grades



Graph 1 illustrates the distribution of overall academic achievement among 30 students, categorized into three school descriptions: Below average, Average, and Above average. The data are presented as follows: 20 students are below average, 6 are average, and 5 are above average.

On the other hand, Graph 2 displays the disciplinary grades of students. It's noteworthy that in Moroccan

public high schools, discipline is graded based on attendance, behavior towards teachers and administration, whether students have had any disciplinary measures before or not, on a scale of 20 out of 20. The grade is included as an element of overall academic performance, with the understanding that 1 is its lowest level.

### **Results**

The results showed that approximately 80% of students who demonstrated "problem walk" appeared to have weak academic performance. The findings revealed that students who walk in the same way have had a history of troubled relationships with their teachers in addition to their low school performance.

### **Discussion**

By this study, we by no means seek to conclude that low school performance is the result of 'Problem walk'. However, we want all those engaged in the act of education to consider this manifestation as a sign of behavior degradation which must be regarded as a factor among the multiple factors which impact learners' school achievement.

The manifestation of walk problem has to be regarded as a valid indicator in order to anticipate any deviance or degradation in terms of learners' academic performance and therefore prepare a cooperative plan for more effective countermeasures. We strongly believe that the earlier the intervention occurs, the better chances are to positively influence our children.

### **Intervention Plan**

#### *Act Accordingly*

The school should work on bringing role models to the learner's environment, encourage those selected kids to come, by organizing special events and invite guests who are leaders in entrepreneurship, education, medicine, and the list goes on.

The school should work on bringing role models to the learner's environment, encourage those selected kids to come, by organizing special events and invite guests who are leaders in entrepreneurship, education, medicine, and the list goes on.

Children who were selected by teachers, parents and school administration, should be given an assignment and told that their attendance is mandatory. The assignment is simply filling out a form that has four stages:

The process to target this behavior is based on four phases:

- A. **Noticing:** The aim of noticing is to make students conscious of appearance of the guests. By describing how they dress, talk and walk. Awareness is crucial for learning to happen (Spielberger, 1966).
- B. **Analyzing:** Our ultimate objective in this phase is to reinforce units of the behavior's demonstration in their inner mind. We recommend the composition of a series of WH-questions that would incite learners to frequently think and question the appearance.
- C. **Comparing:** Our purpose in this stage is to lead learners to unconsciously question the demonstration of their own behavior. Writing or speaking activities in which they are instructed to demonstrate the differences and similarities would be an efficient means for our purpose.
- D. **Evaluating:** This stage is crucial to us as educators, teachers, and parents as this is the step in which we are putting under close scrutiny the overall of our planning.

### 1. Instruction and guidance for teachers:

The assignment should be reviewed by teachers once students return to classes. Teachers should take this task seriously and prepare a lesson plan with clear objectives. The assignment should not mark the end of this process, but rather be accomplished repeatedly to reinforce learning.

### 2. Implement PBIS in the Classroom:

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) multi-tiered framework brings about practices, with social and behavioral objectives, in a classroom setting. It includes three tiers:

- First Tier includes proactive and positive elements that apply to every student in the classroom, such as designing effective classroom environments, developing predictable routines, teaching expectations, delivering engaging instruction, providing prompts and active supervision, acknowledging positive behavior, and responding to problem behavior.
- Second tier school personnel align their supports with existing classroom practices provide targeted professional development, and increase prompts and specific feedback for individual students.
- Third tier provides intensive, individualized support for students who require it, with behavior support plans and individualized professional development plans for school personnel ( Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports (PBIS)).

### Conclusion

Non-cognitive factors may significantly impact our behavior and cognition. This study aimed to investigate the link between problem walk and students' school performance. The study presents a close examination of 30 high school students' academic records from the past two years, focusing on subjects exhibiting signs of what we assume to be "problem walk". Even if these non-cognitive factors don't directly affect students' performance, they are still used as indicators to take countermeasure or corrective actions with the purpose of preventing and correcting any deterioration in learner's academic performance. This paper offers an alternative perspective for addressing low achievement and problematic behavior in an unorthodox manner. It provides straightforward and practical procedures for both educator actors and parents to actively participate in the learning-teaching process.

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## **Constructive Feedback and Student Autonomy**

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### **Abstract**

Education and education technology always change; changes are challenges and opportunities. Teachers need to act upon the shift from lecturing to facilitation, from teacher-centered to learner-centered approaches and from summative to learner-oriented formative assessment. They need to plan, deliver and reflect on teaching, students' learning and assessment differently to develop quality teaching and student autonomy. Feedback is one of the formative assessment techniques that help students learn and develop effectively. There are different types of feedback; feed up, feedback and feedforward. Teachers should keep their feedback focused on students' learning processes and related to learning outcomes. Education technology helps to deliver different types of feedback remotely, quickly and flexibly.

**Keywords:** Feedback, facilitation, student autonomy, and formative assessment.

### **Introduction**

There are always regular changes of education and education technology; changes are challenges and opportunities. Teachers need to act upon the shift from lecturing to facilitation, from teacher-centered to learner-centered approaches and from summative to learner-oriented formative assessment. They need to plan, deliver, and reflect on teaching, students' learning, and assessment differently to develop quality teaching and learning. Feedback is one of the formative assessment techniques that help students learn and develop effectively. Hattie (2009) thinks that feedback is critical; it helps improve learning and students' motivation. There are different types of feedback; feed up, feedback and feedforward. Feed up refers to the instructions given by teachers to help students get learning outcomes from the very beginning of learning. Feedback refers to the instructions given by teachers to students on how they go through learning. Feedforward refers to the instructions given by teachers to help students go next on their learning. Teachers should keep their feedback focused on students' learning processes and related to learning outcomes. They should use feedback that meets students' needs and learning styles on time. They should prompt students' thinking and help them define, implement, and self-assess improvements. They should identify and recognize students' successes. New technology helps to deliver different types of feedback remotely, quickly, and flexibly. Online platforms, digital applications, and social media help teachers and students communicate instantly and productively.

### **Facilitation**

To move from lecturing to facilitation, teachers should be facilitators, not lecturers. They help students to learn by themselves, they help to enable students to be independent and autonomous learners. To do so, they develop the qualities of guides, coaches, and inquirers. As guides, teachers help students go throughout learning processes and offer help when needed. As coaches, they help students develop skills practice and provide role models for students. They develop their awareness of students' backgrounds, needs, challenges and opportunities to provide advice and support. As inquirers, they develop questioning

skills; they ask deep questions to develop higher order thinking skills “HOTS”. To develop project-based learning “PBL” and flipped learning, teachers raise deep questions for students to practice critical thinking skills. They also observe, monitor and scaffold students’ learning based on understanding of their interests, needs, abilities, learning styles and individual differences as well. In face-to-face or online instruction, teachers begin with students’ input, differentiate multi-disciplinary curricula instruction, promote students’ collaboration, and use formative assessment. Formative assessment is an in-process form of assessment conducted throughout teaching and learning processes. It helps to monitor students’ progress, develop teaching and learning and provide constructive feedback. Quizzes, storytelling, show and tell, presentations, rubrics, questioning, observations, exit tickets and projects are some techniques of formative assessment. Teachers should give constructive feedback of different types that help students to learn, develop and grow. To give feed up, teachers direct students towards goals. They help students get instructions to develop learning outcomes from the very beginning of learning. They help them to learn where they would go throughout their learning journey. To give feedback, teachers help students learn how they learn, perform, and grow. They help them learn about their current learning. To give feedforward, teachers highlight to students next learning steps towards improvement. They help students to move forward throughout their learning journey.

### **Constructive Feedback**

Wiggins (2012) states that effective feedback is goal-referenced, tangible, transparent, user-friendly and actionable. Effective feedback is goal-referenced. Teachers give constructive, developmental and non-judgmental feedback. They ask questions and give reflective comments that help students define goals and learning outcomes. They share descriptions of what students need to achieve. Effective feedback is tangible. Teachers highlight actual results based on goals and learning outcomes. To do so constructively, they observe students, assess their portfolios and watch videos that show students’ learning and progress. Effective feedback is transparent. Teachers share goals, learning outcomes and assessment rubrics with different students from the very beginning. They regularly share feedback comments, reflections and thoughts with students, colleagues, and parents. They provide students with equal opportunities to discuss and respond to feedback. Effective feedback is user-friendly. Teachers deliver oral, written, verbal and non-verbal feedback in different ways that meet the learning styles and capacity of different students. They use simple and accurate language that is the most suitable to students’ age, background, and level. Effective feedback is actionable. Teachers give specific comments, thoughts, and actions for students to reflect on and act upon throughout their learning journey. They give timely, consistent, and ongoing feedback to help students move from where they are to where they could go based on their pace.

### **Student Autonomy**

Chickering and Gamson (1987) think that feedback is one the seven principles of good teaching practice. Feedback helps language teachers and instructors develop their students through direct and online instruction. To give constructive feedback and develop student autonomy in language classrooms, teachers use positive body language. They provide formative feedback to develop students’ growth and growth mindsets. They keep feedback positive by using feedback sandwich; it is to give a corrective comment between two positive comments. They give time-bound and frequent feedback and engage students in feedback activities. They are specific and they give students their own time and space as well.

To respond to education and education technology changes, English language teachers and instructors give online instruction, assessment and feedback remotely. There are different online tools – such as

Grammarly and Formative – that help English language teachers provide their students with formative assessment and constructive feedback, so they help develop student autonomy. Grammarly is a digital writing tool that helps check spelling, grammar and plagiarism. Formative is a real-time learning, teaching and assessment tool that helps create student-centered assessments at school or home. To provide students with remote and effective online feedback, English language teachers address students by their names to raise their self-esteem. They give immediate and regular feedback to keep students engaged. They give specific and balanced feedback to help students act upon and develop their learning processes. They ask critical questions and give reflective comments using positive tone to help students be recognized and to develop their higher thinking skills.

### **Conclusion**

To act upon education and education technology changes, challenges and opportunities, English language teachers use constructive feedback to develop student autonomy. Feed up, feedback and feedforward are different types of feedback that is given by teachers to students before, during and after teaching and learning. Effective feedback is goal-referenced, user-friendly and actionable. Teachers' roles change; they are facilitators, guides and mentors. They always plan, deliver and reflect on teaching, learning and assessment individually and collaboratively. Education technology helps both teachers and students communicate and learn from constructive feedback; they help share, learn from and act upon feedback directly and remotely.

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## Gender Representation in English Textbooks: The Case of High School Textbooks in Jordan

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### Abstract

One of the domains where language and gender interplay come to the fore is the English language textbooks. While producers of English as a foreign language (EFL) textbooks strive for improving different aspects of the EFL materials included in the textbooks, there is evidence from a wide range of scholarly works that the interaction of language and gender is still a developing issue. Much of current scholarship has shown the need for a special attention to the presentation of gender in EFL. Consequently, the current study investigates how gender is presented and represented in two of the EFL textbooks in Jordan, namely, Action Pack 11 and Action Pack 12. A quantitative approach is applied in this study by analyzing male and female mentions, characters, and roles linguistically and visually. The results have shown that male characters are overrepresented linguistically, visually, and socially. In the texts and photos, the ratio of females to males in the texts and illustrations is 1:2, whereby the men monopolize more social roles than women do. The study also revealed some gender stereotyping, particularly in the context of occupations and how women were represented in photos and illustrations, suggesting that the authors of the Action Pack Series were not constrained by any particular gender criteria when creating these educational materials. Action Pack 11 and 12 have so far failed to accurately represent the contemporary Jordanian society, where Jordanian women hold outstanding jobs and are greatly admired.

**Keywords:** Gender bias, gender representation, EFL textbook, Jordan, Action Pack 11, Action Pack 12

### Introduction

Gender representation plays a vital role in shaping societal perception and cultural norms, as well as attitudes towards gender-assigned roles. In the area of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education, the depictions in textbooks have a significant impact not only on the learners' understanding and awareness of gender roles, but also on gauging the effectiveness of inclusive learning. Furthermore, investigating the representation of gender in EFL textbooks gives room to challenging stereotypes which in turn reflect gender inequality in all walks of life. Stereotype is a challenge that has influenced someone's life from time to time. Stereotypes can occur in a wide range of aspects. For instance, in daily life and education, stereotypes also occur in gender. Some examples of stereotypes include: a girl is fussy and bossy, a boy is more powerful than a girl, and women are bad drivers. These are gender stereotypes, as Elbalqis (2020) suggests. Gender bias has been largely observed and acknowledged in education, specifically in the educational curricula (Ahmad & Shah, 2019). Clearly in English language teaching (ELT) textbooks, different ethnic, age, class, mental level, gender variables must be taken into account.

The motivation for this research is two-fold. First, the researchers' personal observation as teachers of

EFL that textbooks do not include balanced representation of gender. Second, recent scholarship has recognised the important role of EFL textbooks as a primary source of language input in shaping the learners' perceptions and understanding of gender dynamics and social norms (Khiari, 2022; Joo, Chik, & Djonov, 2020). Additionally, studies focusing on gender representation in textbooks have shown EFL textbooks often underpin traditional gender roles, giving a picture of males as dominant, assertive, and holding positions of authority, whereas females are pictured as passive, nurturing, and occupying domestic roles (Smith, 2017; Brown & Smith, 2019). Such representations not only frustrate learning among the underrepresented group, which is normally females (Nofal & Qawar, 2015), but also affect learners' self-esteem and identity development (Lee, 2018; Jones & Johnson, 2020).

Against this backdrop, examining the gender representation in textbooks is crucial as it enables educators to identify and address any potential social issues, such as gender bias, present in the textbooks. It also helps teachers and decision makers to make informed decisions when selecting the most suitable textbooks for their students (Hassan, 2015). The value of this study lies in aiding to increase textbook designers, teachers, and applied linguists' awareness of the values and norms of the societies they work with. To this end, the present study investigates the portrayal of gender in Action Pack (AP) 11 and 12: the content used for this study was taken from the English language textbooks that have been taught to students in grades 11 and 12 since 2014 and 2015 respectively. While Judith Greet, Cheryl Pelteret, and Liz Kilbey authored AP 12, AP 11 was authored by Edwina Johnson as one of the publications of York Press, England.

This study aims to examine (1) the representation of gender and gender roles in an EFL textbook. Specifically, it examines whether there is balance in gender representation in two EFL textbooks, which are the 2014 AP 11 and the 2015 AP 12 for grades eleven and twelve respectively; (2) how AP 11 and 12 represent equal opportunities for men and women and their social roles in the Jordanian society, and (3) the portrayal of both males and females and the roles they play in the home and domestic settings in general.

To achieve the intended objectives, an overarching question guided this study: "Is there equitable gender representation in Jordanian EFL textbooks?" Equitable gender representation refers to the number, type, content, and context of male and female images. This overarching question was split into three sub-questions as follows:

1. What is the ratio of female to male characters in AP 11 and AP12?
2. How are [wo]men portrayed in social settings?
3. How are [wo]men portrayed in domestic settings?

### **Gender representation in textbooks**

Gender equality is defined as the absence of discrimination based on sex with regard to goals, priority setting, benefit distribution, and access to healthcare (Anjarwati, 2020). Furthermore, gender equity pertains to the fair and equal allocation of rewards, authority, finances, and responsibilities between women and men (Anjarwati, 2020). To achieve gender equity, it is important to have a balanced representation of males and females and equal distribution of resources among them. Conversely, gender imbalance occurs when one gender is overrepresented in content or imagery, while the other is underrepresented. This issue is of great importance in textbooks as they play a significant role in the

socialization processes and may contribute to the development of gender biases among students. Gender stereotypes can also be reinforced through interactions and textbooks. Therefore, it is crucial for educators to be aware of gender prejudice and strive to eliminate it in their interactions with students. Providing students and teachers with textbooks that do not contain gender bias is equally important for creating a fair and inclusive learning environment (Vedari, 2021).

Current scholarship on gender representation has focused on a plethora of linguistic content aspects of gender in textbooks. While some studies focused on analyzing Hallidayan textual metafunctions through the linguistic signs of the EFL textbooks (e.g., Gharbarvi & Mousavi, 2012), others focused on gender representation drawing upon semiotic analysis (Jannati, 2015) and critical discourse analysis (Al Kayed, Al-Khawaldah, and Alzu'bi, 2020; Hamaidah, 2017). For instance, Hamidah (2017) shows that gender representation can be determined by four factors: (1) characteristics and behaviors, (2) types of games, (3) aspirations and interests, and (4) achievements. In terms of aspirations, men are often portrayed as having ambitions in physically challenging and intellectually demanding jobs, whereas women are depicted as having ambitions in careers that emphasize emotion and subtlety.

Additionally, gender representation is studied by various scholars in different areas. For instance, Healy (2009) focuses on gender representation in occupations and conversations, while Lee and Collins (2010) categorize gender representation in textbooks based on female and male characters, social and domestic roles, semantic roles, masculine generic constructions, titles, order of appearance, and pictorial representation of males and females. Similarly, Ummu Salamah (2014) analyzes gender representation based on categories such as female/male pictures, mentions, roles, games, role models, and patterns of mentioning female/male names. Karima (2017) investigates various categories to analyze gender representation, which includes:

- a) Invisibility: a lower number of males or females compared to the opposite gender.
- b) Occupational stereotyping: the portrayal of females or males in fewer and less prestigious occupational roles.
- c) Relationship stereotyping: women are depicted more in relation to men than men in relation to women.
- d) Personal characteristic stereotyping: for instance, portraying women as emotional and timid.
- e) Disempowering discourse roles: portraying more males speaking first.

In the context of Middle East, particularly in Jordan, Various empirical studies have been carried out exploring gender representation in EFL textbooks, either AP Series or other books. Following is a glimpse of the conducted research.

