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## *Color-coded Marking: Using Vibrant Feedback to Enhance ELL Engagement*

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Official Conference Proceedings

### **Abstract**

Social science research suggests that using a red pen for essay marking evokes a negative student response. Beyond the choice of marking color, ELL students are often overwhelmed by the assorted scribbles, circles and slashes that teachers apply to the written essay in an effort to illuminate and correct syntactic and semantic errors. The use of a color-coded marking matrix allows teachers to easily indicate the problem areas while prompting students to interact with their text on a visual level to make recommended corrections independently. The matrix is a discrete set of grammatical and lexical elements; each assigned its own color. By highlighting the mistake, either manually or electronically, the teacher is able to give the student a visual depiction of areas of writing weakness. Simply correcting the student error does not ensure that future mistakes of the same kind will not occur. At a glance, a student can assess her writing weaknesses by color prevalence and can actually track her progress in subsequent writing activities by comparison. In addition to the color-coded writing elements in the matrix, students can use corresponding columns for translations as well as hints for remediating the particular error. Teachers and students agree upon the colors that denote the elements, and the matrix legend is co-created by the class for the term. Rather than marking being seen as the endpoint of a learning experience, color-coded marking introduces student empowerment and self-correction for maximum engagement and retention.

**Keywords:** writing process, English Language Learners, marking systems, engagement

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## **Introduction**

Before engaging in discussion of the means and modes of the marking of writing and its correlation to teaching the skill, it may be beneficial to consider the function of writing in the instructional process, as well as to connect the use of marking to relevant learning theory.

### **Writing: The Swiss Army Knife of Instructional Tools**

Within the English language classroom, indeed within the broader context of learning, there is often the confusion between understanding and familiarity. While neurocognitive processes drive familiarity, recollection and understanding are phenomenologically distinct expressions of explicit memory as their retrieval is accompanied by pertinent associative detail (Paller, Voss & Boehm, 2007). If a group of adults were asked to raise their hand if they know what *existentialism* is, a fair number of the educated participants might do so. However, when given a small slip of paper and asked to write the definition of *existentialism*, the former certainty may erode when presented with the task of capturing one's understanding in words.

Such is often the case with both L1 and L2 English learners. Class content, leisure reading, social media and the cinema expose the learner to an array of words and sentence constructions, which without acquisition and sustained use, are retained comfortably under the heading of "familiar." Putting these familiars under the heading of "knowing" requires their ownership, use, and manipulation in a variety of settings. Writing is one such mechanism for evaluating comprehension and assisting the learner in distinguishing between what I know and what I am simply familiar with. Additionally, the emergence of writing across the curriculum has gained appeal in recent years as it provides these benefits regardless of content area and supports the development of such 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills as critical reflection.

Writing for the English language learner (ELL) represents a constellation of inter-related masteries in the language classroom. Aside from the syntactic, lexical and semantic issues that must be dealt with, some learners must simultaneously balance these features within a new alphabet of characters, as is the case with my Arabic-speaking students. Therefore the form, or physical aspect of writing in perhaps a new direction with new letters and symbols, often takes precedence over attention to content. Even so, the utility of writing bears the same vital function in that it provides an avenue for learners to demonstrate understanding, reveal weaknesses and display creativity. It is likewise a peephole through which teachers can individually access these student competencies and align subsequent instruction.

## **Learning Theories about Marking?**

Although marking generally signals an endpoint in leaning as it articulates the summative outcome of instruction, the form that marking takes can transform the activity into a starting point for unlearning and re-learning. Formative assessment, or teacher feedback in general, is considered a powerful influence on student achievement and by extension, engagement (Atherton, 2011). The form that marking takes may adhere more closely with some learning theories than with others, thereby changing the nature of the learning experience for both the student and the teacher.

The teacher wielding the iconic red pen and identifying student writing mistakes with a confusing assortment of scribbles, lines and corrections falls more in line with somewhat outdated learning theories. This manner of marking tends to be more behaviorist in perspective in that the ultimate aim is performance improvement by arranging the environment to produce desired results in achievement (Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2007). A closer look at traditional forms of marking indicates that surface-level manipulation lacks the student participation element that is critical to engagement and authentic learning.

Although the use of color in teaching and learning has enjoyed favorable appeal, there is research that suggests that the color red used in marking has negative connotations for students (Dukes & Albanesi, 2013). Simply pointing out mistakes, in any color or format, communicates not only the finality of the teacher's judgment, but also does nothing to guarantee the error will not be repeated in subsequent writing attempts.

Solution-based learning and collaborative work between students, and between student and teacher, all features of the constructivist learning theory, offer some insulation against inadvertently excluding the learner from the learning process. Transforming the writing process into more of a volley between teacher and student wherein teacher feedback invites a response and ultimately a change, moves the student from the position of receiving knowledge to discovering knowledge. Herein may lie our best prospects for authentic learning and retention.

## **Facilitating Discovery for English Language Learners**

As we consider the complexity of elements that L2 students must juggle within the writing process, it is unlikely that more written feedback or even simple circles and slashes applied to their attempts will point them toward discovery. Perhaps a non-linguistic medium for identifying errors would be productive. However if this mechanism is designed and employed only by the teacher without student input, then there is less likelihood of engagement, let alone improvement as a result of it.

There are any number of marking systems and frameworks available to teachers. Some, such as essay marking software and other computer-assisted programs offer the type of objectivity, consistency and timeliness that is viewed as desirable to teachers and students alike (Shermis, Burstein, Higgins, & Zechner, 2010; Page & Petersen, 1995; Ajay, Tillett, & Page, 1973).

In many ways, these programs expedite the marking process and reduce the time between output and outcome for the student. Unfortunately, not only does the student have limited, if any, interaction with the design of the tool, neither does the teacher except for selecting from a preset menu of criteria. In some ways, excluding the student from this aspect of the learning outcome process may have more damaging effects than excluding the teacher.

In the differentiated learning environment, those time-honored virtues of objectivity and consistency lose some of their appeal as the one-size-fits-all approach lacks sufficient customization to be beneficial to all learners. Therefore a marking framework that is rigid enough to be considered equitable, is often not flexible enough to accommodate the range of learning differences, styles and preferences that today's classroom now recognizes and must accommodate. Likewise, when students co-create the marking matrix based on teacher-guided competencies, there is a participatory aspect to both the process of writing, as well as an investment in the marking.

## The Color-Coded Marking Matrix

Several years ago when I began teaching English internationally, I found that some of the tools in my TESOL toolbox that had worked sufficiently in the ELL classroom in the US, were no longer adequate. As I considered this new challenge and how I might better configure my practice in a way that was both engaging, effective and enjoyable for the student, the color-coded matrix was born (Fig. 1). Unlike in the US, where speakers of other languages were submerged in the target language environment, my ELL students had a different challenge. As in my current setting, they are learning English in an Arabic-rich environment, much like English speaking students would learn Japanese or French in the US.

Figure 1: Example of a color-coded grammatical matrix.

Writing Element	Translation	HINT or RULE	Student Notes Or examples
Spelling or Word Choice	التهجئة الصحيحة للكلمات	Check the dictionary or type the word into an online search engine like Google.	
Verb Agreement or Tense	زمن الفعل صحيح	Circle the subject of the sentence and underline the verb. <a href="http://www.grammarbook.com/grammar/cnt_gram.asp">http://www.grammarbook.com/grammar/cnt_gram.asp</a>	
Punctuation	علامات الترقيم	Ask: Does your sentence end in a full stop? Does your question end in a question mark? Does your exclamation end in an exclamation point?	She runs fast. Do you like to run? No! I hate exercise!
Capitalization	استخدام الحرف الكبير بداية الجملة والأسماء	If the word occurs at the beginning of the sentence or is a proper noun (the name of a specific person, place or thing), it should begin with a capital letter.	Princess Haya Dubai Ferrari

## **Implications for All Learners**

Therefore if we assume that experience is the most salient factor in advancing a learner through the stages of skill acquisition, then the remaining dilemma is what is done with this knowledge, both in terms of storage and appropriate access. Charlin, Boshuizen, Custers and Feltovich (2007) introduce an interesting notion that repeated experiences can construct schemas that can be later activated when a similar pattern of elements is detected.

Although discussed exclusively in a medical context, the notion of scripts might be applicable to other real world environments. Students engaged in problem-based learning might benefit from being taught these configurations to speed up the retrieval of possible solutions. I see this as a mechanism for categorizing and storing prior knowledge. Ambrose, Bridges, Lovett, DePietro and Norman (2010) assert that students have not yet developed the necessary networks to connect and organize concepts and procedures in their learning domain, as experts typically have.