Shtewi (2003) investigated the representation of gender roles in 96 textbooks in primary schools. He also analyzed the content and data of the textbooks. The results of Shtewi's study showed that 87% of the majority of the public roles are male-dominated, while female roles were traditional as in teaching. Also, Bataineh (2014) conducted a study that involved content analysis of gender representation in nine Jordanian EFL textbooks. The research findings indicated that these textbooks contained significant and substantial gender disparities. The quantitative and qualitative data demonstrated that males were represented more frequently than females in images, photographs, pictures, and illustrations. Furthermore, the study revealed that images and texts in these textbooks covertly and overtly portrayed males as superior and females as inferior. The study also concluded that these textbooks still contained traditional, stereotypical, and biased images and perceptions of gender inequality.

Al Kayed, Khawaldah, and Alzu'bi (2020) explored in their study gender representation in EFL textbooks within the context of Jordan. The researchers gathered data from the international ELT textbook series, specifically Interchange 1A & 2B Student's Textbooks, which were used in teaching undergraduate students at Al-Balqa Applied University. The results of the investigation indicated that the textbooks displayed a bias towards men in certain roles and activities, such as "craftsman" and "fitness trainer," while women were underrepresented. However, the study also revealed that the textbooks did demonstrate some degree of gender equality in terms of visual representation and certain activities and roles.

AP Series was also focused on in this regard, for example, Hamdan (2010) focused on the issue of gender bias in textbooks, which is a work package series from Grade 1 to Grade 9, used in public schools in Jordan. He did a content analysis based on the calculation of the number and types of jobs for males and females. He collected qualitative and quantitative data. The results revealed that the selected textbooks reflected culturally prevalent gender biases. Hamdan also shed light on the males who are portrayed in the textbooks as the influential and dominant figures in the labor market. While females practiced traditional jobs such as teachers and nurses. Similarly, Nofal and Qawar (2015) examined gender representations in an ELT textbook used in Jordan (i.e., AP 10). As a result, they discovered that male characters were over-represented socially, visually, and linguistically. Females outnumbered males in illustrations and texts by a factor of 3:1. They also discovered that men dominated more societal roles than women. Based on these findings, they concluded that 'AP 10' failed to meet modern Jordanian society, in which women were highly regarded and given prominent positions. Likewise, Hassan (2015) conducted a study to examine the prevalence of gender stereotyping in Jordanian English language textbooks used in AP Grades 6, 7, and 8. The findings revealed that while some aspects have improved, such as the reduced use of masculine generic pronouns, the majority of illustrations and text examples still displayed male dominance. In all three textbooks, there was a clear bias towards male characters occupying dominant roles, while female characters were portrayed in passive, domestic, or subservient roles.

Internationally, many scholars delved into the complexities of gender representation in EFL textbooks from different lenses. For example, in Saudi Arabia, Aljuaythin (2018) investigated the representation of gender in two English as a Foreign Language textbooks for elementary students in Saudi Arabia. The analysis of the two textbooks revealed a gender imbalance in favor of males. As a result of this disparity, women were portrayed as marginalized and stereotypical figures. According to this study, such underrepresentation of women may create a false reality about women's perceptions and may impede the process of ensuring equality for all humans. This paper also indicated a symmetrical representation of gender in textbooks could increase female empowerment in Saudi Arabia.

In Japan, Lee (2018) investigated whether the Japanese government's recent efforts to promote a "gender-equal" society and women's improved status are reflected in gender representation patterns in Japanese English as a foreign language textbook. The study examined the ratio of female-to-male appearances, the extent of use of gender-neutral and gender-marked constructions, the common adjectives associated with women and men, the common address titles for reference to women, and the order of appearance of women and men in four popular series of English language textbooks published in 2011 for local Japanese students using corpus linguistic tools (e.g. concordancing, keyword in context).

The findings revealed some evidence of gender equity, such as the widespread use of gender-inclusive terminology (e.g., salesclerk, waitress) and the neutral address title Ms for women. The 'male-first' phenomenon, on the other hand, is still prevalent in contemporary Japanese textbooks, implying women's secondary status.

In Pakistan, Ahmad and Shah (2019) investigated gender representation in an English language textbook taught to the students of Grade-5 in public and private schools in Punjab (Pakistan) by applying Fairclough's three-dimensional model. To that end, content and critical discourse analysis approaches were used to examine the textbook's eight-factor gender discrimination. As a result, it was discovered that the said textbook was highly gender biased, favoring males over females. It also appeared that the said textbook was intended to maintain male dominance in both implicit and explicit ways. In practice, such a state of affairs may result in gender discrimination. As a result, the study suggested that both genders should be represented in an equalized proportion. This can be accomplished by increasing the number of female authors, educating teachers about gender discrimination, and encouraging them to highlight gender biased issues in education.

In Indonesia, Anjarwati (2020) analyzed the representation of gender in Pathway to English, the primary English language teaching ELT resource used in Senior High Schools across Indonesia. The findings of the study indicated that gender stereotypes persisted in the textbook. Specifically, there were 24 images of females and 38 images of males, and 23 female occupations depicted in pictures and texts compared to 55 male occupations. Moreover, there were only 5 images of females engaged in games or sports, while 21 male counterparts were represented. The study also showed that male characters were presented as "first" in dialogues more frequently (11 times) than female characters (4 times). Additionally, domestic roles were attributed to females in 14 instances, while only 5 instances of male characters were depicted in similar roles. Lastly, there were 14 female role models shown through texts and pictures, in contrast to 37 male role models. Based on these findings, it is evident that gender stereotypes continue to persist in the Pathway to English textbook.

AP 11 and 12 were recently introduced in 2010 and it was the first edition of this release. The researchers analyze the second developed editions of the selected textbooks, which were improved and introduced in 2014 and 2015. It is worth mentioning that this study differs from what was mentioned above in that it analyzes the two books AP 11 and 12 that have not been analyzed before. Thus, the researchers desired to see whether gender was considered by the authors when improved the two textbooks.

## **Method and procedures**

### ***The selected textbooks***

The content of this study was drawn from the English language textbooks taught to Grade 11 and 12 students. While AP 12, which is authored by Judith Greet, Cheryl Pelteret and Liz Kilbey, AP 11 is authored by Edwina Johnson. The two textbooks are published by York Press in England and are based on Jordan's General Guidelines and General and Specific Outcomes for the English Language: Basic and Secondary Stages, which incorporate all four language skills into topics. Each AP Series level comes with a Student's Book, a cassette with listening material, an Activity Book, and a Teacher's Book. The chosen student's book, the 2014 AP 11 and the 2015 AP12, are made up of six modules. AP 11 and 12 were selected for content and visual analysis. The analysis was carried out on the personalities of men and women mentioned in the written texts, which contain dialogues, interviews, letters, stories and

biographies that are related to different topics such as technology, health, achievements, learning, choices, celebrations, sports and world cultures.

In order to help answer the research questions, the researchers used the content analysis which is a research tool used in determining the presence of certain words, themes... etc. Usually, content analysis is applied to written or visual data. According to White and Marsh (2006), content analysis involves categorizing or coding various types of communication based on a conceptual framework. This method can be applied to a wide range of communication forms, including books, magazines, songs, paintings, speeches, and letters. Content analysis provides a comprehensive and precise analysis of the data.

### ***Data analysis procedures***

The researchers followed Gharbavi and Mousavi's (2012) and Nofal and Qawar's (2015) steps to analyse the selected textbooks. First, the textbook is chosen. The textbooks then undergone mass observation. The content analysis process included two stages of mass observation: the first was performed after the textbook was selected to allow the researchers to take a quick look at the textbook and to ensure that it consisted of the data needed by the researchers. After that, the researchers divided the contents into various categories, such as graphic characters, characters mentioned, social and domestic activities, and so on. The second phase focused on revising the main hypothesis that had been developed prior to the first phase. The researchers considered the reliability of the analysis by conducting the analysis individually and then the results were cross-checked jointly to solve the discrepancies detected (Nofal & Qawar, 2015). The data were analyzed based on these aspects:

- Female/male images: the researchers counted the number of female/male images in the book. First, the visibility category was employed to evaluate whether gender representation was present in the pictures. This category was utilized to examine the frequency of male or female individuals depicted in the textbook images.
- Female/male mentioned in the book: the female/male mentioned in the books was counted. It included both female and male names, and personal pronouns.
- Female and male social roles: social roles mean which occupations were associated with men or women, and a category was created and analyzed. The category included text and picture examples for various occupations in each module. As a result, the researchers were able to categorize the occupations as being predominantly for females, males, or for both genders (Nofal & Qawar, 2015).
- Female and male domestic roles: The purpose of the domestic role category was to identify how gender was portrayed.

A quantitative analysis was applied in the study by counting the number of male and female mentions, male and female characters, and male or female roles. Additionally, this study presented a frequency analysis of illustrated images in the activity and student's books, and then characters and roles in the reading texts in the student's and activity books.

## **Results and discussion**

### ***Visibility of males and females***

The first question is pertinent to the visual and linguistic appearance of males and females in the selected textbooks to gauge the ration of female to male characters in the textbooks. To answer this question, the researchers start by presenting the findings of the visual representation of both males and females

followed by the linguistic ones from texts of AP 11 and then by presenting the findings from AP 12 following the same order.

### A. The ratio of female to male characters in photos and illustrations

AP 11 includes a total of 83 pictures (one-character and multi-character pictures). The visual analysis for both Student's Book (SB) and Activity Book (AB) as shown in Table 1 shows that male characters visually appear more often than female characters.

**Table 4.1. Visibility of male and female characters in AP 11 in photos and illustrations.**

Module	Females		Males		Module	Females		Males	
	SB	AB	SB	AB		AB	AB		
One	1		12		One	1		1	
Two	7		6		Two	0		0	
Three	8		21		Three	0		0	
Four	1		1		Four	0		0	
Five	1		12		Five	0		5	
Six	2		4		Six	0		0	
TOTAL	20		56		TOTAL	1		6	

Table 1 shows that male characters are more visible in photos and illustrations in AP 11 for both SB and AB with 62 occurrences (74.69%) while female characters appear 21 times (25.3%). The ratio of female to male characters in the pictures of the AP 11 is around 1:3. This suggests that generally female characters are visually underrepresented in AP11.

Examining the visual representation of men and women in the one-character pictures and multi-character pictures of AP11, Figure 4.1 shows that there are 71 one-character pictures and only 12 multi-character pictures. Furthermore, Figure 4.1 shows that while men and women are equally represented in multi-character pictures, men are overrepresented in one-character pictures which represent the majority of pictures in the textbook.

**Figure 4.2. Frequency of occurrence of males and females in pictures of AP 11**

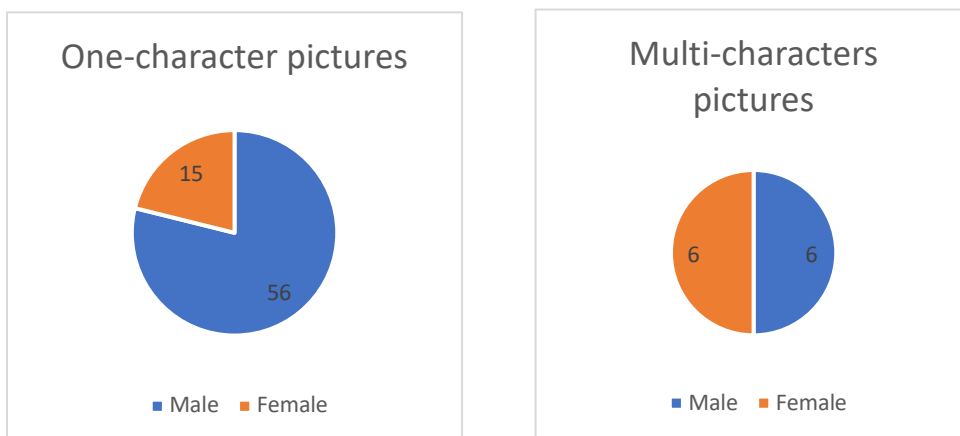


Figure 4.2 shows that males in One-character pictures are more visible in photos and illustrations in AP 11 for both the SB and AB with 56 occurrences (78.8%) and that female characters appear 15 times (21.1%). While in the Multi-Characters Pictures, the result was equal between males and females with 6 occurrences (50%) in AP 11 for both the SB and AB.

AP 12 includes a total of 103 pictures (one-character and multi-character pictures). The visual analysis of the both the SB and AB as shown in Table 4.3 shows that male characters visually appear more often than female characters.

**Table 4.3. Total visibility of male and female characters in photos and illustrations in AP 12**

<b>Grade 12: Illustration (Photos)</b>				
<b>Units</b>	<b>Females</b>		<b>Males</b>	
	<b>SB</b>	<b>AB</b>	<b>SB</b>	<b>AB</b>
<b>Module one</b>	6	0	7	0
<b>Module two</b>	7	0	14	0
<b>Module three</b>	2	0	10	1
<b>Module four</b>	11	0	9	0
<b>Module five</b>	8	0	7	1
<b>Module six</b>	8	0	12	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>40.70%</b>		<b>59%</b>	

Table 4.3 shows that male characters' presence in photos and illustrations in AP 12 for both the student's and activity books constitutes the total number 61 with the percentage 59% while females have appeared 42 times with the percentage 40.7%. It is obvious that, similar to AP 11, male characters appear in AP 12 more than do the female characters but in varying degrees.

Again, having a look at the types of pictures in AP 12, one can notice that most of the pictures are one-character pictures (n=81) and are male-dominated and only 22 multi-character pictures are presented in the textbook.

**Table 4.4. Frequency of occurrence of females and males in pictures in AP 12**

<b>One-character pictures</b>		<b>Multi-character pictures</b>	
<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
50	31	11	11
62%	38%	50%	50%

Regarding one-character pictures, Table 4.4 shows that males have 62% of the pictures while only 38% of them are for females. On the other hand, when it goes to multi-character pictures, it shows that this type of pictures is 50% of the characters are males while 50% of them are females.

Having a look at the total of pictures in AP 11 and AP 12, one can notice that many of the pictures, 123 occurrences (66.12%), are male characters while 63 occurrences (33.8%) are female characters.



**Table 4.5. Visibility of male and female characters in photos and illustrations in AP 11 & AP 12**

<b>Male</b>		<b>Female</b>		<b>Total</b>	
Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
123	66.12%	63	33.8%	186	100%

Table 4.5 shows that in the two AP textbooks (11&12), male characters are shown in 123 photos and illustrations out of 186 with the percentage 66%. Female characters appear in photos and illustrations 63 times with the percentage 33.8%. The results demonstrate that female characters appeared 32.32% less than male characters, which means that male characters are dominant in terms of appearance in photos and illustrations with the overall ratio of female to male of about 1:2.

### **B. The ratio of female to male characters in reading texts.**

After analyzing the ratio of females and males in photos and illustrations, the researchers analyzed the ratio of females and males in the reading texts.

AP 11 includes a total of 202 nouns and pronouns in the reading texts. The linguistic analysis for both the SB and AB as shown in Table 4.6 shows that male characters linguistically appear more often than female characters.

**Table 4.6. Total males and females mentioned in AP 11**

<b>Units</b>	<b>Females (SB)</b>		<b>Males (SB)</b>		<b>Females (AB)</b>		<b>Males (AB)</b>	
	<b>Noun</b>	<b>Pronoun</b>	<b>Noun</b>	<b>Pronoun</b>	<b>Noun</b>	<b>pronoun</b>	<b>Noun</b>	<b>Pronoun</b>
<b>Module one</b>	3	6	6	6	0	0	0	0
<b>Module two</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Module three</b>	15	34	15	28	1	0	4	1
<b>Module four</b>	9	0	15	0	2	3	0	0
<b>Module five</b>	9	13	35	33	1	0	18	25
<b>Module six</b>	8	4	5	2	2	0	5	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>45.22%</b>		<b>54.77%</b>		<b>22.05%</b>		<b>77.94%</b>	

The data presented in Table 4.6 reveal that in AP 11 (SB & AB), male characters are mentioned (including nouns, and pronouns) 202 times with the percentage 59.94% while female characters occurred 138 times with the percentage 40.94%. Table 4.6 shows that there are more male mentions than female mentions with the ratio of female to male mentioned is approximately 1:1.5. It is noticed that the dominance of males over females in the stage one (AP 11) book, includes nouns and pronouns. By comparing these results with the result of Table 1, it is noticeable that this book contains male dominance over female in terms of their appearance in photos and illustrations.

Meanwhile, AP 12 has a total of 163 nouns and pronouns in the reading texts. The linguistic analysis of both the SB and AB as shown in Table 4.7 shows that the male characters are linguistically present more frequently than female characters.

**Table 4.7. Total males and females mentioned in AP 12 (SB and AB)**  
**Nouns and Pronouns**

Units	Females (SB)		Males (SB)		Females (AB)		Males (AB)	
	Noun	Pronoun	Noun	Pronoun	Nouns	Pronouns	Nouns	Pronouns
<b>Module one</b>	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Module two</b>	1	0	20	14	1	0	2	13
<b>Module three</b>	5	2	19	22	1	0	10	20
<b>Module four</b>	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Module five</b>	2	2	5	4	1	1	2	1
<b>Module six</b>	2	0	8	1	0	0	0	0
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>163</b>							
<b>Percentage</b>	7.36%	2.45%	33.13%	25.15%	1.84%	0.61%	8.59%	20.86%
	<b>9.82%</b>		<b>58.28%</b>		<b>2.45%</b>		<b>29.45%</b>	

Table 4.7 indicates that AP book for grade twelve (second stage) presents males mentioned including nouns and pronouns 143 times out of 163 times with percentage 87.7%. Whereas females were presented 20 times out of 163 times with a percentage of 12.2%. The table shows that there are more male mentions than female mentions with the ratio of female to male mentioned is 1:7.15. Here, there is a strong and significant dominance of the male-to-female ratio mentioned in AP 12. Table 4.3 shows that it is also clear that there is a dominance of males over females in photos and illustrations.

Looking at the total of males and females mentioned in AP 11 and 12, and the total number of nouns and pronouns mentioned in the reading texts for both textbooks in the SB and AB was 503 distributed into 345 occurrences (68.5%) for males and 158 occurrences (31.4%) for females.

**Table 4.8. Total Males and Females Mentioned in AP 11&12**

Male		Female		Total	
Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
345	68.5%	158	31.4%	503	100%

The findings above show that the ratio of females to males in the two books is approximately 1:2.2. In addition, the analysis of the written texts as shown in table 4.8 shows that the total number of the characters is 503 in the books, and that many characters are males, 68.5%, whereas a small fraction of the characters is allotted to females, 31.4%.

Additionally, females are not mentioned at all in some units, such as the sixth unit of AP 11, and in unit ten, they are mentioned only once. Whereas in the AP 12, females are absent from the first, second, and ninth units. It is important to mention that in some units there is complete dominance of males over females. In unit Seven, Males and the pronouns referring to them are mentioned 93 times, compared to three times for females only. This lack of gender representation and presentation in textbooks is an indicator of not having a plan towards implementing gender diversity in school textbooks.

The findings shown in Table 4.5 showed that males are numerically double that of girls in photos and

illustrations, despite the ongoing efforts to improve and adapt AP Series to be suitable for representing the contemporary Jordanian society. It is obvious that the ratio of female to male characters is nearly 1:2. As a result, when females do not appear as often as males, the implicit message is perhaps that women are not as important as men or that their accomplishments are not as worthwhile to mention as men's (Hamdan, 2010). Similarly, the results reported in Table 4.8 revealed that males surpass females in number linguistically. The ratio of female to male mentions in the reading text is 1:2. Male mentions surpass female mentions as 68% of the characters are males and 32% of them are females.

Additionally, it was noticed that some units -like the sixth unit in AP 11- do not mention women at all, while in unit ten, they are only mentioned one time. In contrast, the first, second, and ninth units of the AP 12 do not have any female characters. The full dominance of males over females in some units should also be noted. For example, in unit 7, males and pronouns referring to them are mentioned 93 times, compared to three times only for females alone. Lack of gender representation in textbooks is a sign that there is no plan in place to incorporate gender diversity in educational materials.

The results of the study concerning this aspect agreed with the findings of the previous studies which emphasized the frequent visibility of males over females in Photos and Illustrations. The findings of this study resonate those of Hamdan (2010) who has concluded that male characters are dominant in terms of appearance in photos and illustrations with percentage 54% in nine textbooks from AP series which is taught in the school curricula in Jordan from the first to the ninth grade. This also agrees with Nofal and Qawar (2015) who has concluded the ratio of female to male characters is 1:3 in AP 10 in Jordan.

### ***Males and females' social roles***

The second question pertains to the depiction of females and males in terms of their roles in the society (i.e. social settings). This question seeks to delve into the presentation of the occupation and the roles that men and women have outside of the home. To answer this question, the researchers start with the findings of the representation of both males and females from AP 11. Then, the findings from AP 12 are presented.

AP 11 includes a total of 27 types of jobs of both the SB and AB as shown in Table 4.9 below. It shows that the female occupation types are more than their male counterparts.

**Table 4.9. Distribution of social roles and occupations in AP 11**

Female (SB)		Male (SB)		Females (AB)		Males (AB)	
Occupation	Freq	Occupation	Freq	Occupation	Freq	Occupation	Freq
Princess	1	Doctors	2	Dentist	1	Athlete	1
Rider	4	Craftsmen	1	Sportswoman	1	Sportsman	1
Trainer	1	Horsemen	1	Queen	1	Teacher	1
Horsewomen	1	Writer	1			trainer	1
Groom	1	clerk	1				
Nuclear physicist	2	Lawyer	1				
Research	1	Journalist	1	<b>Total</b>	<u>3</u>		<u>4</u>
assistant Author	1	Author	1		<b>42.80%</b>		<b>57.10%</b>
Artist	1	Officer	1				
Queen	3	Spokesmen	1				
Athlete	1	Chef	1				
Empress	1	King	1				
		Athlete	1				
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>		<b>14</b>				
	<b>56.20%</b>		<b>43%</b>				

The occupation category is used to analyze gender representation in textbooks. The data were collected from texts referring to gender in the textbook. AP 11 refers to a wide range of occupations with 27 different types of jobs. Table 4.9 shows that females are more often appearing than males in occupations category whereas the males portion type of occupations are also less appearing than female's occupation types. This indicates that the 18 occurrences of occupations refer to males with the percentage of 46.1% while 21 occurrences of occupations refer to females with the percentage of 53.8%.

The results reported in Table 4.10 indicate the social roles that males and females occupy as illustrated in AP 11 textbooks

**Table 4.10. Frequency of occurrence of female and male in social roles in AP 11**

Male-monopolized social roles	6
Male-dominated social roles	7
Female-monopolized social roles	5
Female-dominated social roles	6
Gender-shared social roles	3



The results reported in Table 4.10 show that the frequency of male-monopolized social roles is 6. Examples include craftsmen, horsemen, officer, king, spokesmen and sportsman. On the other hand, the frequency of female-monopolized social roles is 5. Examples include princess, queen, empress, sportswomen and horsewomen. On the other hand, male-dominated social roles are seven (e.g., doctors, writer, lawyer, journalist, clerk, teacher, and chef). Female-dominated social roles which appear in the textbook are 6 (i.e., rider, groom, nuclear physicist, research assistant, artist, and dentist). The frequency of gender-shared social roles are 3 including (Athlete, author, and trainer). Again, AP 12 includes a total of 31 types of jobs of both the SB and AB. Table 4.11 shows that the male occupation types are more than female occupation types.

**Table 4.11. Distribution of social roles and occupations in AP 12 (Student's and Activity Books) from the reading texts.**

Female (SB)		Male (SB)		Male (AB)	
Occupation	Frequency	Occupation	Frequency	Occupation	Frequency
Interpreter	4	Scientist	1	Writer	2
Director	1	Inventor	1	Scientist	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	Prince	1	Engineer	1
<b>percentage</b>	<b>11.6%</b>	Sheikh	3	Polymath	1
		King	2	Scholar	1
		Founder	1	<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>
		Pupil	1	<b>percentage</b>	<b>100%</b>
		Businessman	2		
		Physician	1		
		Philosopher	1		
		Mathematician	1		
		Chemist	1		
		Musician	1		
		Astronomer	1		
		Polymath	1		
		Craftsman	1		
		Developer	1		
		Director	2		
		Shop assistant	2		
		Reporter	1		
		Editor	1		
		Captain of School basketball	1		
		Worker	3		
		Chemistry teacher	1		
		Researcher	2		
		Scientific journal	1		
		Salesperson	2		
		<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>		
		<b>percentage</b>	<b>88.3</b>		



AP 12 touches upon 31 various types of jobs, covering a wide range of professions. According to Table 4.11, males occupy forty-three out of forty-eight with the total percentage 89.5% while females have appeared doing five jobs with the percentage 10.4%. Table 4.11 shows that males are more often appearing than females in occupations category whereas the females portion type of occupations are also less than the male's occupation types.

The results reported in Table 4.12 indicate the social roles that males and females occupy as illustrated in AP 12 textbooks.

**Table 4.12. Frequency of occurrences of females and males in social roles in AP 12.**

Male-monopolized Social Roles	5
Male-dominated social roles	22
Female-monopolized Social Roles	0
Female-dominated social roles	1
Gender-shared social roles	1

The results presented in Table 4.12 indicate the social roles that males and females occupy as illustrated in AP 12 textbooks. The findings show that the frequency is 5 for male-monopolized social roles, such as Prince, Sheikh, King, Businessman and Craftsman. It is worth mentioning that the female-monopolized social roles are never mentioned in the textbooks. Male-dominated social roles are 22 (e.g., developer, shop assistant, reporter, editor, captain of school basketball and worker), and only one female-dominated social roles appear in the textbook (i.e., interpreter) the frequency of gender-shared social role is only one including director.

Looking at the total of males and female occupations in AP 11 and 12, the total number of occupations mentioned in reading texts for both textbooks in SB and AB was 87 distributed into 61 occurrences (70%) for males and 26 occurrences (30%) for females.

**Table 4.13. The frequencies of males and female's occupations in the reading Texts (AP 11 & 12)**

Male		Female		Total	
Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	percentage
61	70.11%	26	29.88%	87	100%

Table 4.13 shows that AP Series 11 and 12 present males in sixty-one jobs out of eighty-seven with the percentage 70.11%. Females are shown doing 26 jobs only with the percentage of 29%. The results indicate that males outnumbered females with (40%) which mean that males dominate the occupations and jobs presented in the course books.

It is important to highlight that female occupations were never mentioned in Activity Book of AP 12 and that the male occupations dominated in the Activity Book one hundred percent. Therefore, it is clear to us that the results here are similar to the result of the first question which was the lack of gender representation in the textbooks.

There are some findings to assess based on the data description. There are more male pictures offered in the textbook when comparing the number of female and male images. It indicates that males are dominantly portrayed in the images of both men and women. In addition, many of the textbooks illustrations show stereotypes of both men and women. The following are the images from AP 11 and AP 12:





Figure 4.3: A woman is planting  
It is shown in AP 11, Module Six, Unit Ten, page 83.



Figure 4.4: woman is taking care of the child.  
It is shown in AP 11, Module Two, Unit Two, page 23.



Figure 4.5: woman is cooking.  
It is shown in AP 11, Module One, page 9.



Figure 4.6: woman as a teacher.  
It is shown in AP 12, Module One, Unit One, page 9.



Figure 4.7: woman in the kitchen.  
It is shown in AP 11, Module Three, Unit Four, page 35.

Figures 4.3-4.7 are examples of the pictures found in the textbook, showing women commonly associated with domestic work roles, namely, planting (Figure 4.3), taking care of children (Figure 4.4), and preparing meals (Figure 4.5). Additionally, the women's occupations such as a teacher (Figure 4.6), a cook (Figure 4.7), and babysitter are also related to their stereotypes as warm, weak, gentle, friendly etc. Conversely, men are represented as strong and powerholder, and are presented as holding leading positions and a businessman (Figure 4.8), a doctor (Figure 4.9), and a craftsman (Figure 4.10) which are considered more masculine occupation.



Figure 4.8: businessman  
It is shown in AP 12, Module Six, Unit Ten, page 76.



Figure 4.9: man as a doctor  
It is shown in AP 12, Module Two, Unit two, page 18.



Figure 4.10: Craftsman  
It is shown in AP 12, Module Three, Unit 5, page 38

The popular manifestation of gender-related occupations in EFL textbooks has drawn a lot of attention in both study and discussion. While female occupational positions were conventional and few in number, male jobs were unconventional and varied.

The results reported in Table 4.13 concerning the presence of females and males in social roles reveal that the majority of roles are male-dominated, where 61 roles for males corresponding with only 21 roles for females with ratio near to 2.3:1. An essential point to emphasize here is that the Activity Book for AP 12 exclusively lists male occupations, with no mention of female occupations. The results here are in agreement with Shteiwi (2003) who concluded that the majority of public roles are male-dominated whereas the female roles were traditional such as teaching. Also, the results agree with those of Nofal and Qawar (2015) who indicated that men predominate in the majority of roles. Moreover, the results resonate Anjarwati (2020) who demonstrated that while female occupation types were substantially rarer than male occupation types, males appeared in the category of occupations more frequently than females do.

Women are observed working in a wide variety of professions in the third-world nations like Jordan, including those of dean of a college, minister, upper house member of parliament, judge, engineer, police, lawyer, pilot, doctor, therapist biologist, etc. So, it was surprising to learn that the creators of a new educational series couldn't handle the realities of contemporary living.

These findings allow for discussion of the appropriate nature of the relationship between society and language textbooks. Should they reflect the current state of affairs? Or should they depict a more advanced state of affairs than what is actually the case? The findings of the study showed that gender asymmetry in EFL textbooks tends to be bigger than the gender asymmetry in the society they were intended to depict (Hamdan, 2010).

### ***Males and females' domestic roles***

The third question focuses on the depiction of females and males in terms of their roles in domestic settings (the home). This question seeks to delve into the presentation of the roles that men and women have within the home.

The results reported in Table 4.14 below show the domestic roles occupied by males and females in the AP 11. The three domestic roles undertaken by males as presented in the textbooks are father, son, and brother. Each of them is found once except for the father role which is repeated three times.

The results presented in Table 4.14 indicate the domestic roles for males and females as illustrated in AP 11 textbooks.

**Table 4.14. Frequency of occurrence of female and male in domestic roles in AP 11**

<b>Domestic roles</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Book</b>	<b>Domestic roles</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Book</b>
Father / Dad	3	SB	Mother / Mum	9	SB
Husband	0	-	Wife	2	SB
Son	1	SB	Daughter	1	SB
Brother	1	SB	Sister	1	AB

Moreover, the domestic roles that are occupied by females as presented in the textbooks include mother, wife daughter and sister. The domestic roles of daughter and sister are portrayed one time, wife is mentioned twice, and mother is mentioned nine times.

The results shown in Table 4.15 below indicate the domestic roles occupied by males and females in the AP 12. The only domestic role undertaken by males as presented in the textbooks is father. It is repeated twice (one time in each book).

**Table 4.15 Frequency of occurrence of female and male in domestic roles in AP 12**

<b>Domestic roles</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Book</b>	<b>Domestic roles</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Book</b>
Father / Dad	2	SB&AB	Mother / Mum	2	SB&AB
Brother	0	-	Sister	2	SB&AB

Furthermore, the domestic roles that are occupied by females as presented in the textbooks include mother and sister. The domestic roles of mother and sister are portrayed twice.

Results reported in Table 4.14 and Table 4.15 concerning the depiction of females and males in domestic

roles show that the frequency of occurrence of female domestic roles is 17 while it is 7 for male. So, the number of occurrences of these roles is more for females than males. This outcome is consistent with Lee and Collins (2008) who maintained that some authors supported the stereotyped image of women as weaker than men, and as acting primarily within household rather than social domains. This also agrees with Nofal and Qawar (2015) who indicated that Men and women were depicted in a limited number of domestic roles, and with Anjarwati (2020) who showed the occurrences of domestic roles were 14 times for females and 5 times for males.

### Conclusion

Based on the results of analyzing AP 11 and 12, it can be concluded that the textbooks are biased when it goes to gender. Occurrences of male characters are higher than female characters in relation to visual and textual visibility in terms of mentions, occupation, and social and domestic roles. There are still gender stereotype traces in the AP textbooks based on the domestic role which is represented in reversing the stereotypical image of women in the home. As a result, AP 11 and AP 12 failed to accurately depict contemporary Jordanian society, where Jordanian women hold outstanding positions and are greatly respected. Also, this contradicts the role of the Jordanian government in highlighting the role of women in all areas and fields. Therefore AP 11 and 12 need some modifications that reflect the image of women in Jordanian society and their effective roles.

In conclusion, the findings of the current study demonstrated that the researchers' hypotheses are broadly applicable to the issue highlighted in this study:

1. In both written texts photos, the proportion of female to male characters is roughly equal. Male characters are portrayed as being two times as numerous as female characters, with an approximate ratio of 1:2.
2. Women are depicted in different social settings such as horsewoman, interpreter, teacher, princess, and trainer. Nonetheless, men are depicted in more social settings than women. Men monopolize a variety of roles such as writer, doctor, scholar, polymath, and king.
3. Men and women are depicted in several domestic roles. While the former are portrayed as father and brother, the latter are portrayed as mother, daughter, sister, and wife.

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## Mitigating Impediments of Deploying Innovative AI Tools in ESL/EFL Classrooms

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### Abstract

AI systems can increase the capacity of any educational system and support the social and cognitive development of students and teachers. More specifically, applications of AI can support instruction in mixed-ability classrooms; while personalized learning systems provide students with detailed and timely feedback about their writing products, automated assessment systems support teachers by freeing them from excessive workloads.

Despite the benefits of AI applications for education, they pose societal and ethical drawbacks. The biggest risks of integrating these algorithms in EFL/ESL contexts are: (a) perpetuating existing systemic bias and discrimination, (b) perpetuating unfairness for students from mostly disadvantaged and marginalized groups, and (c) amplifying racism, sexism, xenophobia, and other forms of injustice and inequity. These algorithms do not occur in a vacuum; rather, they shape and are shaped by ever-evolving cultural, social, institutional and political forces and structures. As academics, scientists, and citizens, we have a responsibility to educate teachers and students to recognize the ethical challenges and implications of algorithm use. To create a future generation where an inclusive and diverse citizenry can participate in the development of the future of AI, we need to develop opportunities for our students and teachers to learn about AI via AI- and ethics-based curriculum and professional development.

Implementing AI tools in ESL/EFL environments faces several obstacles that need careful consideration for successful integration. Firstly, technological infrastructure and access present significant hurdles, as not all schools or regions may have adequate resources such as computers, stable internet connectivity, or updated devices, creating disparities that hinder universal access to these tools. Secondly, there's a prevalent need for comprehensive teacher training and professional development programs. Educators may lack familiarity with AI tools, requiring guidance on how to effectively incorporate them into lesson plans and adapt their teaching methodologies accordingly. Moreover, the customization and adaptability of AI tools to cater to diverse learning styles and proficiency levels pose a challenge. These tools have got to accommodate various student needs while providing personalized learning experiences, which demands sophisticated customization features.

Data privacy and security concerns also emerge as critical obstacles, requiring stringent adherence to privacy regulations to protect sensitive student information. Additionally, the cost implications of implementing and sustaining AI tools can be prohibitive, necessitating cost-effective yet quality-driven solutions and potential funding avenues. Cultural sensitivity and inclusivity are crucial aspects often overlooked, demanding AI tools to respect and represent diverse languages and cultures accurately.