Therefore the researchers posit that it is the organization of their knowledge that influences how they learn and apply what they know (Ambrose et al. 2010). In fact, they argue that a chief objective for the instructor is to teach students how to organize, as well as how to discern and mediate inaccurate or inappropriate prior knowledge, as it has been shown to hinder learning (Ambrose et al. 2010).

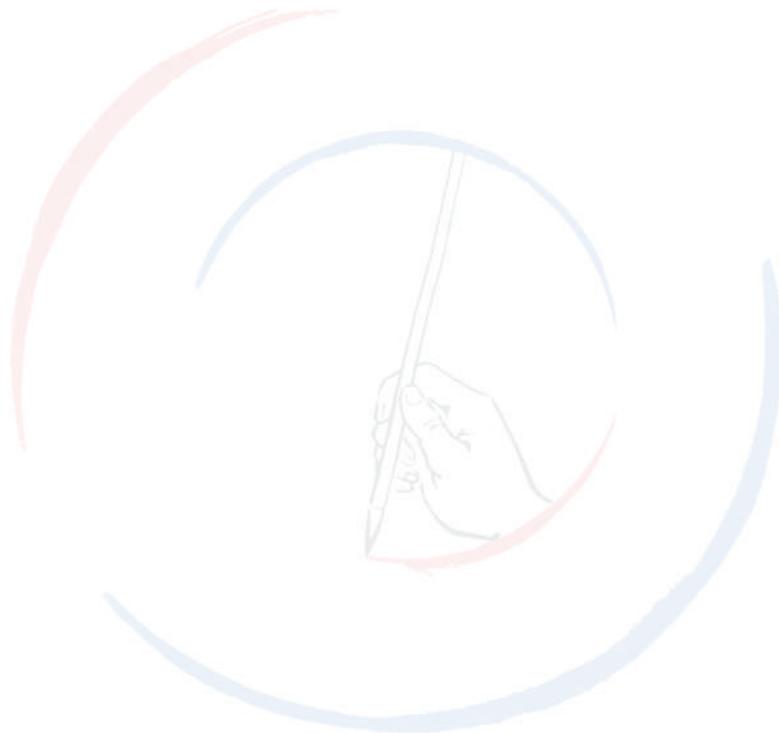
Frameworks such as the color-coded matrix can provide both an organizational schema for writing improvement as well as a participatory activity for ownership of learning as expressed through the written medium in all language learning environments.

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*Difficulties of Building English Sentences in Writing  
(A case study for Sudanese Secondary schools in Gezira State, Sudan)*

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**Abstract**

This study aims at investigating the problems of writing correct English sentences as for the Sudanese students of secondary schools. The study applied the descriptive and the analytical methods beside the statistical tools so as to achieve the desired goals. Therefore, the researcher used both questionnaire for teachers (31teachers) and test for students (25 students), and he reached the results below:

1. Most of the Sudanese students at secondary school are not acquainted with parts of speech.
2. The periods allocated for writing skills are extremely rare.
3. Teachers, encouragement for students concerning writing skills is entirely rare.
4. There is a complete absence in teaching lessons of English structure.
5. Students, mistakes in writing skills are not discussed in the presence of students.

Thus the study recommended that: there should be a sort of modification in the Sudanese secondary schools syllabus through introducing a lot of periods concerning English structure besides focusing on literature periods, for it is the main source of vocabulary.

**Keywords:** English sentences, writing skill, structure, vocabulary.

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### **Introduction:**

Languages generally have an important function in terms of communication and exchange of ideas and interests among people. It can be seen that many necessary and inevitable things depend on language. Therefore whether language is written or spoken it should be clear and straight forward.

No doubt most official issues rely on written language such as treaties, matters of trade and other things of paramount importance. Therefore the more there is stress and for language especially English language which is world language, the more people on particularly students will make much progress and development on this field.

Unfortunately enough ambiguity will occur when students of English language express themselves in structurally wrong sentences. This ambiguity may lead to a sort of misunderstanding between the writer and the reader. Therefore the message will be lost between the ignorance of the writer and perplexity of the reader.

Moreover wrong written sentences may lead to a sort of misinterpretation for the message they convey. Since this topic is extremely academic the researcher attempts to choose a topic with the title of: Difficulties of building English sentences in writing skill.

### **Research problems:**

The researcher will try to investigate and identify the actual problems facing Sudanese secondary school students in learning English language and especially in building English sentences. Moreover, he will try to find out why students have such problems, analyze accurately the difficulties that our students have in learning each pattern, as well as discover remedies for these problems and suggest solutions.

### **Aims of the research:**

1. To investigate the nature of the problem of sentence writing.
2. To explore the difficulties facing Sudanese students in writing English sentences.
3. To find solutions for these difficulties of writing English sentences.
4. To solve the syntactic problems confront students in secondary schools in learning the target language.
5. To help students in terms of inflection.

### **Research Questions:**

1. What are the actual problems that faced Sudanese secondary schools students in writing English language sentences?
2. What are the structural problems facing Sudanese secondary schools students in writing sentences?
3. To what extent are the teachers encouraging students to concern writing sentences?
4. To what extent is the English language syllabus supports writing sentences so as to provide syntactic problems?
5. To what extent does the absence of discussing mistakes affect in writing English languagesentences?

### **Hypotheses of this research:**

1. There are actual problems that faced Sudanese secondary schools students in writing English language sentences.
2. There are structural problems facing Sudanese secondary schools students in writing sentences.
3. The teachers do not encourage students to concern writing sentences.
4. English language syllabus supports writing sentences so as to provide syntactic problems.
5. The absence of discussing mistakes affect in writing English language sentences.

### **Research limits:**

- Theme limit: to cover three schools.
- Time limit: from 2010 to 2012-08-09
- Location limit: Gezira State North Medani.
- Human limit: students+ teachers

### **Literature Review:**

#### **Definition of sentence:**

*What exactly is a sentence?*

Longknife and Sullivan (2002: 1) Mention that (a sentence is a means of communicating). A sentence expresses a complete thought and contains at least one subject –verb combination .It may express emotions , give orders make statements , or ask questions In every case , sentences are meant to communicate.

Sometimes, a sentence may be a single word:

What? Nonsense! Jump.

" What " and " nonsense!" communicate a complete thought.

"Jump" though, has an unspoken " you " as the subject.

Most sentences however have two parts: the subject which is a noun or pronoun, and the verb. These two parts follow a basic pattern:

Subject + Verb

John(1976: 31-32) illustrates that all language is spoken or written in sentences .The sentences is the mould into which all our thinking is run .Hence when we come to write , we are compelled to write in sentences.

#### **General rules:**

As our purpose in writing is to be easily and quickly understood, it is plain that there must be a few general rules to guide our practice these rules are:

- (i) The sentence ought not to be over crowded either with words or with ideas
- (ii) The right words must be used.
- (iii) Let the sentence have a pleasant rhythm.
  - (i) Another rule very usually given is: ' The sentence must have unity.' This means that we should speak or write of only one person or thing in the sentence;that we should not wander off to other subjects; and that the principal clause in the sentence should dominate and keep in their proper places all the subordinate clauses.

(ii) It is often necessary to ask the opinion of a friend as to whether this or that sentences are overcrowded. The writer already knows the meaning; to him it is all plain, and immediately plain; but the reader or hearer does not know what is coming, and has 'to take it in.' The hearer will be able to tell us, after he has heard our sentences, whether we have given to each the feeling of unity.

Crystal (1985: 277) maintains that, the largest structural unit in terms of which the grammar of a language is organized. Innumerable definitions of sentence exist, ranging from the vague characterizations of traditional grammar (such as the expressions of a complete thought,) to the detailed structural descriptions of contemporary Linguistic analysis. Most linguistic definitions of the sentence show the influence of the American linguist Leonard Bloomfield, who pointed to the structural autonomy or Independence of the notion of sentence: it is not included by virtue of any grammatical construction in any larger linguistic form.

Recent research has attempted to discover larger grammatical units (of discourse, or text) but so far little has been uncovered comparable to the sentence. Whose constituent structure is state able in Formal, Distributional terms.

Linguistic discussion of the sentence has focused on problems of Identification, classification and generation. Identifying sentences is relatively straightforward in the written language, but is often problematic in speech, where intonation and pause may give uncertain clues to whether a sentence boundary exists. Classification of sentence structure proceeds along many different lines. In generative grammar likewise, there are several models of analysis for sentence structure with competing views as to the direction in which a sentence Derivation should proceed. Certain analytic problems are shared by all approaches, e.g. how to handle ELLIPTICAL sentences (or 'sentence fragments').

In actual practice we often ignore the definition with its "complete thought" as a criterion. If for example, a reader attempts to count the number of sentences that occur on this or any other page of print, he usually does not stop to decide whether each group counted expresses "a complete thought".