Ethical considerations and responsible AI use are vital, requiring education on ethical AI usage and critical thinking among students to navigate AI tools responsibly. Creating collaboration among educators, developers, policymakers, and the community is essential for building a supportive ecosystem that fosters

the successful implementation of AI tools in ESL/EFL environments, sharing knowledge and resources for effective integration. Addressing these multifaceted challenges is crucial to leveraging AI's potential for enhancing ESL/EFL learning experiences.

**Keywords:** Techno-enthusiasts, digital simulators, technological efficacy, autonomous learning, immersive environment

## Introduction

"Technology will not replace great teachers but technology in the hands of great teachers can be transformational." -George Couros

With the emergence of a plethora of educational technology tools and applications often, the eyebrows are raised among some ELT influencers about their efficacy and an altogether different set of challenges that they deem to trigger to the learners and the instructors alike. This paper aims at bringing to the fore some of the teething issues and the pragmatic approaches to circumvent them with the minimum intervention of the teachers in an uncompromising self and autonomous learning environment. Incorporation of the emerging technologies, such as Artificial Intelligence, Virtual Reality, Augmented reality and many other more innovative and engaging tactics and learning magical moments has cast doubts among the minds of those who still advocate content driven, task-based learning approaches in the same age-old fashion and opine that technological intervention should be promoted as a last resort to supplement the instructional book-based materials, extensively available in every nook and corner of the globe.

This study is focused on diving into the evolving education trends worldwide and their resultant consequences and the pitfalls, if any especially in the backdrop of inaccessibility of immersive, live and collaborative learning experiences in the economically developing nations.

To fully understand the challenges and opportunities of technology in education, it's important to examine the current statistics of technology use worldwide. According to a report by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), nearly half of the global population is online, with 3.9 billion people using the internet in 2018 (ITU, 2019). In the United States, 94% of households with school-age children have access to the internet (National Center for Education Statistics, 2019).

By discussing the current statistics and the lack of data collection, we can understand the need for better research and data collection in education technology. This understanding can then inform our approach to integrating technology in education and provide a basis for more informed decision-making.

Currently biases of all sorts surround educational technology tools and to name a few:

1. Facial Recognition Technology: Studies have shown that facial recognition technology is often biased against people with darker skin tones, particularly women. In one study, facial recognition technology was found to be 34 times more likely to misidentify black women compared to white men. This is due to the lack of diverse training data used to develop these algorithms.
2. Google Search Algorithm: Google's search algorithm is known to produce biased search results that reinforce racial and gender stereotypes. For example, a study found that a search for "CEO" produced images of almost exclusively white men, despite the fact that women and people of color hold CEO positions in many companies.

3. **Predictive Policing:** Predictive policing algorithms use historical crime data to predict where future crimes are likely to occur. However, this approach can reinforce existing biases in the criminal justice system, leading to over-policing of certain neighborhoods and communities of color.
4. **Job Hiring Algorithms:** Many companies use automated hiring algorithms to screen job applications. However, these algorithms can perpetuate bias by favouring candidates with certain educational backgrounds or work experience that may not necessarily be relevant to the job.
5. **Social Media Algorithms:** Social media platforms use algorithms to recommend content to users, but these algorithms can amplify existing biases by showing users content that confirms their existing beliefs and biases. This can lead to the spread of misinformation and reinforce stereotypes.

The mad race of competing with ever emerging technological advancements cannot be won by one and all and the digital divide keeps growing with starker differences in various parts of the globe, leaving the under-resourced poverty-stricken in a deplorable state.

“Success in creating AI would be the biggest event in human history. Unfortunately, it might also be the last, unless we learn how to avoid the risks.”—Stephen Hawking.

AI systems can increase the capacity of any educational system and support the social and cognitive development of students and teachers. More specifically, applications of AI can support instruction in mixed-ability classrooms; while personalized learning systems provide students with detailed and timely feedback about their writing products, automated assessment systems support teachers by freeing them from excessive workloads.

Despite the benefits of AI applications for education, they pose societal and ethical drawbacks. The biggest risks of integrating these algorithms in EFL/ESL contexts are: (a) perpetuating existing systemic bias and discrimination, (b) perpetuating unfairness for students from mostly disadvantaged and marginalized groups, and (c) amplifying racism, sexism, xenophobia, and other forms of injustice and inequity. These algorithms do not occur in a vacuum; rather, they shape and are shaped by ever-evolving cultural, social, institutional and political forces and structures. As academics, scientists, and citizens, we have a responsibility to educate teachers and students to recognize the ethical challenges and implications of algorithm use. To create a future generation where an inclusive and diverse citizenry can participate in the development of the future of AI, we need to develop opportunities for our students and teachers to learn about AI via AI- and ethics-based curriculum and professional development.

Implementing AI tools in ESL/EFL environments faces several obstacles that need careful consideration for successful integration. Firstly, technological infrastructure and access present significant hurdles, as not all schools or regions may have adequate resources such as computers, stable internet connectivity, or updated devices, creating disparities that hinder universal access to these tools. Secondly, there's a prevalent need for comprehensive teacher training and professional development programs. Educators may lack familiarity with AI tools, requiring guidance on how to effectively incorporate them into lesson plans and adapt their teaching methodologies accordingly. Moreover, the customization and adaptability of AI tools to cater to diverse learning styles and proficiency levels pose a challenge. These tools have got to accommodate various student needs while providing personalized learning experiences, which demands sophisticated customization features.

Data privacy and security concerns also emerge as critical obstacles, requiring stringent adherence to privacy regulations to protect sensitive student information. Additionally, the cost implications of



implementing and sustaining AI tools can be prohibitive, necessitating cost-effective yet quality-driven solutions and potential funding avenues. Cultural sensitivity and inclusivity are crucial aspects often overlooked, demanding AI tools to respect and represent diverse languages and cultures accurately.

Ethical considerations and responsible AI use are vital, requiring education on ethical AI usage and critical thinking among students to navigate AI tools responsibly. Creating collaboration among educators, developers, policymakers, and the community is essential for building a supportive ecosystem that fosters the successful implementation of AI tools in ESL/EFL environments, sharing knowledge and resources for effective integration. Addressing these multifaceted challenges is crucial to leveraging AI's potential for enhancing ESL/EFL learning experiences.

If one considers the analytical statistics about the usages and adoption of the newer or innovative technology-based curriculum designing and instructional materials, we discover that there is an upsurge in the technological integration, but we are yet to find out the measurable positive outcomes in terms of the learnability and the outcomes in the true sense.

Genuinely understanding the nature of learning is the foundation of informed decision-making that considers students' struggles and dynamic classroom context (Clough, Berg & Olson, 2009)

### **Stark Disparities**

Incorporating technology-induced philosophy of instructional paradigm without understanding its nature to nurture the learners might be putting the horse before the cart and the utmost significance of any technological progress lies in its harnessing to cater to the die needs of the learners.

Integrating innovative AI tools in ESL/EFL classrooms can greatly enhance personalized learning experiences. However, the introduction of these tools also presents several challenges. Integrating AI tools into ESL/EFL classrooms requires careful consideration of pedagogical alignment. Teachers must ensure that the tools align with their instructional goals and teaching methodologies. AI tools should be seen as supplements to traditional teaching methods, rather than replacements. Teachers should have the flexibility to choose the most appropriate tools for their specific teaching contexts.

For example, a teacher selects an AI tool that allows students to practice grammar exercises independently, freeing up class time for more interactive and communicative activities or a teacher integrates an AI tool into a project-based learning approach, where students use the tool to research and analyze data related to a specific topic.

AI tools may not always be designed to cater to the specific needs of ESL/EFL learners. They may lack support for different languages, accents, or cultural contexts. To address this issue, developers should prioritize the inclusion of diverse language and cultural settings in their AI tools. Additionally, teachers should have the ability to customize and adapt the tools to meet the unique needs of their students.

When we reflect upon the majority of the students' perceptions on the direct and indirect benefits of technology to their learning, we don't find very encouraging trends with regards to the tangible language competencies gained because the majority of them use them just to communicate with instructors and other students and searching for information or accessing course information.

AI has a variety of educational applications, such as personalized learning platforms to promote students' learning, automated assessment systems to aid teachers, and facial recognition systems to generate insights about learners' behaviors. Despite the potential benefits of AI to support students' learning

experiences and teachers' practices, the ethical and societal drawbacks of these systems are rarely fully considered in ESL/EFL classrooms and their educational contexts.

AI tools often require the collection and storage of student data. This raises concerns about data privacy and security. Schools must ensure that appropriate measures are in place to protect student information and comply with relevant data protection regulations. This may include obtaining parental consent, implementing secure data storage systems, and regularly reviewing and updating privacy policies.

Teachers may lack the necessary training and support to effectively integrate AI tools into their teaching practices. They may be unfamiliar with the tools or unsure of how to incorporate them into their lesson plans. To address this challenge, schools should provide comprehensive training programs for teachers, including workshops, online courses, and ongoing support. This will empower teachers to confidently use AI tools and maximize their benefits in the classroom. Deploying innovative AI tools in ESL/EFL classrooms can greatly enhance personalized learning experiences. However, it is crucial to address the challenges and issues that arise during their implementation. By ensuring access to technology, providing teacher training and support, addressing data privacy and security concerns, prioritizing language and cultural adaptability, and aligning with pedagogical goals, schools can successfully integrate AI tools into traditional ESL/EFL classrooms.

### **Enhanced Training**

Technological innovations, no doubt, have significantly improved the abilities and resources and the introduction of digital simulators in the scientific world has made it easy to show scientific processes and the high-end language labs with audio visual aids have certainly added a new facet to the learning games, but not without an utter disregard to the creative processes of the budding minds, left in a decrepit classrooms in the far-flung areas in an impoverished poor acquisition environment.

Nature of educational technology in the right educational settings could be the need of the hour (Buckmiller & Kruse, 2011; DiGironimo, 2011; Kruse, 2009, 2012), but some points to ponder over might include but not limited to about the value-laden nature of technology:

Beliefs impacting technological efficacy, identifying the right model technology and the pace and nature of technological progress.

The introduction of 21st century skills (Trilling & Fadel, 2009) and Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS, 2013) have highlighted the importance of more general learning skills and competencies such as metacognition, critical thinking, and collaboration. Subsequently, today's educational environments and theories strive to incorporate authentic practices using big problems in collaborative settings. To maintain its relevance and increase its impact, the field of AIED must adapt to these changes. These transitions in education are also an opportunity: current educational theories advocate for more agency and personalization (Collins & Halverson, 2010). However, many existing classroom structures are inapt for engaging students in "big" problems (Kirschner et al., 2006; Tobias & Duffy, 2009) or for offering students choice (Collins & Halverson, 2010). Both students and teachers need better, personalized support. How can we build ILEs that enable high-quality adaptive education at scale?

Educational goals are moving away from preparation for the workforce in terms of a rigid body of knowledge and in favor of giving students the tools to become adaptive experts and on-the-job learners (Common Core, 2012; NGSS, 2013). The ubiquity of smartphones and other portable computers means

that factual knowledge (like state capitals) and simple calculations are at the tip of our fingers rather than the tip of our tongues. Furthermore, the dynamic nature of job requirements encourages schools to develop curricula that focus on knowledge application, collaboration, and self-regulated learning skills (Toner, 2011). Knowledge is becoming a verb (something we do) rather than a noun (something we possess; Gilbert, 2013). Similarly, as educational goals change, so must assessments. While assessments were used previously to measure the knowledge state of the learner, there is a growing movement to use assessments to capture learning trajectories and processes. Assessment shifts from being a summative measure of performance to an ongoing formative measure that informs just-in-time support (Collins & Halverson, 2010; Shute, 2011). For example, the ASSISTments platform offers a nice synergy between the two perceptions of assessment, by first assessing students on the required knowledge for standardized tests, followed by individualized support as needed (Heffernan & Heffernan, 2014).

Current classroom practices incorporate much more authentic elements. These include authentic problems (Hmelo-Silver et al., 2007), experiential learning opportunities, group work, etc. One outcome of these changes is increased complexity – complexity in the assignments (e.g., from calculation to Problem-Based Learning), complexity in learning goals (e.g., from recall to information seeking and synthesis), complexity in required literacies (e.g., from verbal literacy to technology and information literacies; Katz 2013), and complexity of classroom interactions and orchestration (e.g., from individual to supported group interactions; Dillenbourg, 2013).

Another major challenge for current schooling practices is that of personalization (Collins & Halverson, 2010). While learners bring different experiences, goals, and backgrounds, the current schooling system struggles to offer individualized learning paths.

There is a big focus on supporting learning anytime and anyplace (life-long and life-wide learning). One example of this is the growing movement of Massive Online Open Courses (MOOCs). Currently, millions of learners every year enroll in MOOCs (Pappano, 2012). The MOOC phenomena also changed the landscape in terms of accessibility and student population. Many MOOC learners come from the developing world (Christensen et al., 2013), and in general, MOOC students are post-graduate learners. In fact, leading MOOC vendors have begun to offer their own credentials (Coursera, edX), creating a new type of certification.

In some poorly resourced classrooms teachers may lack the necessary training and support to effectively integrate AI tools into their teaching practices. They may be unfamiliar with the tools or unsure of how to incorporate them into their lesson plans. To address this challenge, schools should provide comprehensive training programs for teachers, including workshops, online courses, and ongoing support. This will empower teachers to confidently use AI tools and maximize their benefits in the classroom.

AI tools may not always be designed to cater to the specific needs of ESL/EFL learners. They may lack support for different languages, accents, or cultural contexts. To address this issue, developers should prioritize the inclusion of diverse language and cultural settings in their AI tools and teachers should have the ability to customize and adapt the tools to meet the unique needs of their students.

Integrating AI tools into ESL/EFL classrooms requires careful consideration of pedagogical alignment. Teachers must ensure that the tools align with their instructional goals and teaching methodologies. AI tools should be seen as supplements to traditional teaching methods, rather than replacements. Teachers

should have the flexibility to choose the most appropriate tools for their specific teaching contexts.

One of the primary challenges is ensuring that all students have access to the necessary technology. Not all students may have access to computers or reliable internet connections at home. This can create a digital divide, where some students are unable to fully participate in online activities. Schools must address this issue by providing access to technology within the classroom or finding alternative solutions such as mobile devices or offline resources.

The Cognitive Tutor ecosystem offers this overarching perspective by introducing the technology together with a curriculum (Koedinger & Corbett, 2006). As educational resources become increasingly global, ILE should take into account cultural traditions, structures, and ways of knowing. Education is a socio-cultural phenomenon (Vygotsky, 2012). Ogan et al. (2015) offer one example of the diverse ways in which technology can be used. There is currently an interesting dilemma in educational practices. While theory suggests that constructivist activities are beneficial, data suggests that students need greater support (Tobias & Duffy, 2009). Thus, classrooms often include activities that could benefit from additional support. This tension between open activities and just-in-time support offers a great opportunity for AIED.

An AI tool for language learning offers support for various accents and dialects, allowing ESL/EFL learners to practice listening and speaking skills in a more realistic context by incorporating culturally diverse content and examples to make learning more relatable and engaging for ESL/EFL learners.

Deploying innovative AI tools in ESL/EFL classrooms can greatly enhance personalized learning experiences. However, it is crucial to address the challenges and issues that arise during their implementation. By ensuring access to technology, providing teacher training and support, addressing data privacy and security concerns, prioritizing language and cultural adaptability, and aligning with pedagogical goals, schools can successfully integrate AI tools into traditional ESL/EFL classrooms.

With an explosion in remote learning, it has become even more imperative to train the minds of the novice teachers with their existing pedagogies in tandem with the cataclysmic onslaught of technological innovations and high-tech gadgetry like HMD (Head mounted devices), Google Glasses, Holograms, and other immersive overlay in a true transformation from the real environment to Augmented Reality (AR), Augmented Virtuality (AV) to an altogether virtual environment in the (RV) continuum.

Taking a critical instance by critiquing and improving technology implementations in the educational institutions paves the way forward since technological progress is "slow and cumulative" (DiGironimo, 2011, p. 1343). The interactive whiteboard would not be possible without computer technology.

A bevy of boisterous educational technology boosters are being pushed through by the Tech giants like Google, Facebook (Metaverse) in the platter of Quest 1 and Quest 2, striving to dislodge the whole gamut of pedagogical tenets of the hitherto-held beliefs and practices in the traditional classroom setup where textbooks and curriculum addicts have been reigning supreme.

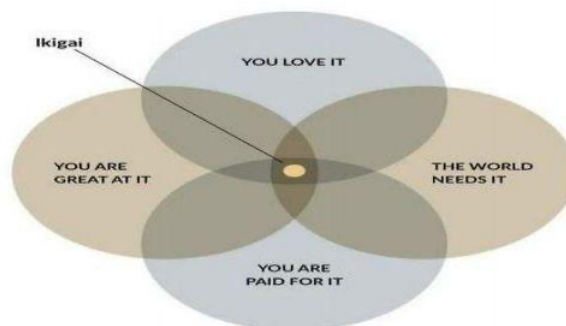
In order to develop the creative and critical thinking skills essential for a fulfilling life in the world of tomorrow over-reliance on technological advancement may not prove to be a panacea as usually touted by techno-enthusiasts who harbor the false hope that technology will alter the entire game of teaching and learning, contrary to the fact that it promotes nothing much different from traditional learning spaces (Cobb, 1999; Fraser & Deane, 1999; Gance, 2002; Guzman-Rodriguez, 2007).

The hyperbole surrounding the educational technology initiatives worldwide needs to be critically analyzed, assessed and examined thoroughly so that teachers' conceptualized teaching and learning principles remain validated in the backdrop of the changing needs of, majority without much discrimination or intrusiveness.