In fact he may not read a single word of the material nor even attempt to discover what the discourse about. Another practical definition used to count the number of sentences in any written material would thus be phrased as follows:

A sentence is a word or a group of words standing between an initial capital letter and a mark of end punctuation or between two marks of end punctuation.

### **Components of sentence:**

#### **(Phrases and clauses):**

##### **Phrases:**

Radford (2009: 39-49) explains that to put our discussion on a concrete footing, let's consider how an elementary two-word phrases such as the italicized response produced by speaker B in the following mini-dialogue is formed:

(1) Speaker A: What are you trying to do?

Speaker B: Help you

As speaker B's utterance illustrates, the simplest way of forming a phrase is by merging (a technical term meaning "combining") two words together: for example by merging the word help with the word you in (1), we form the phrase help you . The resulting phrase help you seems to have verb-like rather than pronoun –like properties, as we see from the fact that it can occupy the same range of positions as the simple verb help, and hence e.g. occur after the infinitive particle to.

- (2) (a) We are trying to help .
- (b) We are trying to help you.

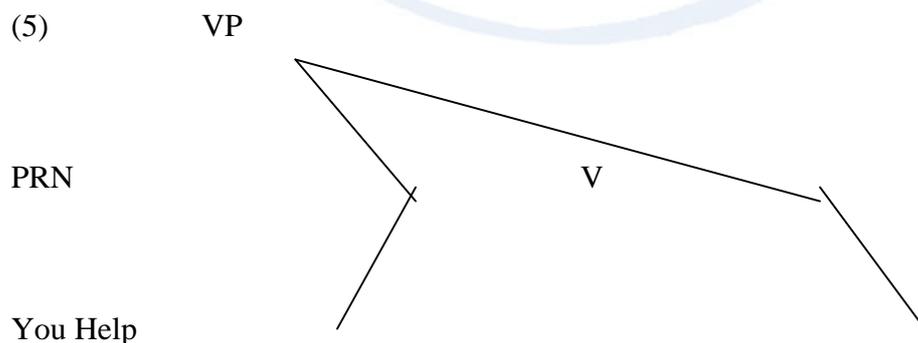
By contrast, the phrase help you cannot occupy the same kind of position as a pronoun such as you, as we see from (3) below:

- (3) (a) You are very difficult
- (b) \* Help you are very difficult

So it seems clear that the grammatical properties of a phrase like help you are determined by the verb help, and not by the pronoun you .Much the same can be said about the semantic properties of expression, since the phrase help you describes an act of help, not a kind of person .Using the appropriate technical terminology, we can say that the verb help is the head of the phrase help you, and hence that help you is a Verb Phrase: and in the same way as we abbreviate category labelslike verb to V , so too we can abbreviate the category label Verb Phrase to VP , If we use traditional labeled bracketing technique to represent the category of the overall verb phrase help you and of its constituent words ( the verb help and the pronoun you) we can represent the structure of the resulting phrase as in (4) below :

- (4){ VP { V help } { PRN you } }

An alternative (equivalent ) way of representing the structure of phrases like help you is via labeled tree diagram such as( 5)below  
( Which is a bit like family tree diagram – albeit a small family ):



What the tree diagram in (5) tell us is the that the overall phrase help you is a Verb Phrase (VP) , and that its two constituents are the verb (V) help and the (PRN) you . The verb help is the head of overall phrase (and so is the key word which determines the grammatical and semantic properties of the phrase help you).

In (4) in the sense that the two provide us with precisely the same information about the structure of the phrase help you.

The differences between a labeled bracketing like (4) and a tree diagram like (5) are purely national: each category is represented by a single labeled node in a tree diagram.

Since our goal is developing a theory of Universal grammar is to un cover general structural principles governing the formation of phrases and sentences.

**Clauses: a man on the tape length of thel the five the given the level**

Leech and Slortvick (1987:211-212) asserts that clauses are the principal structure of which sentences are composed. A sentence may consist of one or more than one clause, there are three important ways in which clauses maybe described and classified:

- (a) In terms of the Clause Elements (subject, verb, etc.) from which they are constructed, and the verb patterns which are formed from these elements.

**Classification of sentences:**

**Declarative sentence and word order:**

Swick (2009 : 1+2+12+13+32 ) comments that Declarative sentence in English consist of a subject and predicate . The verb in the predicate is conjugated appropriately for the subject and in specific tense :

Subject	+	predicate
Mary	+	speaks English.

Lets look at some examples that can illustrate this point. Declarative sentences can have singular or plural nouns as their subjects and can be followed by a verb in any tense and by the complement of the sentence.

John repairs the car.  
The boys ran into the forest .

Other declarative sentences use a pronoun as their subject , and again the tense of the sentence can vary .

1. She has never been to England. (Singular– pronoun subject, present perfect tense verb).
2. We shall visit him soon. (Plural – pronoun subject, future –tense verb)

Since English verbs can show an incomplete action or one in progress (he is going) or a completed or habitual action (he goes), when changing tenses you have to conform to the type of action of the verb .For example:

He is going, he was going, and he has been going  
He goes, he went, and he has gone

The conjugation of English verbs is, with few exceptions, a relatively simple matter, but using the proper tense of verbs is something else. It is particularly important to understand the tense differences between verbs that describe an action in progress and verbs that describe a complete or habitual action.

### **Interrogative sentences:**

There are two types of interrogatives, and both types ask questions. The first type can be called a yes-no question, because the answer to such a question will begin with the affirmative word yes or the negative word no. Most questions of this type begin with a form of the auxiliary verb do.

Auxiliary + Subject + verb + predicate +?  
Do + you + have + the books +?

### **Yes –No questions:**

If the verb in a yes –no question is the verb to be or the verb to have, the question is formed simply by placing the verb before the subject of the sentence.

To be / to have + subject + predicate +?  
Is + she + the new student +?

This occurs in any tense. In the case of the perfect tenses or the future tenses, it is the auxiliary of the verbs to be and to have that precede the subject. For example:

1. Is she aware of the problem? (Present)
2. Was there enough time to finish the exam? (Past)
3. Have you been here before? (Present perfect)
4. Will you come back again? (Future)

### **Types of sentence:**

#### **Sentence structure:**

Maclin (2000:301-304) demonstrates that sentence structure can be simple, compound, complex, or compound complex according to the kinds of clause in the sentence.

#### **Simple sentence:**

Murcia and Freeman (1983:280-283) states that they have decided to treat together sentences with none referential it and there subjects. One reason for this decision is that both of these none referential words function syntactically as a subject in English i.e. their behavior in Yes –No questions and tag questions indicates that they undergo subject /auxiliary inversion.

It's a nice day. Is it a nice day?

It's a nice day, is not it?

There is a book on the table. Is there a book on the table?

Although the it and there subjects in these sentences express no referential meaning we know that in other contexts, these same words can indeed have a referential function:

Where is the book? It is on the table. (It refers to the book)

Let's go out in the garden .It is cooler there (there refers to in the garden). here is a book on the table, is not there?

### **Compound sentence:**

What is compound sentence?

Zandvourt (1965:212-214) observed that, A compound sentence has at least two main or independent clauses, connected by coordinating conjunctions ((and, but, or not, for, so, yet)) . Each clause has its own subject and verb.

This second clause should be separated from the first by comma in front of the coordinating conjunction.

### **Example:**

The man went to the store, and the sales clerk sold him some milk easiest way to expand this basic pattern is to join two simple sentences to make a compound sentence .

Compound sentence ; semicolon , no conjunctions ((two short ,related sentences now joined ))).

S + v ; S + V .

### **Explanation:**

This pattern can help us to join two short simple sentences having two closely related Ideas . They need as semicolon instead of conjunction and comma. The illustration in the box and the examples Show only two clauses you can actually three or more ,be sure to avoid two pit falls of the compound sentence:

1. The fused or run –on sentence (which has no punctuation between the two sentences that have been joined).

### **Example:**

My cat lost her ball I do not know where .

2. The comma splice ( using a comma instead of a period ,semicolon or colon to separate the two sentences you have joined.

### **Example:**

The plant wilted, I forget to water it.

You avoid the above two problems if you faithfully copy the following patterns for compound sentences , being careful to Imitate the punctuation exactly. (The art of styling sentence).

As regards the structure of the members of the compound sentence it is to be observed that a main clause may take any of the structural forms of a simple sentence .

### **Complex Sentence:**

What is complex sentence?

A complex sentence has one main or independent clause and one or more dependent or subordinate clauses.

**Example:**

When atom is split, it releases neutrons.

Dependent clauses can function in the sentence as a nouns ,adjective or adverbs

**Methodology:**

In this chapter the researcher introduces the description of the study methodology; the researcher will describe the tools utilized for data collection which contains the population (subjects), the procedure and the statistical analysis which applied in this research.He used (SPSS) which known as (statistical package social science) program, to analyze this data.