The ikigai diagram shown below lines up with something a great teacher has said: It's better to focus on using your strengths than to focus on correcting your weaknesses. Instead of falling in the ever-widening gamut of technological advances the learners need to question himself to adapt.

What are my skills? Where can I find a sense of true accomplishments? What can I offer the world?...

## The Ikigai Diagram: Philosophical Perspective



*Adapted from PositivePsychology.com Toolkit. 2020*

Invariably the new-found technological arsenals, in the hands of the inexperienced teachers, become lethal in promoting faulty and ineffective teaching practices and the entire exercise proves self-defeating, leading to a crisis in establishing the bonhomie required for promoting the desirable value system which stands juxtaposed to the technology designers and commercial tech giants.

Cuban (1998, p.7) rightly remarks: “The lure of higher productivity in teaching and learning via computer technologies, however, has seduced reformers into treating teaching like any other form of labor that has experienced productivity gains after automation.”

### **Conclusion**

Techno centricity sometimes devalues the cardinal virtues of imparting and gaining the right education in the right measure and forms and distracts us from meaningful goals, raising altogether new ethical issues including but not limited to blurring the boundaries between professionals and novices.

Our societies may have to bear the brunt of all the undesirable fallouts of non-judicious implementation of these new digital avatars, gadgetry embodiments, unsupervised virtual learning spaces in the Metaverse with all our privacy widely exposed and mined by the third-party tech giants without many safeguards for conscientious teaching and learning.

Overall, the integration of educational technology can have a significant impact on the learners, and it has the potential to transform education in the Gulf region and worldwide. However, it is essential to note that the success of educational technology integration depends on various factors, including the quality of the technology, the availability of reliable internet access, and the quality of teaching.

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## Promoting an Anxiety-Free Environment in ELT Classrooms Through Flipped Learning

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### Abstract

Integrating flipped learning in ELT classrooms has been widely discussed recently. English language teachers have been looking for ways to better their teaching practices and increase students' wellbeing in classroom. Flipped learning seems to meet teacher's expectations through content consultation "at home" and dedicating "in-class time" to discussion and effective practice by learners. Accordingly, this research study has been held over ELT teachers at the higher Institute of Education and Training within Mohammed I University using interviews. The data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. Findings depict that most of teachers do not rely on technology in their teaching practices, yet they use classroom-flip through reading materials/books and resources prior to class. Thus, classroom time is devoted to concept deepening. This approach impacted greatly language teaching and learning. It also promoted an anxiety-free environment where students felt free to make mistakes and experiment with target language.

**KEYWORDS:** Anxiety-free; ELT; flipped learning; students' wellbeing

### Introduction

The implementation of flipped learning alone cannot and will not lead to effective learning unless other key principles are to be considered. Flipped learning implementation needs to be geared towards key purposes of the teaching-learning processes. Yet, its implementation should be pedagogically underpinned.

One of the most critical motives behind the implementation of flipped learning is to increase the time spent with learners. Once students read and grasp materials, resources and content at home, the in-class time is effectively spent through group/pair work; task-based activities; critical-thinking and problem-solving type activities. Hence, the in-class time is devoted to deep and root learning. Students prepare the content at home through understanding and memorizing concepts. While the "in-class" time is dedicated to deepening these concepts and gaining insights through interaction, discussion and debate. Students, then, confidently participate in complex activities such as analysing, evaluating and applying knowledge with their peers and classmates. As such, students' self-confidence can be increased because they have already grasped the content and knowledge necessary to lead discussion and take in an active role in the classroom. Thus, the importance of content internalizing that leads to learning consolidating.

This eventually leads to the creation of anxiety-free environments that allow students to experiment freely with target language; make mistakes and errors; learn from their mistakes; use their creative and innovation power when dealing with English language. Indeed, creating an

anxiety-free environment where students feel free to interact and discuss openly is of an utmost importance. Teachers are asked here to provide instant and constructive feedback.

### ***Flipped Learning Key Aspects***

Flipped learning provides new possibilities for achieving objectives such as students' well-being; students' centeredness and anxiety-free environments that enhance the foundations for effective practice. It helps teachers tailor the content according to students' needs. It provides an engaging learning environment which is also one of the fundamental pillars of effective learning. It sets the conditions necessary to allow learners to be fully engaged, motivated and involved in the learning process.

Enabling learners to develop a growth mindset and autonomy in the classroom is a highly sought for endeavour.

Another key element within here is the teacher who plays a vital role. His previous role transforms from being "sage on stage", information and knowledge provider to a "guide on the side" and a facilitator. He keeps on monitoring and tracking students' progress. He listens to students' productions and watches their performances; But most importantly, he provides instant feedback and feeds in the language necessary (vocabulary; expressions, etc) when students get stuck and cannot express themselves. This role provides students with ample opportunities to experiment with the target language, discover mystifying concepts; receive instant feedback and gain insight through interaction and sharing skills.

### ***Students' Centeredness***

Taking ownership of the learning process by the learners is one of the founding principles of flipped learning. While the focus ought to be put on students' centeredness. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) stated in this regard that when students are fully absorbed, are in the flow, they are using their skills to the max which leads to more effective, deeper learning and enhance overall performance.

Students' centeredness revolves around the idea that students ought to take charge of their own learning process. They are able to work independently and be responsible for their learning. According to Fraser (2012) 'only when students are given this agency and take ownership in the learning process by being active participants and are fully engaged, motivated and willing to learn.

Flipped learning approach promotes students' centeredness in the classroom, where students take their learning process on their own, relying on themselves to learn the language; students tend to compare their answers with their peers through active learning activities held by their teachers (students can be invited to perform the tasks on their own and then can be asked to discuss in pairs their answers, compare/ improve and correct their answers based on this activity's purpose.

However, the prerequisite element and the key condition that leads to effective students' centeredness in a flipped learning context, is that students must grasp the materials, content-videos, and resources at home while classroom time is devoted to concept deepening through interaction, discussion, debate and so on.

Therefore, within this approach, learners are invited to learn the language openly and freely. Errors and mistakes are tolerated; language learning is not characterized by repetition, imitation

or habit formation. Rather, language learning is regarded as a complex process requiring active involvement of students, using their cognitive and mental competences.

### ***Students' wellbeing***

In the previous decades, little concern has been given to students' well-being in the educational arena. The concept was overlooked and the concern was shifted towards workplace competences, skills acquisition and knowledge building. Though, promoting students' well-being is equally important as students' technical competences. Preparing students for future while developing in them a positive socio-psychological state that helps in regulating their emotions is necessary.

In the field of ELT, however, this concept has started to be incorporated in the teaching process through the promotion of autonomy and self-dependence in the teaching process. Some ELT teachers attempt to promote students' well-being through engaging activities that help in developing students' intrinsic motivation, boost their self-confidence and prepares them mentally, emotionally and physically for the future. Therefore, students can recognize their emotional states and react in an appropriate and informed way.

These teachers are aware of the fact that if students are feeling well during class time, they are likely to grasp the concepts necessary, participate in discussions, interact with their peers, and receive a satisfactory learning journey. If, on the other hand, students are not feeling well, the outcome would be in experiencing an ineffective learning journey that might eventually lead to demotivation and failure. Yenisei from Oxford University Press (2022) stated in this regard that "Teaching practices can include explicit discussions about the connection between physical and mental well-being and how to maintain a healthy lifestyle, while remaining respectful of physical diversity and avoiding prescriptive or judgmental attitudes.... Learners can be supported in recognizing and naming emotions, and considering strategies to regulate their emotional responses".

Through flipped learning, the concept has been fostered through 'in-class' activities encouraging students to participate freely, learn from their peers, transcending issues of shyness and low-self-esteem and boost self-reliance and confidence. Mercer (2023) claimed that "Most people want to be happy, enjoy positive relationships with others, and find meaning in their lives. Schools can teach skills of emotional self-regulation and well-being that help learners to flourish now and, in the future."

Taking into account all that have been stated previously, it seems that students' well-being is one of the most critical components of the learning-teaching process because this element prepares them not only to succeed their course and learn a language but most importantly for future generations.

### ***Flipped Learning and Sociocultural Theory***

There is a link between the classroom environment promoted by flipped learning and sociocultural theory (SCT) of Leo Vygotsky who views learning as a social process. Through interaction, students are enabled to move from dependency towards autonomy in learning.

Learners at first depend on others to support them in their learning processes. They rely on external mediation provided by either their teachers; peers or parents, until arriving at stage where they achieve self-reliance and independence in learning. It is, indeed, how Scott Thurnberry (2006) described it as "This mediation typically takes the form of "assisted performance", whereby the "better other" interacts with the learner to provide a supportive

framework (or scaffold). Through this shared activity, new knowledge is jointly constructed, until the learner is in a position to appropriate it, at which stage the scaffolding can gradually be dismantled (appropriation).” He adds on, that learner is able to function independently, having graduated from a state of other-regulation to a state of self-regulation.

Therefore, if according to SCT, learning is a social phenomenon that stands on two key elements activity and interactivity. Flipped learning approach also requires these two elements to fulfil the objectives of the teaching-learning processes, that is to say, promoting an environment where learning is collaborative, interactive, jointly-constructed and scaffolded.

### **Methodology**

Given the fact that the main aim of the study is to explore teachers’ perception of flipped learning and how it helped in promoting students’ well-being and creating anxiety-free environments, the data collection of this research study relied on spoken data as a method of data collection tool. The spoken data comprehended one-to-one and focus group interviews that respond to targeted questions related to the research questions and the purpose of the study.

It appeared that semi-structured interviews will fit best the purpose of this research study. With regards to the interview questions, they were formed in accordance with the research questions. These questions were prepared in advance but were open-ended. Two specific research questions were raised and served as the primary nodes/themes for considering results. These include:

1. Does the flipped-learning mode of instruction allow to develop and foster learners’ well-being?
2. Does flipped learning create an anxiety-free environment that promotes interaction and social activities?

### **Results and Discussion**

Results depict that students’ well-being has been taken into consideration by most of the interviewee teachers, which resulted in a sharp increase of students’ self-confidence and motivation. It also outlined that while being instructed in a flipped-learning mode, students have developed their autonomy in learning and became self-reliant individuals able to take ownership of their learning process.

Another key element was achieved is the social interaction that increased and led to effective learning through collaboration and team knowledge building. Teachers claimed that students’ English language proficiency improved through discussion and preparation at home. The fact of coming prepared to class helped in transcending issues such as shyness or low-self-esteem and boosted students’ self-confidence. One of the teachers said “I couldn’t recognize the level of my students at first, I thought it was learnt by heart but as I was monitoring them every now and then, I realized that my students’ linguistic ability has hugely improved”. Another teacher claimed that “before implementing the flipped learning, I was always struggling with finishing the curriculum on time; but now when I started flipping my classes, everything changed... my students read and learn the materials at home and once in class, we have plenty of time to deepen their learning, correct their mistakes; give them more profound examples and case-studies...I could see how my students have completely changed into motivated learners who take active role in the classroom”.

A teacher expressed his satisfaction of classroom flip in saying that “I didn’t know the aim of

implementing this mode of instruction, until I've seen some of my colleagues using it and I decided to the same and tried it...It worked! It's so energy saving for teachers as I do record my videos only once and my students can watch them multiple times... I no longer have to explain and re-explain the lessons..." he added "I can see my students' progress every day. My students do no longer depend on me but they participate in chatrooms as well as in class... They started debating about complex issues and are not afraid to make mistakes".

In order for these teachers to promote an anxiety-free classrooms and increase students' well-being, one of the interviewee teachers said in this regard "I always push my students to change their partners in group and pair work activities... this move students from their comfort zone and pushes them to interact with other students who might not feel comfortable talking to...I've noticed that a lot of students changed their ways of behaving and are now able to participate in discussions, share information, and overcame their fear of speaking to others".

Therefore, deep learning was emphasized in a way that students raise questions about mystifying and up to date issues, questioning, analysing and evincing their opinions freely and openly.

### **Conclusion**

In a nutshell, based on teachers' comments and answers, it seemed that through flipped learning, anxiety-free environments were promoted and students' well-being sharply increased. While taking into account the fact that teachers' role is to purposefully harness flipped learning as an approach support and back up effective language teaching and learning. Flipped learning implementation in the classroom should be hailed as a means to an end rather than a means in itself. This approach should be geared towards the goal of enhancing learners' experiences and should be pedagogically underpinned.

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## Exploring the Role of Teacher Groups in TESOL Technology Implementation

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### Abstract

This study examined TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) teachers' perceptions of teacher education groups' role in supporting technology integration through a questionnaire administered to 45 educators. Results showed strong agreement that digital tools enhance TESOL instruction, though integration poses difficulties. Respondents perceived teacher education groups as playing a crucial role in professional development and effectively supporting technology adoption. Programs focused on developing digital skills were seen as knowledge-enhancing, though addressing effective integration strategies remains an area for improvement. Collaborative opportunities and mentoring facilitated by these groups received predominantly positive feedback. When considering advocacy and policy influence, results indicated agreement that teacher education groups significantly advocate for technology use, receiving significantly higher ratings than their perceived policy impact potential. Intended impacts on instructional quality and learning outcomes also achieved strong agreement. Comparisons found response consistency across items. This study provides initial validation that teacher education groups importantly facilitate technology integration for TESOL according to educators' perceptions, corroborating frameworks around their roles in collaborative professional growth. Insights offer data to inform sustainable practices and advance the field through advocacy and professional development, suggesting teacher education groups make meaningful contributions despite preliminary findings.

**Keywords:** Digital technologies, technology integration, pedagogical framework, professional development, sustainable learning

### Introduction

Teacher education groups have become important platforms for TESOL teachers to explore effective uses of digital tools and resources in instruction. This study examines the impact of these groups. By participating in workshops, seminars and training through these groups, TESOL professionals can stay up-to-date on technological advances, build skills, and gain knowledge of digital tools.

The collaborative environment allows educators to connect with colleagues of similar interests. This fosters innovation through sharing ideas, experiences and best practices for incorporating technology. Collective expertise enhances understanding of effective integration.

Resource sharing not only saves time but provides a diverse range of adaptable lesson plans, materials and assessment tools. Collaborative efforts develop a rich repository benefiting experienced and new teachers.



Additionally, these groups provide emotional support and mentoring opportunities. Teachers can seek guidance from more experienced members who understand the challenges of technology integration. This builds confidence in navigating complexities.

Furthermore, the collective voice of these groups advocates for professional rights, interests, and concerns influencing policy and reform. Their input ensures digital resources meet the needs of TESOL teachers and learners.

Active participation signifies a commitment to continuous learning, growth, and engagement within the community. It demonstrates dedication to staying current with innovations and exploring new instructional approaches.

In conclusion, teacher education groups play a pivotal role in supporting TESOL professionals to effectively integrate digital tools and resources through professional development, collaboration, resource sharing, support systems, advocacy and reputation enhancement. This study aims to provide valuable insights into their impacts on technology integration in TESOL classrooms.

### ***Significance of the Study***

This study contributes to TESOL professional development by shedding light on how teacher education groups impact educators' learning related to digital tools. Understanding their role can lead to improved professional development programs and teaching practices. Examining strategies employed by these groups can inform better technology integration in TESOL instruction, enhancing teaching and learning.

By examining advocacy efforts, valuable insights are provided into how these groups influence educational policies and reforms, allowing policymakers to make informed decisions about technology integration in TESOL education. The study also investigates the groups' function in facilitating resource sharing and collaboration among educators. Understanding these impacts can support robust networks and digital resource repositories for all teachers.

Exploring emotional support and mentoring provided by these groups aims to empower TESOL educators by enhancing their confidence in navigating technology's challenges in teaching. Insights gained about overall instructional quality and student learning outcomes can provide guidance on effective digital tool use in classrooms to optimize practices and improve achievement.

This research adds to existing knowledge in the field, particularly regarding technology integration in ESL instruction. It establishes an evidence base to inform future investigations and identification of best practices, with the overall goal of advancing technology-enhanced language teaching and learning.

### ***Statement of the Problem***

Despite the growing availability and potential benefits of digital resources and tools in TESOL instruction, there is a need to explore the impact of teacher education groups on the effective integration of these resources and tools. While teacher education groups offer TESOL educators a supportive and collaborative community, it remains uncertain how involvement in these groups actually impacts teachers' skill and confidence in effectively using digital tools and materials in their instruction. More research is needed to determine to what degree these teacher networks help to strengthen educators' knowledge, abilities, and confidence when it comes to incorporating technology. It is also important to investigate the overall influence of these groups

on instructional quality and student learning.

Gaining a better understanding of how teacher education groups support TESOL teachers in utilizing digital resources will provide valuable insights for professional development programs and contribute to improving technology integration practices in ESL teaching. Examining the role and effectiveness of these groups in helping educators navigate technology can help inform initiatives aimed at advancing educational technology use to optimize instruction and student outcomes.

### ***Objectives***

1. To understand the roles and contributions of teacher education groups in supporting TESOL teachers' integration of digital resources and tools.
2. To examine how teacher education groups impact TESOL teachers' knowledge, skills, confidence and instructional practices regarding technology integration.
3. To explore the collaborative communities facilitated by teacher education groups and their influence on professional learning and resource sharing among TESOL educators.
4. To evaluate the advocacy, policy influence and reputation building enacted by teacher education groups around technology integration in TESOL.
5. To assess the impact of teacher education groups on TESOL instructional quality, student outcomes and recommendations for maximizing their support of technology integration.

### ***Research Questions***

1. What professional learning opportunities, collaboration, networking and resources are provided by teacher education groups regarding technology integration?
2. How do teacher education groups contribute to enhancing TESOL teachers' capacity and confidence around integrating technology?
3. In what ways do teacher education groups support resource sharing, innovation and best practices for technology enhanced TESOL instruction?
4. What advocacy and policy impact have teacher education groups had on promoting technology integration in TESOL education?
5. How are teacher education groups perceived to influence TESOL instructional quality, student learning and what recommendations emerge for strengthening their role?

### ***Literature Review***

This literature review aims to provide a comprehensive examination of the existing research on the role of teacher education groups in supporting the effective integration of digital technologies in TESOL instruction. The review will begin by discussing the importance, impact, and challenges of utilizing digital resources and tools in TESOL classrooms. It will then define teacher education groups in TESOL and analyze their goals, activities, and capacity to deliver professional development opportunities to TESOL educators. Next, the review will evaluate professional development programs focused on integrating digital technologies into TESOL instruction, including effective strategies and the impact on teachers' knowledge and skills. Additionally, it will investigate how teacher education groups specifically assist TESOL teachers in adopting digital resources through collaboration, mentoring, and emotional support. The review will also consider the advocacy efforts and policy influence of teacher education groups regarding

technology integration. Finally, it will examine research on the impact of these groups on instructional quality and student learning outcomes in TESOL classrooms. By synthesizing literature across these key areas, the review aims to identify critical themes, trends, and gaps to inform future research on this important topic.

### ***Digital Technologies***

Digital technologies refer to the various tools, systems, and applications that utilize digital information and communication processes. These technologies encompass a wide range. According to Rice (2003), the term "digital technologies" encompasses a range of software and hardware tools that are utilized for the purpose of generating, storing, transmitting, and presenting information. Several widely used digital technologies encompass digital devices including computers, tablets, and mobile phones (Vuorikari et al., 2016). These devices facilitate the consumption, utilization, and production of various digital products, such as websites and applications (Plowman, 2016). Differentiating digital technologies from analogue technologies is of utmost significance. Digital technologies have the primary objective of digitally processing information, enabling its storage and utilization for a multitude of purposes such as information sharing, entertainment, and communication. In contrast, analogue technologies are primarily concerned with the creation of representations of the physical world, such as through painting or drawing (Mantilla & Edwards, 2019).

### ***Integration of Digital Technologies***

Numerous endeavors have been made throughout the years to establish comprehensive definitions for the integration of digital technology. Ertmer (1999) was among the first academics to articulate a conceptualization of the integration of digital technologies, highlighting their potential to bring about substantial improvements in the process of teaching and learning. This includes enabling educators and learners to accomplish more advanced educational goals. It is noteworthy to observe that despite the origins of this concept in the 1990s, it corresponds with the current perspective that digital technologies are not independent entities but rather exist in a dynamic interplay with pedagogy and instructional practices. According to Viera and Sánchez (2020), the content is as follows. In a subsequent study conducted by Hennessy et al. (2005), it was found that digital technologies integration refers to the utilization of digital technologies by educators for instructional purposes.

This study aims to investigate the efficacy of familiar activities and the degree to which digital technologies alter these tasks. Hew and Brush (2007) proposed that the integration of digital technology involves teachers utilizing computers at a basic level, such as students using them for simple tasks. Internet searches are commonly used by individuals to gather information from various online sources. On the other hand, at a more advanced level, students engage in the creation of multimedia presentations or projects as a means of demonstrating their understanding and knowledge. The definitions provided fail to acknowledge the essential relationship between teaching and technology, since they neglect to consider crucial elements such as pedagogy and content, which play an equally significant role in the process of integrating technology into education (Okojie et al., 2006).

In the study conducted by Dockstader (2008), the integration of digital technology was examined. The term "digital transformation" refers to the integration of digital technologies into educational practices, with the aim of enhancing learning experiences by enabling learners to complete assignments using computer-based platforms instead of traditional paper-based methods. The

aforementioned concept, while espousing the potential of digital technologies to generate diverse educational prospects, was limited in its extent. As indicated by the existing body of literature, digital technologies possess the capacity to go beyond mere facilitation of assignments. One aspect of online learning that can enhance student engagement is the promotion of class interaction and the encouragement of student expression (Baydas & Goktas, 2016).

The aforementioned proposed definitions have identified multiple challenges associated with the endeavor of defining the integration of digital technology. According to Akcil et al. (2021), undertaking this task is notably more difficult. The process itself is multifaceted and undergoes changes in conjunction with the advent of novel digital technologies (Tondeur et al., 2009). Furthermore, although digital technologies have been effective in highlighting their affordances, which refer to their capacity to facilitate teaching and learning in many educational settings (Haines, 2015), these definitions, with the exception of Ertmer's (1999) work may not adequately capture the complex character of the subject at hand. The integration of digital technologies. These analyses overlook the crucial integration of technology with pedagogy and content in the successful implementation of digital technologies.

### ***Key Frameworks for Technology Integration in EFL Instruction***

The existing body of research on the use of technology in EFL teaching provides valuable insights and theoretical frameworks (Bax, 2003; Plass & Jones, 2005; Salaberry, 2001; Tudor, 2003). Regrettably, a comprehensive examination of these viewpoints indicates that a framework that encompasses the most significant potential benefits and obstacles to the integration of technology in EFL instruction has yet to be developed or put into practice.

According to Roblyer and Doering (2010), technology integration refers to the systematic identification of suitable electronic instruments and corresponding implementation strategies that effectively address specific classroom settings and challenges. Various studies have examined the incorporation of technology into language instruction from diverse angles. For instance, Salaberry (2001) explored the pedagogical principles underlying the use of technology in teaching second languages. Bax (2003) discussed the stages involved in achieving the "normalization" of computer-assisted language learning, wherein technology seamlessly integrates into everyday teaching practices. Plass and Jones (2005) proposed a cognitive processing model for second language acquisition that is enhanced by multimedia tools. Additionally, Tudor (2003) examined ecological perspectives on language teaching.

According to Salaberry (2001), it is crucial to consider several key factors in order to effectively include technology into second language education. These factors include the identification of pedagogical objectives, the analysis of qualities associated with technological instruments, the design of instructional activities centered around technology usage, and the provision of sufficient resources. However, it is important to note that these principles primarily pertain to the instructional strategies employed by instructors within the confines of the classroom, therefore representing just a fraction of the broader scope of their utilization of technology. The model proposed by Plass and Jones (2005) examines the role of multimedia in facilitating cognitive processing during the acquisition of a second language. It explores how multimedia might be utilized to enhance learners' cognitive processes in the context of second-language acquisition. The model presented in their study offers valuable insights into the utilization of multimedia as a means of supporting language learners. However, it does not address the various aspects that influence the usage of technology by EFL teachers. In Tudor's (2003) work, an

ecological framework for language teaching is presented, highlighting the interconnectedness of various stakeholders in the teaching and learning process. This framework recognizes the significant role played by teachers, students, and other individuals who impact classroom practices. Moreover, it emphasizes the dynamic interplay between participants, methodology, and the contextual factors that shape language education. According to Tudor (2003), this particular viewpoint emphasized the diverse human and contextual elements that impact the utilization and potential efficacy of this technology. While Tudor's (2003) ecological view provides valuable insights into the intricate nature of utilizing technologies for language learning, it fails to adequately consider the significance of technology's involvement in this context. Therefore, these views are inadequate for understanding the fundamental elements that influence the integration of technology in EFL instruction.

### ***A Pedagogical Framework for the Integration of Technology in the Context of EFL Classrooms***

There are both general frameworks for integrating technology (Hughes, 2005; Mishra & Koehler, 2006) and more specific frameworks for integrating technology in science education (Kim, et al., 2007). Kim, et al. (2007) strategy for incorporating technology into the classroom is one such example of a pedagogical framework. This framework consists of three distinct contexts of integration: systemic standards and curriculum reform, teacher community and professional development, and technology-supported class. The purpose of this framework is to analyze the alignment between these contexts in relation to the use of technology in science education. Upon closer analysis of both frameworks, it becomes evident that Tudor's (2003) ecological perspective on language education bears certain resemblances to and is mirrored by Kim et al. (2007) pedagogical framework for the integration of technology. Furthermore, the framework proposed by Kim et al. (2007) appears to function as a comprehensive structure for examining the potential benefits and obstacles associated with the integration of technology in a certain academic domain. Both suggest that the approach proposed by Kim et al. (2007) may be more suitable than other frameworks for examining the potential benefits and obstacles associated with technology-enhanced EFL training.

The paradigm proposed by Kim et al. (2007) focuses on the intricate nature of incorporating technology into science education. It investigates the congruence between the many settings in which technology is integrated and highlights both the potential benefits and obstacles associated with technology integration in science education. The macro-context of systemic standards and curriculum change is established through the integration of teacher community and professional development. Interactions between students and educational tools, between teachers and educational tools, and between teachers and students all fall under the micro-context of a classroom where technology has been implemented. Kim et al. (2007) argue that the interplay between standards, teachers' communities, and classroom settings is an important factor to consider when investigating the use of technology in education. According to Kim et al. (2007) framework, nevertheless, it is necessary to make modifications to in order to adapt it to the specific context of EFL instruction. This adaptation is crucial for effectively examining the potential benefits and obstacles associated with integrating technology in EFL instruction.

### ***Needs Analysis for Professional Development***

A needs analysis is a crucial component in the realm of professional development. It serves as a systematic approach to identify and assess the specific needs and requirements of individuals or groups within a professional setting. By doing a needs analysis, organizations can gain valuable

insights into

The process of needs analysis involves the identification of needs, attitudes, expectations, and preferred learning/teaching styles prior to the development of any instructional courses (Thornbury, 2006). The significance of needs analysis in teacher professional development is in its ability to provide valuable insights to policymakers and training designers/organizers about language proficiency, methodological practices, curriculum, material design, and evaluation (Cansiz & Cansiz, 2015; Kawanami & Kawanami, 2012; Moeini, 2008).

The exploration of a needs analysis has been extensively examined in several ELT scenarios. In 2006, the Japanese government initiated the mandatory inclusion of English as a topic in all public primary schools, exemplifying their commitment to language education. Despite the fact that the implementation guideline was published with a two-year delay, teachers experienced feelings of anxiety and confusion due to a dearth of adequate input and discussion regarding teacher training, materials development, curriculum design, class sizes, and the impact of English on the first language (Kawanami & Kawanami, 2012). The study identified that the lack of a needs assessment among instructors was a contributing factor to the unsuccessful implementation. According to Moeini (2008), educators held the belief that they should adequately equip themselves by participating in ample training workshops or programs focused on teaching methodologies and instructional activities. In order to build a comprehensive professional development plan, it is necessary to consider the specific needs of instructors in terms of their pedagogical expertise and language proficiency. Furthermore, the inclusion of teachers' requirements is crucial in the successful implementation of innovative practices in English instruction (Kawanami & Kawanami, 2012; Moeini, 2008). In essence, needs analysis refers to the methodical process of gathering and analyzing both subjective and objective data in order to define and substantiate professional development objectives that cater to the specific needs of teachers within the educational environment (Brown, 2006).

### ***TESOL and Sustainable Learning***

From a socio-cultural theory literature standpoint, it can be argued that TESOL has a substantial impact on the sustainability of learning. The socio-cultural theory posits that the acquisition of knowledge and skills is facilitated through social interactions within a specific cultural context. In the context of TESOL, it is imperative that language acquisition occurs within authentic environments that accurately reflect the cultural norms and practices of the group utilizing the language in question (Yuan, et al. 2022). The evidence presented indicates that TESOL has a preference for fostering enduring learning outcomes. Enhancement of English language proficiency can be achieved through the implementation of TESOL, which is considered essential for sustained and enduring educational progress. The attainment of English language proficiency is deemed essential for the achievement of sustainable development (Khurram, et al. 2021).

Furthermore, the field of TESOL plays a crucial role in enhancing individuals' communication skills, which are vital for sustained educational development. Based on a research study, effective collaboration and teamwork play a vital role in promoting sustainable development, necessitating proficient communication abilities. The cultivation of cultural understanding and awareness is vital for the establishment of a global society, and TESOL can play a significant role in facilitating this process (Eyres & Woodward, 2019). TESOL can help spread cultural understanding by exposing pupils to new ideas and traditions. The field of teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) plays a crucial role in helping students cultivate the critical

thinking abilities necessary for ongoing education. Eyres and Woodward (2019) argue that TESOL can help students develop their critical thinking skills by encouraging them to assess and analyze information and to establish and articulate their own opinions.

In addition, TESOL has the ability to encourage lifetime learning, an essential component of ongoing schooling in today's rapidly developing world. TESOL prioritizes the provision of extended educational opportunities aimed at fostering the development of critical thinking abilities, enhancing cultural sensitivity, refining linguistic proficiency, and bolstering effective communication aptitude (Fealing, 2021). This initiative enables individuals to assume responsibility for their personal growth (Bai et al. 2019).

Furthermore, TESOL has the potential to improve people's employability and subsequently boost their confidence. Cooperation, communication, and problem-solving are all transferable qualities that could benefit from TESOL training. As a result, students may develop a stronger sense of confidence in themselves and their abilities. TESOL has the potential to enhance self-efficacy through the cultivation of tenacity (Faez & Karas, 2019). The promotion of tenacity in TESOL can be facilitated by the provision of a supportive learning environment and opportunities for feedback and revision (Xu et al. 2022). TESOL has a positive impact on self-efficacy by enhancing academic achievement, promoting learner autonomy, developing employability skills, and cultivating perseverance.

### **Research Method**

The descriptive-analytical research method used in this study makes important contributions. It enables the systematic description of TESOL teachers' perceptions and views regarding teacher education groups' role in supporting technology integration, providing insights into the current reality. Beyond simple descriptions, the analytical component allows statistical testing of relationships within the quantitative survey data to generate more robust inferences. Using a questionnaire survey administered to a representative sample facilitates the efficient collection of standardized data from a large, diverse group of educators. Descriptive statistics and other analyses succinctly summarize this sizable dataset into clear tables and outputs, aiding accessibility. Including reliability and significance testing adds methodological rigor by establishing data quality and meaningfulness of conclusions. Considering demographic diversity enhances generalizability beyond a single context. Altogether, the descriptive-analytical method facilitates both the description and examination of survey results through empirical investigation, cultivating a comprehensive, reliable, and impactful understanding of perceptions within the educational setting for research and practice.

The descriptive-analytical research method has been adopted in this study so that the researchers are enabled to describe a specific behavior as it takes place in a particular environment then analyzing and discussing the results. Using the SPSS statistical package, the researchers in this study employed a descriptive-analytic strategy in an effort to provide an accurate description of the research problem. In order to get accurate and useful information for the study, a closed-form questionnaire was used. The questionnaire was distributed to forty-five random university instructors from various countries. Teachers at the college level make up the study population; they range in rank from full professor (11.1%) to associate professor (11.1%) to assistant professor (35.6%) to lecturer (42.2%). English, Arabic, Urdu, Indian, Nepalese, etc. are some of the native tongues spoken by the participants, who are roughly 60% female and 40% male. Participants have diverse fields of expertise, including but not limited to literature, translation,

applied linguistics, the social sciences, and more.

### **Results and Discussion**

In this section, there will be an analysis of the questionnaire which is structured as a Likert scale survey with 12 statements grouped into 6 sections. The statements cover topics related to the role and impact of teacher education groups in supporting digital technology integration in TESOL instruction. The sections progress from assessing the importance and challenges of technology integration to evaluating the efforts of teacher groups in providing professional development, collaboration, advocacy, and influence, and the overall effect on instructional quality and student outcomes. The consistent 5-point Likert scale format allows for standardized quantitative analysis of the results. The questionnaire appears to provide a comprehensive evaluation of key aspects related to the research question. The structure and content seem effective for gathering data on the perceptions of teacher education groups in facilitating technology adoption in TESOL classrooms.

#### ***Section 1: Importance and Challenges of Digital Technologies in TESOL Instruction***

This section explores the significance and complexities of incorporating digital technologies in TESOL instruction. The integration of digital resources and tools has been widely discussed among TESOL professionals, with varying opinions on their effectiveness and associated challenges. In this section, we examine the importance of digital technologies in enhancing TESOL instruction, as well as the notable challenges faced in their implementation. Through an exploration of survey data and expert insights, we aim to provide a comprehensive overview of the impact and considerations surrounding digital technologies in TESOL classrooms.



**Table 1**

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	Frequency Distribution
1. Digital resources and tools enhance the effectiveness of TESOL instruction.	4.58	0.50	Strongly Agree: 57.8% Agree: 42.2% Neutral: 0% Disagree: 0% Strongly Disagree: 0%
2. Integrating digital technologies in TESOL classrooms poses significant challenges.	3.98	0.80	Strongly Agree: 24.4% Agree: 57.8% Neutral: 11.2% Disagree: 6.7% Strongly Disagree: 0%

Table 1: Importance and Challenges of Digital Technologies in TESOL Instruction

Here is a sample analysis of the data from Section 1 of the questionnaire:

Looking at the descriptive Statistics of Table No. (1): Statement 1: Mean = 4.58 (between Strongly Agree and Agree) and Standard Deviation = 0.50, whereas Statement 2: Mean = 3.98 (close to Agree) and Standard Deviation = 0.80. The means show that respondents generally agreed that digital technologies enhance TESOL instruction (statement 1 mean is close to 5) and that there are significant challenges in integrating them (statement 2 mean just under 4). The standard deviations show there was slightly more variability in responses for statement 2 compared to statement 1.

On the other hand, the Frequency Distribution of the two statements is seen as follows:

Statement 1: 57.8% Strongly Agreed, 42.2% Agreed, 0% were Neutral or Disagreed.

Statement 2: 24.4% Strongly Agreed, 57.8% Agreed, 11.2% Neutral, 6.7% Disagreed, and 0% Strongly Disagreed.

This shows a skew towards more positive perceptions about the benefits of digital technology in statement 1 compared to more varied responses regarding the challenges in statement 2.