To know the difficulties in building English sentence between Sudanese secondary school students the researcher followed some steps. So this chapter deals with procedure, data collection from the population, the questionnaire and the test is very important tool for this process.

**Population:**

**Consist of:**

- 1- A group of teachers from (30) governmental schools, were chosen from central State – North Medani
- 2- A group of (25) students were chosen from a governmental school in Central State North Madani.

**Sampling:**

In order to choose a sample for this study the target population is (31) teachers, this group is selected randomly.

The following table shows the study sample with regional to their sex, qualifications and experience.

Table 3.1: The frequency and the percentage for the sample individual survey.

Gender	frequency	percent
Male	21	67.74%
Female	10	32.26%
Total of sample	31	100.0%

Qualifications	frequency	percent
B.E	17	54.84%
M.A	14	45.16%
Total sample	31	100.0%

Experience	frequency	percent
Less than 5 years	6	19.4%
5-10 years	12	38.7%
More than 10 years	13	41.9%
Total sample	31	100.0%

**Discussion:**

The tables show the demographic distribution of the individuals of the study as questionnaire sample. It consists of 67.74% of male and 32.26% of female. As for qualifications, there is 54.85% getting bachelor and 45.16% getting master degree. For experts it can be seen that the majority of the sample individuals 41.94% have experience of more than 10 years teaching.

**Tools:**

In this study, data is collected by questionnaire beside test. 31 secondary school English teachers at central State-North Medani answered the questionnaire inquires.

**The questionnaire design:**

The questionnaire was designed to collect information about the difficulties building English sentence among Sudanese secondary schools students. The questionnaire consists of (20) statements and it was designed on the scale of five points:

Strongly agree – Agree - Disagree – Strongly disagree - Not sure
--

**Validity:**

Five judges have given their opinion on the validity of the questionnaire inquires. (Appendix 3)

**Reliability:**

The researcher has shown the characteristics of the sample individuals and their distribution .Therefore, the statistical divisions are as follows:

- (1) The frequencies and the percentage.
- (2) Degree of consistency and correlation.

**The test:**

The test consists of thirty questions .This test contains three parts each one is 10 questions .These questions are sentence completion ,answer the following questions and arrange these words correctly to compose sentences, is presented for 25 students .This test is designed to increase both the validity and the reliability of this research.

(Appendix 2)

**The summary:**

The researcher has introduced the description of the research tools which are used in this research, it includes measuring instruments, population, questionnaire, test, and statistical analysis method and he distributed the subjects according to their genders, pairs of experience and qualifications as it was shown above in the tables.

**Conclusion and Results:**

**Recommendations and further suggestions:**

**Conclusion:**

Difficulties of building English sentences in Sudanese secondary schools are a problem which is so clear. The researcher has used two methods in conducting this study. So he used the descriptive and analytical method in analyzing data. So the researcher reaches these conclusions and results.

**Results:**

1. Most of the Sudanese students at secondary school are not acquainted with parts of speech.
2. The periods allocated for writing skills are extremely rare.
3. Teachers, encouragement for students concerning writing skills is entirely rare.
4. There is a complete absence in teaching lessons of English structure.
5. Students, mistakes in writing skills are not discussed in the presence of students.

**Recommendations:**

1. Establishing English societies is a must for the Sudanese students of secondary schools.
2. Modification in Sudanese secondary schools syllabus through allocating a lot of periods for writing skills.
3. Introducing modern techniques in terms of writing skills.
4. Encouraging Sudanese students of secondary school to write their own wall Newspapers
5. Avoiding the policy of large classes for they widen and deepen students' academic problems.
6. There should be a sort of balance between reading and writing skills concerning Sudanese secondary school English syllabus.
7. Introducing the culture of writing diaries and daily activities as for Sudanese students of secondary schools.
8. Using modern technology in developing English Language.

**Suggestions:**

The researcher advises other researchers who are interested in the area of writing skills to investigate the following points:

1. The problem of acquiring sufficient amount of vocabulary.
2. Making much use of literature as a main source of vocabulary.

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## Appendix (1) The questionnaire

**Dear:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name: (Optional)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Gender:**

	<input type="checkbox"/> Male	<input type="checkbox"/> Female
<b>Qualifications:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> University Graduate	<input type="checkbox"/> Post Graduate
<b>Experi</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Less than 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 5-10 years
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> More than 10 years

### Questionnaire For Teachers

1. The English syllabus at secondary schools focus only on reading skills.  
 Strongly agree     Agree     Disagree     Strongly disagree     Not sure
2. The English syllabus at secondary schools ignores the techniques of writing skills.  
 Strongly agree     Agree     Disagree     Strongly disagree     Not sure
3. Most students at secondary school do not know parts of speech.  
 Strongly agree     Agree     Disagree     Strongly disagree     Not sure
4. Most students at secondary school have inadequate Knowledge of vocabulary.  
 Strongly agree     Agree     Disagree     Strongly disagree     Not sure
5. Writing exercises at secondary schools syllabus are very rare.  
 Strongly agree     Agree     Disagree     Strongly disagree     Not sure
6. The periods that are devoted for writing in English syllabus aren't enough.  
 Strongly agree     Agree     Strongly disagree     Not sure
7. Some teachers of English language do not encourage students to learn writing skills.  
 Strongly agree     Agree     Disagree     Strongly disagree     Not sure
8. Students lack motivation both at school and in their homes in terms for writing skills.  
 Strongly agree     Agree     Disagree     Strongly disagree     Not sure
9. The nature of Sudanese culture is mainly based on speaking not writing.  
 Strongly agree     Agree     Disagree     Strongly disagree     Not sure
10. The structure of English language is not taught sufficiently at secondary schools.  
 Strongly agree     Agree     Disagree     Strongly disagree     Not sure

11. Teachers at Sudanese secondary schools do not put into consideration punctuations rules.

Str  agree    Ag     Di     Str  disagree    No

12. Teachers do not provide student accuracy in writing skills.

Str  agree    Ag     Dis     Str  disagree    No

13. Teachers are not aware of the necessity of teaching competences.

Str  agree    Ag     Di     Str  disagree    No

14. Students are often asked to read what they write.

Str  agree    Ag     Di     Str  disagree    No

15. Sudanese students at secondary schools are acquainted with the components of English sentences.

Str  agree    Ag     Di     Str  disagree    No

16. Sudanese students at secondary schools receive a reasonable dose of lessons of English structure.

Str  agree    Ag     Di     Str  disagree    Not

17. Sudanese students at secondary schools have sufficient lessons in writing.

Str  agree    Agree    Disagree    Strongly disagree    Not sure

18. Sudanese students at secondary schools tend to share ideas in groups.

Str  agree    Ag     Disagree    Str  disagree    Not sure

19. with Sudanese students at secondary schools mistakes are discussed individually.

Str  agree    Ag     Disagree    Strongly disagree    Not sure

20. Teachers are satisfied with their student's standard in writing skills.

Str  agree    Ag     Disagree    Str  disagree    Not sure

**Appendix (2)**  
**The Test**  
**Group (A)**

**Section (I) Complete the sentences below write no more than three words for each answer:**

1. Students must study hard\_\_\_\_\_.
2. Bernard Show is a \_\_\_\_\_.
3. We must take our lunch\_\_\_\_\_.
4. You should spend 40 \_\_\_\_\_.
5. We must take care\_\_\_\_\_.
6. Do not bring any money\_\_\_\_\_.
7. Telephone services provide\_\_\_\_\_.
8. You want to buy something\_\_\_\_\_.
9. My father helps my brother\_\_\_\_\_.
10. Computer courses are\_\_\_\_\_.

**Section (II) Answer the following questions.**

1. Where did you travel during the summer?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your favorite hobby?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What time does school open on Wednesday morning?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Who is your favorite author?  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Where are you from?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Is fast food popular in your country?  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What is your father job?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Do you visit parks?  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What do you like doing in your free time?  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Why do you think people like playing or watching team sport?  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Section (III) Arrange these words correctly to compose meaning full sentences.**

1. The / room / dining/on /is/ left.  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. She / shopping/ will/ and / come /in/half/ an / hour/go.  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. You/ come/ early /can.  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Do / think/ you/ a country's system/ health should be free.  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. The / was / house/destroyed/ by/gas/the/ explosion.  
\_\_\_\_\_

---

6. The/ Roman/ last/ army/ defeated/was.

---

7. The / earth / is/ compared / sun / with / tiny.

---

8. You / stand / can / the/ sea /in / here.

---

9. They/ after/ look / their/ father/ sheep.

---

10. If/ smoke/ you/will harm/ lungs/your.

---



Appendix (3)  
Names of judges

No	Qualifications	Name	Specialization	University
1	Prof.	Abdallah. Alkhanghi	Methodology	SUST
2	Dr.	Ezzeldeen Mohamed	Educational Tech.	SUST
3	Dr.	Lubab Altyeb	Structure	Gezira
4	Dr.	Awatif Satti	Testing	Gezira
5	Dr.	Imad Ahmed	Literature	Gezira

**Comments:**

**Professor Abdallah Alkhanghi** approved both test and questionnaire and commented that they are suitable to be used in the research.