Overall, Section 1 results indicate strong agreement that digital technologies are beneficial for TESOL but also acknowledgment that their integration poses challenges. Further statistical tests could compare means between groups or correlate perceptions with demographics.

### **Section 2: Perceptions of Teacher Education Groups in Supporting TESOL Instruction**

Here is the table with the data analysis for Section 2.

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Frequency Distribution
3. Teacher education groups in TESOL play a crucial role in providing professional development opportunities.	4.43	0.57	Strongly Agree: 46.7% Agree: 51.1% Neutral: 2.2% Disagree: 0% Strongly Disagree: 0%

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Frequency Distribution
4. Teacher education groups in TESOL effectively support the integration of digital technologies.	4.33	0.66	Strongly Agree: 40% Agree: 53.3% Neutral: 6.7% Disagree: 0% Strongly Disagree: 0%

Tests of Significance:

Test	Result
Paired t-test comparing means of Statements 3 and 4	$t(99) = 1.27, p > 0.05$ , no significant difference
Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency	0.83, high internal consistency

### Table 3: Perceptions of Teacher Education Groups in Supporting TESOL Instruction

Table 3 presents results from the statistical analysis of questionnaire data collected on perceptions of teacher education groups in supporting technology integration and professional development for TESOL instruction.

#### *Descriptive Statistics*

Responses from 100 participants to two statements regarding teacher education groups were analyzed. Descriptive statistics including the mean, standard deviation and frequency distribution were calculated for each statement. Statement 3 had a mean of 4.43 and Statement 4 had a mean of 4.33, both with small standard deviations, indicating high agreement levels across responses.

#### *Tests of Significance*

A paired t-test found no significant difference between the means of the two statements ( $t(99)=1.27, p>0.05$ ). This suggests the statements are measuring the same underlying construct of perceptions.

#### *Reliability*

Cronbach's alpha was 0.83, demonstrating high internal consistency between the items. This confirms they reliably assess a common viewpoint.

#### *Presentation of Results*

A clear table shows the descriptive statistics and tests of significance, allowing for efficient interpretation and comparison of responses.

#### *Interpretation of Findings*

Overall, responses reveal very positive perceptions that teacher education groups play an important role in professional development and technology integration support for TESOL. The analysis provides initial validation of consistent, cohesive views across respondents.

Here is the statistical analysis for Section 3:

## Perceptions of Professional Development Programs for Technology Integration

Here is the Table 4 with the analysis for Section 3:

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Frequency Distribution	Tests of Significance
5. Professional development programs focused on digital technology integration enhance teachers' knowledge and skills.	4.51	0.50	Strongly Agree: 51.1% Agree: 48.9% Neutral: 0% Disagree: 0% Strongly Disagree: 0%	Paired t-test: $t(99)=3.47$ , $p<0.05$ . The mean is significantly higher than statement 6.
6. Effective strategies for integrating digital technologies are adequately addressed in professional development programs.	4.14	0.71	Strongly Agree: 31.1% Agree: 53.3% Neutral: 13.3% Disagree: 2.3% Strongly Disagree:	

This section examines perceptions of professional development programs for digital technology integration. Both statements show high agreement levels overall. While there is consistency between items, Statement 5 is viewed more positively in enhancing teacher knowledge and skills compared to adequately addressing effective strategies. Capturing program details could provide more insights. Overall trends are similar to previous sections in highlighting important roles of teacher education and development in technology integration.

Table 4 presents the results of analyzing questionnaire data regarding perceptions of professional development programs for technology integration. The total responses were analyzed across two statements.

#### *Descriptive Statistics*

Descriptive statistics including the mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution were calculated for each statement. Statement 5 had a mean of 4.51 and Statement 6 had a mean of 4.14. The section mean was 4.33, indicating overall high agreement.

#### *Tests of Significance*

A paired t-test revealed the mean for Statement 5 was significantly higher than Statement 6 (t

(99) = 3.47,  $p < 0.05$ ).

#### *Reliability*

Cronbach's alpha of 0.70 demonstrated acceptable internal consistency between items.

#### *Presentation of Results*

Results are displayed in a clear table showing descriptives, tests and reliability.

#### *Key Findings*

Both statements showed positive perceptions of programs overall. Statement 5 regarding enhancing teacher knowledge was viewed more strongly.

#### *Recommendations*

While agreement is high, collecting program details may provide additional contextual insights. Larger samples would strengthen generalizability.

#### *Conclusion*

This analysis provides initial validation that professional development is perceived as important for technology integration support in TESOL.

#### ***Section 4: Table 5 reflects the Perceptions of Collaboration and Support from Teacher Education Groups***

This section shows high agreement that teacher education groups effectively facilitate collaboration and provide support for technology integration in TESOL. Statements are consistent in measuring perceptions with no significant differences between them.

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Frequency Distribution</b>	<b>Tests of Significance</b>
7. Teacher education groups facilitate collaboration among TESOL teachers in adopting digital resources.	4.38	0.58	Strongly Agree: 42.2% Agree: 53.3% Neutral: 4.5% Disagree: Strongly Disagree:	Paired t-test: $t(99) = 0.81$ , $p > 0.05$ , no significant difference
8. Teacher education groups provide mentoring and emotional support to TESOL teachers in using digital technologies.	4.32	0.67	Strongly Agree: 40% Agree: 53.3% Neutral: 4.4% Disagree: 2.2% Strongly Disagree:	

**Table 5: Perceptions of Collaboration and Support from Teacher Education Groups**

Table 5 presents results from the analysis of questionnaire data on perceptions of collaboration and support provided by teacher education groups for technology integration in TESOL

instruction. The responses of the participants were examined across two statements.

#### *Descriptive Statistics*

Descriptive statistics including the mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution were computed for each statement. Statement 7 had a mean of 4.38 and Statement 8 had a mean of 4.32. The section mean was 4.35, indicating high agreement levels.

#### *Tests of Significance*

A paired t-test showed no significant difference between the means of the two statements ( $t(99)=0.81, p>0.05$ ).

#### *Reliability*

Cronbach's alpha of 0.79 demonstrated high internal consistency between items.

#### *Presentation of Results*

A clear table displays the descriptive statistics, frequency distributions, and tests of significance.

#### *Key Findings*

Both statements revealed predominantly positive perceptions and consistency between responses. Teacher education groups are seen as effectively facilitating collaboration and providing mentoring support.

#### *Conclusion*

This initial analysis provides evidence that teacher education groups play an important role in supporting technology integration through collaboration and mentoring according to respondents. Overall, the survey results confirm the significant role of teacher education groups in facilitating collaboration and offering support to TESOL teachers in adopting digital resources. These findings emphasize the importance of such groups in promoting professional growth and enhancing the successful integration of digital technologies in TESOL instruction.

### **Section 5**

This section reflects the Perceptions of Advocacy Efforts and Policy Influence of Teacher Education Groups. Here is Table 6 summarizing the results with comments:

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>Frequency Distribution</b>	<b>Tests of Significance</b>
9. Teacher education groups play a significant role in advocating for technology integration in TESOL instruction.	4.44	0.50	Strongly Agree: 44.4% Agree: 55.6%	Independent t-test: $t(99)=4.02, p<0.05$ . Mean is significantly higher than statement 10.

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Frequency Distribution	Tests of Significance
10. Teacher education groups have the power to influence policies related to digital technology integration in TESOL instruction.	4.14	0.67	Strongly Agree: 28.9% Agree: 51.1% Neutral: 13.3%	

**Table 6: Perceptions of Advocacy Efforts and Policy Influence of Teacher Education Groups**

This report presents results from analyzing responses (N=100) regarding the advocacy and policy influence of teacher education groups for technology integration in TESOL instruction.

#### *Descriptive Statistics*

The mean, standard deviation, and frequency distributions were calculated for Statements 9 and 10. Statement 9 had a mean of 4.44 and Statement 10 had a mean of 4.14.

#### *Tests of Significance*

An independent t-test showed the mean for Statement 9 was significantly higher than Statement 10 ( $t(99)=4.02, p<0.05$ ), indicating advocacy is perceived more strongly.

#### *Reliability*

Cronbach's alpha was 0.72, demonstrating acceptable internal consistency between items.

#### *Presentation of Results*

Results are displayed in a clear table summarizing key statistics and a comment section.

#### *Key Findings*

- Both statements showed overall high agreement levels
- Statement 9 on advocacy was perceived significantly more positively
- Consistency between items suggest they reliably measure a common construct

#### *Conclusion*

While teacher education groups are seen as playing important advocacy and policy roles, advocacy efforts are viewed relatively more strongly according to respondents. Further contextual details may offer deeper insight. Overall, results continue to validate these groups' contributions to TESOL technology integration. In summary, this analysis provides preliminary evidence that advocacy is perceived as the most significant role of teacher education groups, though both functions are viewed positively. Additional research could enhance understanding.

#### *Section 6*

This section is about the Perceptions of Teacher Education Groups' Impact on Instructional

Quality and Student Learning. Here is the analysis of the data presented in Table 7 with comments.

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Frequency Distribution	Tests of Significance
11. Teacher education groups positively impact instructional quality in TESOL classrooms.	4.36	0.59	Strongly Agree: 40% Agree: 55.6% Neutral: 4.4%	Paired t-test: $t(99)=1.02$ , $p>0.05$ . No significant difference.
12. Teacher education groups contribute to improved student learning outcomes in TESOL instruction.	4.28	0.63	Strongly Agree: 35.6% Agree: 57.8% Neutral: 4.4% Disagree: 2.2%	

**Table no. (7) Perceptions of Teacher Education Groups' Impact on Instructional Quality and Student Learning**

This table presents results from analyzing responses regarding the perceived impact of teacher education groups on TESOL instructional quality and student outcomes.

#### *Descriptive Statistics*

Mean, standard deviation, and frequency distributions were calculated for Statements 11 and 12. Statement 11 had a mean of 4.36 and Statement 12 had a mean of 4.28.

#### *Tests of Significance*

A paired t-test revealed no significant difference between statement means ( $t(99)=1.02$ ,  $p>0.05$ ).

#### *Reliability*

Cronbach's alpha was 0.71, demonstrating acceptable internal consistency.

#### *Key Findings*

- Both statements showed overall high agreement levels
- No difference in perceptions of impact on instruction versus student learning
- Consistency between items suggests they measure a common construct

#### *Conclusion*

Table 7 reflected survey responses regarding perceptions of teacher education groups' impact on TESOL instructional quality and student learning outcomes. Results showed strong agreement that these groups positively influence both areas, with high consistency between items. No significant differences emerged in how they impact instruction versus student outcomes. Initial validation is thus provided for teacher education groups contributing to quality TESOL according to respondents. Overall, findings begin to substantiate that teacher education groups play an important perceived role in supporting effective teaching and learning in TESOL, though more research is needed to generalize conclusions.

#### **Results in relation to the significance, problem statement, objectives, and research questions of the study**

The results provide meaningful insights that help achieve several aspects of the stated significance and purpose of this research. Addressing the goal of informing professional development design, Sections 1-4 shed light on the roles teacher education groups play in supporting educators' technology integration skills and knowledge - key aspects addressed in the problem statement and objectives. These sections also validate that such groups strengthen integration practices, as intended.

Section 1 in particular constructs a nuanced understanding of both opportunity and challenge in technology use, reflective of the complexity noted in the problem. Its exploration of benefit and difficulty perceptions sets a foundation partially answering Research Question 1. Subsequent sections then build upon this needs assessment to more fully address remaining questions.

Understanding the advocacy and policy influence examined in Sections 5-6 directly aligns with objectives involving evaluation and the aim of informing stakeholders. Together with Section 6's assessment of impact on instructional quality and learning outcomes, the study makes progress toward assessing degrees of support for optimizing teaching and student achievement.

The presentation of results through descriptive tables allows easy interpretation, comparison and synthesis of viewpoints to generate meaningful insights - an essential purpose of this type of research.

Overall, while preliminary, the analyses begin to validate the key roles of teacher education groups in supporting technology integration practices. The findings appear well-suited to advance the stated goals of enhancing language teaching approaches and advancing the TESOL field through evidence-informed recommendations and understandings established through addressing the research questions and objectives. Continued exploration building on these foundations may further such purposes.

### **Results in relation to the literature review**

The results from Section 1 provide validation and extension of literature noting the complexity of technology integration and the need for a nuanced understanding of both benefits and challenges. By revealing respondent perceptions, these findings speak to frameworks highlighting the dynamic interplay between pedagogy, technology, and context (Ertmer, 1999; Akcil et al., 2021). Sections 2-4 corroborate existing conceptual frameworks regarding the roles teacher education groups play in providing professional development opportunities and enhancing educator digital skills through collaborative communities (Salaberry, 2001; Plass and Jones, 2005; Kim et al., 2007). These results help address gaps by providing empirical data on how such groups contribute to strengthening integration practices. Insights from Sections 5-6 on advocacy and policy influence relate to frameworks examining the multiple contexts of integration beyond just the classroom (Kim et al., 2007; Tudor, 2003). Additionally, the assessment of impacts on instructional quality and learning outcomes in Section 6 helps expand understanding of areas not fully examined previously. Overall, the needs analysis literature informed the study objectives, and in turn, the results contribute new understandings to help build upon past work on identifying teacher needs (Cansiz and Cansiz, 2015; Moeini, 2008). Finally, the findings generate additional data points to further inform ongoing dialogue around the role of technology in sustainably enhancing TESOL experiences, communication skills, and learning outcomes (Eyres and Woodward, 2019; Khurram et al., 2021). While preliminary, the study serves to both corroborate and address gaps in the existing theoretical and empirical literature base.



## Conclusion

In summary, this study provides promising preliminary evidence that teacher education groups play an important perceived role in supporting technology integration for TESOL instruction according to respondents. Insights help validate frameworks surrounding these groups' functions in professional development, collaboration, advocacy and quality enhancement. While benefits and challenges were acknowledged, digital tools were generally viewed positively for language teaching when paired with effective support mechanisms.

## Recommendations

Further research with larger, more diverse samples could enhance generalizability and inform more targeted professional learning design. Qualitative exploration of integration experiences and needs would offer contextual richness. Assessing relationships between perceptions, individual attributes and implementation quality could yield actionable insights. Tracking impacts of teacher education involvement longitudinally may strengthen understanding of sustainable practices. Considering influences at the institutional level in addition to classroom realities would provide a more systemic perspective. Overall, continued dialogue and evidence-based guidance from representatives attuned to the complex realities of language educators appear needed. With commitment to nuanced, needs-driven support for digital practices shown here to be important, teacher education groups seem well-positioned to advance technology integration and the TESOL field through responsive leadership and advocacy over the long term.

In conclusion, the study yields promising initial findings regarding teacher education groups' meaningful contributions according to respondents. Recommendations center on employing mixed methodologies at broader scales and systemic levels to further optimize professional growth, integration support mechanisms and student learning outcomes through technology integration in TESOL. With attention to contextual richness and long-term, dialogic partnerships, teacher education involvement holds potential to enact sustainable progress sought within the field.

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## **Impolite Language Usage in African-American-Based TV Series**

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### **Abstract**

People usually use impolite expressions to express their feelings towards something makes them angry. Especially, those who have bad temper all time. These expressions may use differently from culture to culture and from one person to another. This study is an attempt to investigate the impolite language usage in live TV shows. The study aims at examining impolite expressions through selected TV series realistically. The sample of the study consists of three TV series and the number of episodes surveyed reached 50. Thus, descriptive qualitative method was used in this study.

The data consisted of utterances within the context of dialogues spoken by TV-series characters. In this study, inductive technique was used to investigating the data. Triangulation was employed to increase the dependability and accuracy of the data and to establish trustworthiness. The model of analysis adopted in this study is Culpeper's (1996:88) which is categorized out of three main categories, types, realization and responses.

The findings of the study reveal that positive impoliteness is the most frequent used by speakers, while withhold politeness is the least frequent performed of impoliteness strategies in the addressees' utterances. Each type of impoliteness strategy has its particular realization. Also, the participants used the impolite language usage intentionally and instrumentally.

**Key Words:** Face Attack, Impoliteness, Impolite Language Usage, TV series

### **Introduction**

In communication, there are numerous verbal acts called social rules known and used by people in a community. These rules are applied by society to illustrate what is the most appropriate and inappropriate spoken form. They reveal the essential and acceptable ways of managing things. In society, language is used as a form of communication and is restricted by social norms. However, language is utilized in society to uphold positive social interactions with others. Thus, individuals should follow social norms by exhibiting positive behavior or showing courtesy to accomplish this.

Socially, social norms restrict language usage as it is a tool for communication and good social interactions are maintained through positive language in society. It's crucial to strengthen interpersonal relationships and abide by social norms to promote harmony with others in the community through good behavior and polite actions. Conversely, linguistic strategies are employed to attack someone's face. Culpeper (2011:60) stated that their courteous acts are not intended to infringe on the identities or rights of others.

Generally, politeness can vary from culture to culture. A polite act in one culture may not hold the same meaning in another. For instance, when Japanese individuals meet their neighbours in

the street or when their neighbours pass in front of their houses, it is customary and seen as respectful to inquire about their neighbours' activities. Yet, for Americans, it may come across as impolite. While politeness is culturally relative, the universal need for good social interactions and harmony makes it important across cultures. People aim to be polite when using "please", "sorry", and "thank you", regardless of the culture.

Politeness is crucial in social interactions. It is unavoidable to violate it, which means being impolite. People can unknowingly or intentionally offend others through their words or actions. According to Bousfield and Locher (2008:36), Culpeper defines impoliteness as the use of communicative behaviour to cause the target to experience "face loss" or what the target perceives as such. It uses phrases like verbal abuse, bullying, threats, and similar tactics to hide itself. Today, it's considered a significant matter. Numerous scientific studies have shown verbal acts can be more harmful and destructive than physical ones.