**Dr. Ezzaldeen Mohamed** (associated professor) Approved both the test and the questionnaire are very good and commented that if the research follows guidance and comments.

**Dr. Lubab Altyeb** (Associated professor) approved both questionnaire and commented that they are suitable to be used in the research.

**Dr. Awatif Satti** (Associated professor) approved both questionnaire and commented that they are suitable.

**Dr. Imad Ahmed** (Associated professor) approved both questionnaire and mentioned that they are suitable.



*Teaching English in a Multilingual and Multicultural Context: The Nigeria Experience*

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**Abstract**

Nigeria is a country of more than 450 languages. A teacher therefore always finds herself teaching a class consisting of pupils from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This means that communication in the classroom among learners and with the teacher is a daunting task. By discussing qualitatively and quantitatively the data collected by observing practical English classes, by engaging in focus group discussions with teachers and from interviews, this paper discusses the downside of having so many diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds in Nigeria's English as Second Language (ESL) classrooms. It also underscores the opportunities that are inherent in diversity in the classrooms and ways to utilize these opportunities to the advantage of the teachers and learners of English. The paper concludes that rather than continue with the monolingual-oriented education as is prevalent in Nigeria today, the National Policy on Education that advocates for multilingual education should be fully implemented. But before then, teachers need to harness the opportunities in teaching English to children of diverse linguistic and cultural background to a greater advantage.

**Keywords:** multilingualism, multicultural, linguistic and cultural background, English classroom, Nigeria, opportunities.

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## 1. Introduction

The world is a storehouse of languages with linguistic diversity. While a few countries, like Iceland, are linguistically homogeneous, many countries display a wealth of linguistic diversity. Nigeria is one of the many linguistically polarized nations of the world, an African country with a population of about 450 languages (Crozier and Blench (1992), Elugbe (1994). Oyetayo (2006) presents a more comprehensive analysis of the linguistic situation in Nigeria by identifying 510 living languages and nine extinct ones. This brings the total number of indigenous languages (both living and extinct) to 519 languages. This heterogeneity qualifies Nigeria as a multilingual nation with its accompanying problems of language choice, language planning and implementation.

In a bid to cater for all languages and assign responsibility to each, there is a need for language planning, policy development and implementation. To this end, a National Policy on Education (NPE) was formulated in 1977 (Revised in 1981, 1998 and 2004). The policy prescribes the following:

- a) The medium of instruction in the primary school shall be the language of the environment for the first three years. During this period, English shall be taught as a subject.
- b) From the fourth year, English shall progressively be used as a medium of instruction and the language of immediate environment and French shall be taught as a subject.
- c) At the secondary school level, English shall also be the language of instruction, while the language of the environment, one major Nigerian language other than that of the environment (Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba) and French shall be taught as school subjects.

The NPE seeks to promote multilingualism in schools as the optimal way of utilizing the country's linguistic resources. The paradigm recognizes linguistic diversity as a National asset and sees the need to promote multilingualism but very little has been achieved in its implementation. Scholars such as Obayan (1998), Ogunbiyi (2008), Olagbaju (2009) have tried to identify the different factors responsible for the poor implementation or non-implementation of the multilingual provisions of the NPE. These include the negative attitude of students to multilingual education, parental attitude, ambiguities and complexities in the policy, lack of qualified multilingual teachers and materials. These are only some of the challenges facing the adoption of indigenous languages in early education in Nigeria.

However, in spite of this policy, three different scenarios are present in Nigeria, in reality.

First, is the rural area where children are basically monolingual in the language of the environment and come to school to learn English. Here, the indigenous language of the environment and English are the media of instruction in the early years of school.

Second, is the township private schools attended by the children of the elite. Here, English is almost always the L1 of the children and the language of instruction in such schools is English.

Third, is the township public schools where children are bi/multilingual (in indigenous language(s) and the Nigerian Pidgin), having diverse linguistic backgrounds coming together in one classroom to learn English. In all these three scenarios, young children aged 5-7 years beginning schooling are embarking on their developmental pathway of learning to use language in schooling contexts, such as in reading and writing. This makes them more reliant on spoken language and a range of other meaning - making resources such as visuals (both static and animated) and sounds (music and sound effects).

Generally, therefore, we can divide the Nigeria language classrooms into two types: monolingual and multilingual. In the monolingual classroom, all learners speak the same Mother Tongue or L<sub>1</sub> (English) and are learning English. In the multilingual classroom, the learners speak a variety of languages and the only thing they have in common is that they all are learning English. For this reason, every classroom is a cultural community reflective of the learners' and the teachers' cultural experiences.

Our concern in this paper, however, is the third scenario where a teacher finds themselves teaching a class consisting of learners from more than twenty (20) different linguistic/cultural backgrounds. Almost any combination is possible and you may sometimes find that every single child in the class come from a different cultural background and speak a different Mother Tongue.

This paper examines the challenges and the prospects of multilingualism/multiculturalism in Nigeria's classrooms, particularly as it concerns young children, who are encountering English for the first time in formal contexts. Multilingualism, as Encarta (2009) suggests, is a mastery of multiple languages and a person is multilingual if they know several languages. But a multilingual context in this case, is a classroom with learners from diverse linguistic backgrounds coming together for the purpose of learning a Target language (TL).

We must note that one major language and literacy challenges that most children face is that they have to learn English, given that English is the main language of literacy and the main written medium of instruction throughout the Nigeria educational system from the pre-school level to the University level especially in township public and private schools. English is the country's official language and language of education in general; thus it dominates the sociolinguistic space in terms of attitudes, power and socio-economic mobility.

## **2. Aim and Objectives**

The aim of the study is to present the scenario of English language teaching in selected Nigeria multilingual classrooms. The specific objectives are to:

- Identify the challenges in the multilingual classrooms
- Identify the prospects of multilingual classrooms
- examine the attitudes of teachers to the multilingual situation in the classrooms
- To suggest ways in which the prospects can be harnessed to a better advantage.

### **3. Methodology**

Data were collected from observed classes of four public township schools in Nigeria, once a week for a period of twelve (12) weeks that make up a school term. Field notes were also made during the observation period. At the end of the observation, a focus group discussion was organized with the teachers in each of the schools regarding the challenges and possibilities of multilingual classrooms. In a bid to further understand the challenges and complexities facing teachers in linguistically diverse classrooms, and to generally capture their views and voices on teaching English in such contexts, interview with teachers (n = 40) were conducted in the four public primary schools in the Central senatorial district. Learners were not involved in the interviews because they are too young to contribute intelligently.

The discussion below was made on the basis of the data obtained from the observation, the focus group discussions and the interviews. The data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively using percentages.

### **4. Discussion and Findings**

Currently, in Nigeria, the majority of pupils in public primary schools come into schools as bi/multilinguals, who speak their native languages as well as The Nigerian Pidgin (TNP) - TNP being the country's lingua franca. Many of the young children do not understand the importance of learning English as they are too young to be extrinsically motivated by thoughts of better jobs or universities, and, they therefore, see learning the Target Language as a chore.

#### **I. Pupils Use of Language in the Classroom**

The medium of instruction that teachers use in the classroom is English. However, we found that pupils use the Nigerian Pidgin (NP) to communicate with themselves, and with the teacher. Most of the pupils were found to be using the NP to ask questions. Others simply kept silent. The teachers responded and explained using English. We observed that the use of NP eased the communication gap that would have existed between the pupils and the teachers as well between the pupils themselves.

Although communication problems are reduced because the majority of pupils can interact using the NP, the English language is quite different from the NP. For this reason, most of the teachers (72%) expressed concern on the poor English backgrounds of the pupils. Considering their varied linguistic backgrounds they are skeptical whether the pupils actually understand the content of what they teach. 28% were optimistic that their linguistic diversity notwithstanding, their young minds can easily grasp the content of the TL. Being trained teachers, all of the 40 teachers interviewed claimed that though they use different teaching methods, the population of the classes ( an average of 50 students) and the varied ability and difficulties of students make teaching English difficult.

## II. Teachers' views and voices

Some teachers (74%) believe that by banishing all languages, except the language of instruction from the classroom, they are helping the pupils acquire the English language. They believe that they will best acquire English by only speaking and hearing English. By allowing another language to be used in the classroom, the language of instruction will no longer occupy prime position in the minds of learner. Below are the general views of the teachers:

- a. Teachers (74%) believe that instruction should be carried out exclusively in the English without recourse to pupils L<sub>1</sub> or MT.
- b. Translation between L<sub>1</sub> and L<sub>2</sub> is not ideal in the teaching of Language (72%).
- c. The more English is used in the classroom the better the result (71%). Teachers believe that their pupils will learn English best if they are immersed in the language.
- d. Language diversity in the classroom is a problem. It is better in multilingual classes if pupils speak English all the time (84%).

## III. Some Challenges of Teaching in Multilingual Classes

Mishra (2009) states that:

When children are educated exclusively in a non-mother-tongue language, they are prevented access to education because of the linguistic, pedagogical and psychological barriers created. Thus, these exclusively non-mother-tongue programmes violate the human right to education as expressed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child....

This succinctly expresses the Nigerian situation in that classes consist of children, who speak different languages and have come with the aim to learn English. This means that they usually have no common language between them. As stated above, this causes linguistic, pedagogical and psychological barriers to the students as well as to their teachers. Pupils speaking different language have their individual linguistic/cultural idiosyncrasies, which they bring to bear on the L<sub>2</sub> learning. Almost always, the teacher is not skilled enough to deal with these problems, thereby limiting some of the learners making them feel clumsy and disadvantaged. This is compounded by the usually large population of learners in a class (an average of 50 pupils). These pupils from different linguistic backgrounds also come across different problems in the English language.

Sometimes it could be in pronunciation, spellings, grammar or the morphology of the language. For example, a pupil from the Hausa background had a problem pronouncing the /p/ sound by substituting it with the /f/ sound. Another from the Okun tribe had no problem with the /p/ sound but with the /v/ sound by substituting it with the /f/ sound. These problems are specific to individual students and it requires the personal attention of the teacher. Explaining a problem of one student to the whole class may be inefficient as they don't necessarily experience the same difficulties. The result is that the rest of the class feels unchallenged and bored. But then, how does a teacher pay attention to the individual student's difficulties in such large classes? Because of the multilingual background of the pupils it is very difficult for the teachers to device the right type of teaching methodology.

In the Nigerian context, the monolingually dominated reality of the school, where English is the only acceptable medium of communication fuels ambiguities and inconsistencies, which prevail between the multilingually-oriented Nigerian society and the monolingually dominated reality of the school. The Mother Tongues are termed as 'vernaculars' in schools and their use is seen as intrusive to the effective learning of English. But after school, the so-called 'vernacular' is the language of the home and of the society. Hence, learners are put in a kind of 'linguistic polythene bag', whereby they are neither competent in the English language nor encouraged to speak the native languages.

#### **IV. Prospects of Multilingualism in classrooms**

In a multilingual setting, all learners in classroom have repertoires of languages and/or linguistic varieties, which could be activated as vehicles for learning and, which could help foster language awareness and curiosity about their own languages and those of others. Hence, cultural and linguistic diversity affords the children the opportunity to grow up to be respectful of the multitudes of languages and cultures and peoples they will interact with when they are older. In general, most children are comfortable interacting with people and behaviours. This teaches them that differences in language and cultures are to be cherished and appreciated rather than judged and feared.

Nigeria children have a limited command of the language of instruction, and of literacy and not much efforts are made to welcome them on their own terms, therefore, social stigma is constructed based on the "implicit association between how well an individual expresses themselves and their intelligence" (Torres-Guzman 2002: 6). This obviously is a disadvantage for some. But multilingualism also serves as a signal to learners that they are all in the same boat and all are welcome as legitimate participants in the learning dilemma. They recognize and build on their diverse linguistic knowledge through various types of the learning experiences.

It is not easy to establish an accurate figure of the range of languages represented in classrooms in Nigeria, but about 400 is normally quoted and not uncommon to find primary schools where the pupils between them speak more than 20 languages at home. In cases as this, then, English is the ultimate common language to communicate with each other and with the teacher. This is an advantage because pupils are encouraged to speak English right from the onset, and because they seem to have no choice, this tends to inspire them to want to 'learn to mean' in English. Teachers often practice different methods of teaching in a lesson session in order to try to cater, as much as possible, for the individual needs of the pupils but much still needs to be done.

Dealing with diversity requires creativity, extra effort, diligence and courage on the teachers' part. The Nigeria public school teachers have rarely offered an enthusiastic welcome for learners' differences. However, a multilingual/cultural classroom must thrive on these differences and use them as a foundation for growth and development.

Different cultures have different mores and folkways. For example, a Niger Delta child is likely to be extroverted and bold, whereas a Hausa child maybe reserved and introverted as a consequence of culture and religion. If the teacher is open and

accommodating, s/he will open lines of communication that will create a beneficial learning environment for everyone. By so doing pupils will not be estranged from one another and from the teacher. To be open involves being interested in each student and willing to try new and different things/methods. The teacher should not make assumptions and be prepared for the unexpected.

There are a wide range of classroom activities that can help students recognize the essential humanity and value in different types of people e.g. showing pupils photographs of people of different ethnicity, tailoring classroom activities/lessons toward multilingual and multicultural appreciation by using culturally-centred instructional approaches, which can help facilitate linguistic/cultural pride among diverse pupils. Teaching pupils about multicultural and religious role models also serves as an effective method for demonstrating that peoples of all ethnicities, genders and religions can have positive influence on the world and they deserve to be respected and emulated.

## **Conclusion**

The recent development in language education is the recognition and the proposal that the languages children bring to school should be recognized and promoted, while all children should also study one or more 'foreign' language or 'modern' language at school (Maalouf, 2008). But Nigeria does not appear to flow with this trend. Although the NPE can be said to favour the adoption of more than one language in education, the implementation of the policy has been a mirage. In Nigeria classrooms, English is the language of instruction. This means that the teacher must grapple with meeting the needs of individual pupils. This has not been an easy task.

You may have noted that in Nigeria the long-established monolingual 'target language' approaches to English language learning are still wide spread and are often seen intuitively as the right way to proceed. But there is the need to construct models of learning that recognize and value diversity in all its forms, in order to offer the possibility of enhancement in the quality of learning and achievement for all. While we hope and anticipate a turn towards multilingual education, teachers in Nigeria need to harness the possibilities and prospects in teaching English in multilingual/multicultural contexts to a greater advantage.

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***Motivating students and Improving Language and Interpersonal skills through Forensics***

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**Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to propose a highly motivational framework of integrating Forensics into the State School Systems based on the Greek Anavryta Experimental High School's experience. In many countries, where English is taught as Foreign Language, State School teachers struggle with a plethora of constraints; for instance, overcrowded, mixed-ability classes, in tandem with an outdated, rigid, exam-oriented curriculum, which is accompanied by poor quality, unattractive textbooks. Further hurdles may be the lack of Information Technology resources or adequate teaching time. Nevertheless, extracurricular activities, such as a Forensics after school club, can compensate for the insufficient time allocated, provide an interesting learning environment which does not demand sophisticated digital tools, promote social interaction and could reverse the lack of interest demonstrated by the students. The focus will be cast on the utmost motivation of the participants in the particular Forensics' club through a prism of contextual factors such as the instructional context and the social milieu. The analysis will be based on theories of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, as well as cognitive theories (expectancy of success, self-determination and goal setting and achievement). Through literature, field research (both needs analysis and a posteriori feedback) as well as observation, it will be illustrated that via Forensics, language development is accomplished while the participants' communication, social and interpersonal skills are enhanced. Moreover, teacher development can be achieved simultaneously, since teachers abandon their traditional role and become co-coordinators, coaches and advisors.

**Keywords:** Motivation, Forensics, Oratory, Integration, Skill Building

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## **Introduction**

The aim of this paper is to propose a highly motivational framework of integrating Forensics into the State School Systems based on the Greek Anavryta Experimental High School's experience. Firstly it is imperative to define the term Forensics. Secondly we need to highlight that in many countries, where English is taught as Foreign Language, State School teachers struggle with a plethora of constraints; hence Forensics will be proposed as an innovative way to circumvent these problems. We will go on showing how Forensics can enhance participants' English language skills while improving their teamwork, social, interpersonal and communication skills. The most important part of the presentation is to highlight the students' motivation and level of dedication which are immense, as illustrated through both their Needs Analysis and a posteriori feedback.