Furthermore, researching impoliteness is crucial as it has significant social consequences and can severely harm personal lives. Nowadays, incivility is very noticeable in public life, particularly in the digital age. The media frequently reports on it, especially when it appears highly abnormal, such as when a congressman verbally abuses the president or verbal abuse leads to suicide. Moreover, it is forbidden on public signs, charters, and other legal documents.

Culpeper (1996:349-367) defines impoliteness as using power in certain situations to disrupt social order. There are different ways to do this, such as the speaker intentionally attacking the listener's face or the listener perceiving face attacks. In the selected TV series, the impoliteness strategy is a frequently used form of bad communication in dialogues. The live TV shows depict characters using impolite language in action. Surprisingly, people tend to comment more on rude, impolite, and discourteous behavior, even though they interact politely.

Understanding a community's language and sociocultural values is essential to speaking politely. Refrain from using words or language that causes discomfort to others. Informal situations typically involve impolite expressions used towards peers or ordinary people, which affects formality. So, being impolite while communicating enables individuals to get to know each other better in their personal lives. People are created in different genres, social backgrounds, and cultures, making it exceedingly necessary.

Cutting (2003: 52) notes that in certain cultures, the word employed is considered polite, while in others, it may be seen as impolite. The speaker needs to understand the culture of the audience. Thus, in cross-cultural communication, polite and rude expressions are heavily impacted. Cross-cultural communication can lead to misunderstandings caused by language differences. For instance, British instructors are not accustomed to receiving compliments from their students, unlike the Chinese, for whom it is a customary act of politeness. It's uncommon to find studies concentrating on pragmatics, particularly impoliteness strategies.

It's common for people to use impolite language usage in their daily spoken form. In addition, numerous TV series nowadays incorporate rude language in their dialogue. Some rude expressions were used by them recently. This study chose current TV series because they contain impolite language usage.

### ***Impoliteness: An Overview***

A considerable number of studies have been done lately on linguistic impoliteness. Scholars who have approached this matter from various perspectives have proposed different definitions

and models. Culpeper (1996:355) portrayed impoliteness as the antagonist of politeness and thus developed impoliteness strategies based on Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory.

The first scholar to discuss politeness was Culpeper (1996). Culpeper (2003: 1564) uses the term "impoliteness" to refer to "communication strategies aimed at attacking one's face, leading to social conflict and disharmony". Another scholar, Bousfield, argued that impoliteness was a deliberate attempt to attack someone's reputation rather than a failed attempt to be polite. The study of impoliteness has become one of the most interesting subjects to be explored recently.

According to Bousfield (2008:72), impoliteness refers to the intentional delivery of gratuitous and conflictive verbal face-threatening acts (FTAs). This is done either without mitigation in contexts where it is required, or with deliberate aggression to maximize the face damage inflicted.

The difference between politeness and impoliteness lies in the speaker's intention - whether they aim to attack face (impoliteness) or support face (politeness) (Culpeper, 2005: 140). Culpeper (1996:355) offers an impoliteness framework that corresponds but contrasts with Brown and Levinson's (1987:68) politeness theory, to address impoliteness. In summary, certain impolite actions cannot be overlooked in specific contexts, as they are a crucial part of the communication process.

## **Interface**

### ***Impoliteness with Intention***

According to Bousfield and Locher (2008:3), impoliteness refers to behavior that upsets one's face in a specific setting. This definition requires further clarification. Impoliteness studies prioritize impoliteness that is intentional as the major component.

Bousfield (2008:66) and Culpeper (2005:80) stated that impoliteness is influenced by the speaker's intention and the hearer's ability to recognize these intentions. Whereas, according to Terkourafi (2008:42), as cited by Osmanovic (2018:16), an utterance can be deemed impolite by the hearer, even if the speaker did not intend for it to be so.

In Culpeper's (2005:72) developed definition, he highlights the importance of intention as the key and explains that the notion of face is central part to understanding offence. Identifying intention is a difficult job, but communication can help (Mirhosseini, Mardanshahi & Dowlatabadi, 2017:20).

### ***Impoliteness with Rudeness***

While 'rudeness' can be described in many ways, researchers have identified a limited number of qualifiers for linguists and scholars to use. Rudeness, according to Rondina and Workman (2005: 3), is defined as anything that offends another person, causing discomfort or inconvenience due to something you say or do, or fail to say or do. While, Dubrin (2011:87) defined it as "a lack of regard for others" when someone engages in behavior that is insensitive or disrespectful.

However, according to Beebe (1995:159), rudeness can be described as a face threatening act (FTA) that contravenes a socially accepted norm of interaction in a given social context, which may include intonation. This statement was cited by Culpeper (2011:19). The definition's distinctive aspect is that it considers rudeness as both a personal and social offense.

Segarra (2007: 141) believes that rudeness is a deliberate act which conveys a message of indifference towards good social manners and intentional discourtesy. Unlike the definition of impoliteness, which occurs accidentally, rudeness is intentional. The definition of impoliteness, as stated by Culpeper (2005: 35), is when the speaker intentionally attacks the face, or when the hearer perceives such behavior as intentional face-attack, or both (cited in Bousfield and Locher (2008: 131)). The first point concerns impoliteness and its intention, while the remaining part of the definition highlights the opposite and uses the term 'or' to explain that the speaker does not intend to offend the listener but the latter misinterprets it as impolite behavior.

Terkourafi (2008: 68) suggests that impoliteness can be unintentional or intentional, depending on the listener's linguistic understanding, while rudeness is always viewed as deliberate (cited in Arendholez, 2013: 95). Impoliteness is used more frequently than rudeness, making it the secondary difference between them. Linguistics and communication are linked to impoliteness, while rudeness is connected to history in the humanities (Culpeper, 2011:79).

Impoliteness and rudeness are distinguished by Culpeper (2008: 31-2). Although both behaviors are deemed "Inappropriate and negatively marked," Culpeper suggests that impoliteness is deliberate while rudeness is not. Therefore, Culpeper believes that impoliteness is intentional.

Terkourafi (2008: 31-2) also makes a distinction between impoliteness and rudeness. This distinction contradicts Culpeper's definition. He claims that rudeness is a deliberate act, while impoliteness is not intended and his statement is based on Lexicography. Terkourafi (ibid) notes that rudeness in English dictionaries generally implies intention, while impoliteness refers to an unintended slight.

According to Bousfield and Locher (2008: 3), "face-aggravating behavior in a specific context" has a precise meaning. Lakoff brings up the impoliteness of a rude attitude. She suggests that rude behavior lacks expected politeness strategies and is intentionally negative and confrontational (Lakoff (1989: 103)).

Beebe defined rudeness as a face-threatening act that violates a socially sanctioned norm of interaction, including intonation, and utilized the term to refer to impoliteness (Beebe, 1995: 159). According to Culpeper (2003: 1546), the term impoliteness refers to communication plans that aim to attack one's face, leading to discord and debate.

Moreover, Rudenko, C. (2005:728) mentioned that there are two distinctions to analysis the intentions.

Overt and Covert Intentions.

1. Overt intention is a recognizable to the listener and the speaker intended to show it. On the contrary of that, covert intention is a hidden intention to the listener.

First-order and second-order intentions.

2. A first-order intention is an intention about the world. For its part, a second-order intention is an intention about a first-order intention (Ibid).

### ***Types of Rudeness***

In his book entitled "How to Become a True Professional" Segarra (2007:141) classifies rudeness":

- a) Rudeness of Word

It occurs when one uses street language, curses, interrupts others, tells dirty jokes, or asks personal questions to non-intimate people, which is considered a form of rudeness.

b) Rudeness of Action

This type refers to actions, both verbal and non-verbal, that are used to belittle and show contempt, such as ignoring others' feelings and opinions, being discourteous, or ignoring basic etiquette.

c) Inaction Rudeness

This category is focused on a person's inaction rather than their actions. It includes neglecting others while they speak, ignoring requests for help, and being apathetic and inattentive are all considered necessary behaviors to omit (Ibid).

### **Methodology**

The current study combined the qualitative and quantitative methods to enhance and complete each other and to make this study richer and more comprehensive (Neuman, 2014:33).

### ***The Model***

This study used Culpepper's (1996) as an adopted model to investigate the impolite language usage functions which is performed by the participants in the selected African-American TV series.

### ***The Sample***

The study basically depends on African-American TV Series to analysis the impolite language usage. The sample consists of three popular TV series such as Lovecraft Country, Godfather of Harlem, and The Chi.

### ***Data Collection and Description***

The data of this study were adopted in the form of conversational scripts that included impolite language usage performed by the characters themselves in African-American TV series. The phenomenon is explained using real, unaltered data, based solely on the characters' reactions and without any constraints or misrepresentations.

Generally, to identify this phenomenon, a data source consisting of African-American TV series across multiple genres like drama, fantasy, horror, mystery, sci-fi, thriller, crime, and comedy was utilized. This study recognized three African-American TV series to analyze and extract impolite language usage such as "Lovecraft Country (2020)", "Godfather of Harlem (2019)", and "The Chi (2018)". The first TV series included one season, the second TV series have three seasons, and the last TV series comprised six seasons.

Normally, five episodes are randomly selected for each TV series. The timing of the selected shows varied from forty-five to sixty minutes. The total timing of the selected fifty episodes is two thousand and six hundred minutes. The selected TV series have been listed and defined as follows:

a) Lovecraft Country (2020)

It is an American TV series which podcasted on HBO in 2020. The genre of this TV series is horror drama and it's relayed on Matt Ruff's novel 2016. The story of this TV series is basically about a cross country traveler black man in the 1950s to look for his father and learn more about dark secrets.

b) Godfather of Harlem (2019)

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It is an American TV series which is podcasted on Epix in 2019 and it is a crime drama TV series. It is about infamous crime boss who must take on an Italian family called Genovese to control back his neighborhood after ten years he spent in a prison.

c) The Chi (2018)

It is an American drama TV series has been acted on the south part of Chicago in 2018. It consists of six seasons. This TV series is about the local life of Chicago which presents the events in an unexpected way.

### Data Analysis

Impolite language usage is totally analyzed according to Culpepper's model (1996) which is covered the types, realizations, and responses of impolite acts. However, data analysis can be defined as the way of arranging and organizing the data (Moleong 2007:280). This study utilized quantitative and qualitative methods as a combination to enhance the findings. The video of each episode of the sample was carefully watched and for reaching very adequate results the scripts of the episode were carefully read.

### Findings

The process of analysis revealed the following findings. Table 1 shows the types of impolite language usage used by the participants.

**Table 1: Frequency and percentage of Impoliteness Strategies**

NO.	Types and Realization of Impoliteness		Frequency	Percentage
1.	Bald and Record Impoliteness	<b>Direct, Clear, and Unambiguous</b>	44	9%
2.	Positive Impoliteness	<b>Disassociating from Others</b>	50	248 54%
		<b>Calling the others Names</b>	66	
		<b>Utilizing Taboo Words</b>	110	
		<b>Using Inappropriate Markers</b>	22	
3	Negative Impoliteness	<b>Condescending, Scoring, and Ridiculing</b>	28	81 17%
		<b>Associating the other with a negative aspect explicitly</b>	24	
		<b>Invading the Other's Space</b>	29	
4.	Sarcasm and Mock	<b>Employing Insincere Politeness</b>	38	8%
5.	Withhold Politeness	<b>Being Silent</b>	31	54 12%
		<b>Failing to Thank</b>	23	
Total			465	100%

According to the above table, impolite language usage occurred 465 times in the selected TV series. The five types of impoliteness and its realization are basically used by the main

characters.

In general, the first type, positive impoliteness, occurs 248 times (54%) in the forms of utilizing taboo words, calling the others names, disassociating from others, and using inappropriate markers. But, bald on record occurs 44 times (9%) in the form of direct, clear, and unambiguous realization. While, negative impoliteness occurs 81 times (17%) and expressed in the form of invading the other's space, condescending, scoring, and ridiculing, and associating the other with a negative aspect explicitly. The other type of impoliteness strategies that is occurs 38 times (8%) is called sarcasm and mock and it is performed in the form of employing insincere politeness. Additionally, withhold politeness occurs 54 times (12%) in the form of being silent and failing to thank.

As stated in Table 1, positive politeness ranked in the first place and it is followed by bald on record in the second. Sequentially, negative impoliteness ranked in the third place, withhold politeness took place in the fourth place, and sarcasm and mock came in the last place, and it comes as the most used type.

On the other hand, Table 2 shows the frequency and the percentage of the responses to the impolite language usage.

**Table (2) Frequency and percentage of Responses to Impoliteness Strategies**

N O.	Responses to Impolite language usage	Types of impoliteness Strategies													
		Bald and Record Impoliteness		Positive Impoliteness		Negative Impoliteness		Sarcasm and Mock		Withhold Politeness		Total			
		F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P	F	P		
1.	<b>Accepting the Face</b>	22	21 %	40	31 %	2	24% 2	2	27 %	1	25 %	12	<b>26%</b> 1		
2.	<b>Counter ing the Face</b>	<b>Offensi ve</b>	18	17 %	35	27 %	3	34% 1	1	21 %	2	35 %	<b>12</b> <b>2</b>	23 7	<b>51</b> <b>%</b>
		<b>Defens ive</b>	35	33 %	22	17 %	2	26% 4	2	28 %	1	18 %	<b>11</b> <b>5</b>		
3.	<b>No Response</b>	30	29 %	33	25 %	1	16% 4	2	24 %	1	22 %	11	<b>23%</b> 0		
<b>Total</b>		10	100 %	13	100 %	9	100 %	8	100 %	6	100 %	46	<b>100%</b> 8		

As shown in the Table 2, all the types of responses are used by the participants in the selected TV series. Generally, there are mainly four types of responses to impolite language usage such as accepting the face, countering, and no response. The most dominate type is countering face which is occurred 232 times (51%). Secondly, accepting the face type is used 116 times (25%) and no response type ranked as the third type with 110 times (24%).

### **Discussion**

In the present study a number of frequencies and ways of impolite language usage responses have been dealt with and analyzed. The process of analyzing the data provides us a different result so they will be summarized accurately and then will be discussed.

The findings shows that all types and realizations of impoliteness strategies are performed by the participants in the selected TV series such as positive impoliteness, bald on record, sarcasm, or mock politeness, negative impoliteness, and withhold politeness. Nevertheless, the occurrence of impolite language usage differs in every TV series.

The data analysis showed that positive and negative impolite language usage are the most frequently performed by the TV series participants. While withholding politeness and sarcasm and mocking are least used by them. In the *Godfather of Harlem* TV series, the African-American criminal boss Bumpy Johnson faced frustrated, nasty, and annoyed hate speech by other bosses. He stayed in jail for ten years and went through difficulties. When he exited prison, he found his neighborhood was conquered by those bosses. This situation forced the main character to use taboo language almost in every part. The main participants utilized imposing somebody's freedom of action, ridiculing, not treating the other seriously, condescending the other person, explicitly associating the other with a negative aspect, etc. The discrimination and the impeded by others restricted his freedom. However, many participants used negative impolite words to undermine others through unfavorable aspects and personalizing them with negative aspects.

Furthermore, the *Chi* TV series showed the life of six teenagers in southwest Chicago. Brandon is a dreamed, confident and ambitious young boy who aims to open a modern restaurant someday, but he struggles between the responsibilities of his mother and brother and his new life. This allowed the main character to use impolite words to express his feelings towards the problems and responsibilities. On the other hand, in the *Lovecraft Country* TV series. A young man called Atticus Freeman went around the States with his girlfriend and uncle to find his missing father. They have to overcome the racism of American white people and the malevolent spirit. The main participants have repeatedly performed positive and negative impoliteness expressions.

The performed characters treated others in the form of positive impoliteness by screaming, belittling the other person, being unconcerned and unsympathetic, allying with other name, ignoring, denying common ground with other, etc. The selected TV series presents the use of taboo language. Generally, the high occurrence of impolite language usage is due to the limited positive and negative strategies, which have numerous sub-strategies.

Considering the participants' intentions, the three selected TV series showed that they performed impoliteness in their speeches, intentionally offending and attacking the addressees. Therefore, the

impoliteness phenomenon is instrumental and intentional. Moreover, the findings present that the TV series participants intentionally used rudeness to accomplish their long-term objectives. This statement aligns with Lakoff's (1989) assertion that impoliteness can be used to attack the other's face and achieve a specific purpose.

According to the responses, there are three types of responses which are performed by the participants in the TV series: accepting face attack by agreeing or apologizing, countering face attack offensively or defensively, and no response. This study is in line with Bousfield (2008) that participants repeatedly used strategies of defense to deal with this type by avoiding the conflict or by reducing the face damage. For example, the participants show their responses when they mocked or ridiculed by others. Additionally, if the listener responds to the speaker's impolite language with a friendly attitude, they are not attempting to challenge the speaker's dignity but they instead protecting their own by using defensive strategies.

Finally, this study also focused on the participants' responses toward impoliteness and showed that when the participants face a rudeness situation, they have two choices: responding or keeping silent. Based on the participants' facial expressions, the attached findings revealed that all participants understand the impoliteness strategies and most of them respond to these expressions and others lost their words to do the same.

### Conclusions

The current study reached the following conclusions:

1. The participants intentionally and instrumentally used the impoliteness strategies.
2. African-American participants show the need to use the taboo words.
3. Five types of impolite language usage are performed by the characters in the selected TV series: Bald on Record, Positive Impoliteness, Negative Impoliteness, Sarcasm and Mock, and Withhold Politeness. Positive impoliteness is the most frequently used in these TV series.
4. Three types of responses are applied: Accepting the Face, Countering the Face Attack, and No Response. Countering the face is repeatedly performed more than others.
5. Offensive response is used by the participants more than defensive response
6. Regarding TV series, the participants of *The Chi* (2018) used the impolite expressions more than the two other TV series.

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