### **Definition of "Forensics"**

Firstly, Forensics which is derived from the Latin word forum, turned into forensic and later on forensics is mostly known as a criminology term; nonetheless, English language practitioners know that it also refers to the art of argumentation discourse and it is used as an umbrella term for the following six events: Debate, Group Discussion, Impromptu Speaking, Original Oratory, Duet Acting (comic and dramatic) and Oral Interpretation of Literature (comic and dramatic as well). Briefly, in group discussion there is a predetermined topic and the students discuss trying not only to build their argumentation, but also alliances. The rationale behind original oratory is for a student to think of an original topic or to present an original and convincing point of view about an ordinary topic. The impromptu speaking is for born communicators. The student has 30 seconds to choose a topic out of the three given, 1 minute to gather her/his thoughts and then speak eloquently for 3 minutes.

This is a combination of rhetoric and logic building accompanied by a memorable delivery. Oral interpretation of literature involves the communication of the intellectual and emotional content of a piece of literature through the effective use of voice and body. Duet acting consists of a 9-minute acting segment by a pair. Both the former and the latter require a combination of artistic and language skills. The crowning event, for which distinct societies exist, is the debate. The two most common debating forms are quite different as regards their rules. The world schools' one consists of two 3-member competing teams, the Government and the Opposition. The British parliamentary style includes four 2-member teams, pro and con introducing and concluding respectively.

### **State School Constraints**

The first merit of Forensics is that it has the potential to help EFL teachers overcome possible state school constraints. A common problem is teaching overcrowded, mixed-ability classes (Gaies & Bowers, 1990 cited in Beaumont et al, 2005). This fact in tandem with an outdated, rigid, exam-oriented curriculum, which is accompanied by poor quality, unattractive textbooks present, one could argue, insurmountable challenges. Further hurdles may be the lack of IT resources or adequate teaching time. A particular to Greece problem is a prevailing vicious circle regarding the mentality of all the stakeholders (Ministry of Education – School teachers – Parents – Students) that English is mainly learned outside the school premises.

This fact along with the misconception that by acquiring a certificate in English one is done with the language, as if the certificate alone and not the knowledge is the target, undermine the legitimacy of English as a school subject. Moreover the “norm of mediocrity” which is quite prevalent results in learners suffering social consequences for academic success, which is reflected in labeling hard working students “teacher’s pet”, “nerd,” or “brain” (Daniels, 1994, p.1011 cited in Dornyei, 1997).

Nevertheless, extracurricular activities, such as a Forensics after school club, can compensate for the insufficient time allocated, provide an interesting learning environment which does not demand the use of a computer lab, promote social interaction and could reverse the common lack of interest demonstrated by the students. Someone might argue that extra-curricular activities are not as important as integrating Forensics and especially debate in classroom. Well, condensed and simplified versions of debate, group discussion and impromptu speaking could also be incorporated in the mainstream curriculum as Communicative Language Teaching Games (CLTG), whenever the teacher feels it is appropriate.

As Palmer notes, it has been shown that if used in conjunction with other instructional activities, can “maximize the learning and attendant affect for a wide variety of student types” (Palmer, 1983, p. 15). Actually, Timothy Stewart found in his research that 3 out of 4 of his reserved students found debate motivating and ranked it as their most favorite classroom activity (Stewart, 2003). Furthermore, Papaefthymiou-Lytra supports that “pair and group work provides greater intensity of involvement” (Papaefthymiou-Lytra, 1990, p.178). Apparently, learning becomes personal, exploratory, and thus motivational. Long and Porter, argue that group work contributes to a positive learning culture by means of an intimate climate (Long and Porter, 1985). It also enhances the quality of student talk and helps differentiate instruction as it may adjust to individual characteristics and needs.

### **Linguistic Merits**

The linguistic merits of Forensics are undeniable. For instance, the members of the debate teams have to utilize all four basic language skills, while practicing for forthcoming contests and during the events themselves. Team members have to listen attentively to and note down in detail the arguments of the opposing team(s) so as to rebut their contentions. Furthermore, writing is an integral part of the brainstorming, in the preparation phase, so as to compile debate scripts.

Extensive reading is required, not only in case the debate motion is set in advance, but also to build a good background knowledge regarding contemporary issues so as to put forward arguments buttressed by solid facts. Moreover, each speaker has to deliver a 6-7 minutes speech with a clear structure so as to fulfill the task of his/her assigned position and convince the judges. As highlighted by Krieger “debate is an excellent activity for language learning because it engages students in a variety of cognitive and linguistic ways. In addition to providing meaningful listening, speaking and writing practice, debate is also highly effective for developing argumentation skills for persuasive speech and writing” (Krieger, 2005, p.25).

Concerning the rest of the events, different skills may be more in the foreground but once again the linguistic benefits are enormous. For instance, the speaker in original

oratory would have to draft and re-draft his text numerous times, until she/he is satisfied with the final version. Similarly, both duet acting and oral interpretation of literature not only require extensive research so as to choose the right piece, but also months of rehearsals. All the aforementioned activities are socially realistic and credible 'language generating' activities, not only for purposeful language use but also for encouragement of 'acquisition' as opposed to learning (Crookall, 1984). Despite the focus being on what the students are doing and the language is used as a tool for reaching a goal rather than a goal itself, the linguistic confidence the participants acquire is tremendous.

### **21<sup>st</sup> Century skills**

What is even more important, other skills are simultaneously acquired or improved. Analytical thinking and speech structure are a *sine qua non*. No matter how fluent a speaker may be, if his/her speech lacks structure (no signposting, no recapping) and if he/she does not fulfill the task of their assigned position (for instance the prime minister, has to define the motion and suggest method(s) of implementation if applicable), the adjudicators will definitely penalize them for it. Furthermore, arguments have to be validated and the cause - effect correlation to be illustrated. Evidently, communication skills are required for a good debater or in general a participant in Forensics' events. As Nisbett points out, "debate is an important educational tool for learning analytic thinking skills and for forcing self-conscious reflection on the validity of one's ideas" (Nisbett, 2003, cited in Alasmari & Ahmed, 2013, p.147). Furthermore, Fukuda in a study conducted with Japanese students found that before introducing his students to debate only 30.8 per cent of them were not afraid of expressing their opinions (Fukuda, 2003). After debating, the figure rose to 56.7 per cent. Team spirit and teamwork are an integral component of debating and duet acting, but the preparation phase for those participating in impromptu speaking, original oratory or group discussion requires teamwork as well.

At this point it is worth mentioning that the principles of cooperative learning (CL) which is a highly effective instructional approach regarding small groups in order to achieve common learning goals via cooperation are utilized. Theoretically, CL has proven "superior to most traditional forms of instruction in terms of producing learning gains and student achievement, higher-order thinking, positive attitudes toward learning, increased motivation, better teacher-student and student-student relationships accompanied by more developed interpersonal skills and higher self esteem on the part of the student" (Dornyei, 1997, p.482). Students are divided into small groups and learning takes place through peer teaching, joint problem solving, brainstorming, varied interpersonal communication and individual study monitored by peers. All members, including the teacher, cooperate by exchanging ideas, information and providing constructive feedback. (Johnson et al., 1995 & Sharan, 1995, cited in Dornyei, 1997)

A major objective is to put students in a situation that they are first and foremost involved as individuals and the emphasis is on the social and human aspects of that situation. Therefore, students realize that communication is also about empathy, about convincing, about connecting. As it is obvious, in all events, the participants enhance their social and interpersonal skills. On the other hand, the Forensics' club members need to do a lot of research, so their information technology skills are also improved.

However, Forensics through role-play mainly motivates without the impersonal use of technology, which is very common in younger generations. Students are reminded that “the story should be in the foreground and the technology in the background” (Bull & Kajder, 2004, p.47). Therefore, Forensics’ action, interaction and competitiveness are greatly appreciated by the participants and are generally perceived as enjoyable leading to higher level intrinsic motivation as will later be further analyzed (Venkatesh, 1999 cited in Williams & Williams, 2011).

Especially regarding debate, which is the crowning Forensics’ event, we should also mention that Colbert and Biggers, in a review of thirteen studies, concluded that there are three pedagogically sound reasons why debate ought to be an integral part of academic curricula (Colbert & Biggers, 1985 cited in Wood & Rowland-Morin, 1989). Firstly, it improves communication skills and alleviates communication apprehension; secondly, it provides a unique educational experience as it requires depth of study, complex analysis and focused critical thinking; thirdly, it offers excellent training for future academic and professional endeavours.

Concluding, as regards skill-building we should point out that Forensics help the participant enhance all their 21st century skills, the famous “6Cs” (Fullan, 2013, p.9): “Firstly, Character education— honesty, self-regulation and responsibility, perseverance, empathy for contributing to the safety and benefit of others, self-confidence, personal health and well-being, career and life skills. Secondly, Citizenship — global knowledge, sensitivity to and respect for other cultures, active involvement in addressing issues of human and environmental sustainability. Thirdly, Communication — communicate effectively orally, in writing and with a variety of digital tools; listening skills. Fourthly, Critical thinking and problem solving — think critically to design and manage projects, solve problems, make effective decisions using a variety of digital tools and resources. Fifthly, Collaboration — work in teams, learn from and contribute to the learning of others, social networking skills, empathy in working with diverse others. Finally, Creativity and imagination — economic and social entrepreneurialism, considering and pursuing novel ideas, and leadership for action”.

### **Motivational theories: theoretical background**

In order to examine if and why the Forensics activities are motivational, we need to understand the meaning of motivation, which is the willingness of action especially in behavior. People have the natural tendency to stay in their comfort zone and try hard only if there is a good reason for it. The etymology of the word motivation comes from the latin verb *movere*, which means to set in motion and is originally derived from the Proto-Indo-European root *meue-* which means to push away, to defend. What motivates you is what makes you either defend or move, in both situations act, by putting some effort. Motives are the starting points that launch decision processes (Crompton & McKay, 1997) and the driving forces of all human behavior (Fodness, 1994).

There are literally dozens of motivational theories, but the most influential and widely accepted ones are those about intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is defined as “the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than for

some separable consequence” (Ryan & Deci, 2000. p. 56). In that sense, it is mainly psychological as it is driven by an interest or personal enjoyment in the activity, and is not connected to any tangible reward or punishment; hence it has to do with the individual’s inner desires. In a relatively recent research, Steven Reiss proposed 16 basic desires which shape the human behavior (Reiss, 2002), some of which are of particular interest regarding Forensics. For instance, the need for “Social Acceptance”, which is the desire of inclusion of not being marginalized, “Curiosity” which is the need to gain knowledge, to learn and understand, “Independence” which is the desire for privacy, individuality and self-reliance, “Idealism” which is the need for just social treatment, the need for “Social Contact” (mainly friendship) and the “Status”, which is the desire for social standing.

One would think that the exact opposite of intrinsic motivation is extrinsic motivation, which is the result of exogenous factors. However, there is a complex relationship between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, as described in the self-determination theory. The latter not only encompasses both but also addresses the aforementioned relationship and the reciprocal interaction between the two kinds of motivation. It abides by the notion that an individual’s behavior emanates from within one’s self thus it is self-determined (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011). Actually according to the self determination theory extrinsic motivation can be internalized by the individual if the task correlates with his/her values and beliefs and therefore helps to fulfill their basic psychological needs (Deci et al, 1991).

In order to explain this complex relationship we can use the Ryan & Deci taxonomy as regards the types of extrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Thus, external regulation refers to behaviours performed “to satisfy an external demand or obtain an externally imposed reward contingency” and it is the least self-determined form of extrinsic motivation. A second category of extrinsic motivation is introjected regulation, which refers to “a type of internal regulation that is still quite controlling because people perform such actions with the feeling of pressure in order to avoid guilt or anxiety or to attain ego-enhancements or pride”. The third category called “regulation through identification” implies that “the person has identified with the personal importance of a behavior and has thus accepted its regulation as her/his own”. Finally, the fourth form of extrinsic motivation, “integrated regulation”, is the most developmentally advanced one. The extrinsically motivated person “internalizes the reasons for an action and assimilates them to the self” (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Moreover, the achievement motivation theory or competence motivation theory which was formulated within an expectancy-value framework, in the sense that students’ drive for achievement is determined by expectancies of success and incentive values. Two further components are the need for achievement and the fear of failure. Understandably, to determine expectancy of success students process their own past experiences (attribution theory) judge their own abilities and competence (self-efficacy theory) and attempt to maintain one’s self-esteem (self-worth theory) (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011). Last but not least, we should mention the famous Abraham Maslow’s Pyramid, one of the first and very famous attempts to describe the human behavior as a result of needs. The main principle is that all humans have needs, fulfilled or not. The unsatisfied needs dictate our behavior. According to Maslow, there are five categories of needs, which can be classified hierarchically. The basic needs are physiological/ biological like hunger, thirst or sleep followed by the ones

related to the safety, security and health. Any shortfall on the aforementioned makes the individual turn to the particular need and try to satisfy it. Generally, the satisfaction of the rudimentary needs is a prerequisite for proceeding to the social ones, which start with love and friendship, evolve to self-esteem and achievement and finally reach the self – realization region. Forensics is about the tip of Maslow's Pyramid.

### **Research Presentation**

The research proved that students, who otherwise have no control over the lesson and as a result get little satisfaction from schoolwork, feel that Forensics events is about them. They have the control, they speak their mind, and they grapple with issues that do matter to them. As Clark points out, the students are learning by “doing rather than by being taught” (Clark, 1987, p. 50). This is firstly revealed when analyzing the Needs Analysis feedback. The research conducted illustrated that students acknowledge that “English is useful” (73% considered it “absolutely necessary” and 27% “very useful”) but the majority “does not really” like their classes (66%) They attribute their dislike to the “classroom atmosphere”, “homework” and “exams”. Among their most preferred techniques in order to learn were “games” (18%), “songs” (11%), “movies” (19%), “internet search” (23%) and “acting out a role play” (17%). Other techniques like “seeing something written”, “repeating”, “listening to information” had practically no appeal (less than 5% each). Hence, we can observe what theoretically stimulates the students of this generation. Forensics can motivate as it combines three of their most preferred activities: internet research, games and role-play.

The feedback questionnaire administered to the members of the only Greek State High School's Forensics club is most revealing. First of all, the survey has a sample of 100% since all the members of the team willingly participated in it. Concerning the sample characteristics, gender-wise, the overwhelming majority were girls (almost 70%). Their ages varied from 15 to 17 years old (senior high school students) and their English language proficiency level was quite satisfactory (C1 to C2 level). Their general educational profile was well above average, since most of the students were among the best in their Junior High Schools, before getting accepted through exams to the Anavryta Experimental School. The results showed that some motivators were really extrinsic in nature, as students participated, thinking that they could improve their grades in English and other subjects. This is a clear example of external regulation motivation; however, some saw their participation as a first step in order to become lawyers, politicians or marketing executives, or thought that they would increase their odds of getting accepted or even earning a scholarship to Ivy League Universities. In that case their extrinsic motivation was rather integrated.

Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority joined and stayed in Forensics' team in order to learn, because of their desire for personal development or because they loved the competition in tournaments; hence their motivation was intrinsic. Most considered it as fun and as a game, while pointing out that they became more popular when they joined the team. Escaping from either a hectic schedule or from boredom was also a motivating factor. There is no single doubt that amotivation and demotivation were overrun by Forensics. Almost all agreed that they liked the fact that they joined without any pressure from family; nevertheless, they were glad to see that their

families liked their participation and felt proud of them. This is a proof of self-esteem and refers to the self-worth theory. At this point it is worth pointing out the importance of contextual factors on student motivation. Peer groups may exert a significant influence on individual motivation especially regarding adolescent learners, as a plethora of research evident suggest that peers often gravitate to similar others and strengthen one another's motivation (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011). Furthermore, the school's philosophy, a supportive family climate, as well as highly motivated role models can be conducive to motivation.

The teacher – students' relation was also a factor, in the sense that they felt that their teacher as a proper coach accepted and encouraged them while she gave them choices and options, so as to promote learner autonomy. Last but not least all of them (with no single exception) would recommend Forensics to their friends and 80% would continue being part of the team (the rest, which is a significant 20%, stated that they might have to stop because it was time consuming and had other priorities, like preparation for the highly demanding university entrance exams). All the above illustrate the students' firm belief that Forensics is useful and that through their participation, they improve a wide range of qualities, a fact that touches upon the self-efficacy theory. Most curricula aim at "catering for effective development of the students as informed and responsible citizens in social and professional contexts". The result of the questionnaires proved that nothing can promote the aforementioned objective better than Forensics.

### **Shortcomings of the research and Forensics activities**

For the skeptics who wonder if motivation can be absolutely proven we need to acknowledge the general, inherent problems in motivation research, as already described by Dornyei & Ushioda: "Motivation is abstract and not directly observable", "it is a multidimensional construct" and finally "motivation is inconsistent and dynamic" (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 197-198). Moreover, a particular shortcoming of our research is that it is cross-sectional, which means that it "samples the participants' thoughts, behaviours or emotional stances at the one particular point of time, as for example in a one-off survey" (Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 208) Despite the fact that we used two questionnaires, they were both "snapshots" and as such they cannot "detect changes and patterns of development over time that are due to" (Keeves, 1994 cited in Dornyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 207). The aforementioned indicate that there is more research to be done in order to solidify the conclusions; however the overall results and conclusions of the research cannot be overruled.

Understandably, not everything is perfect about Forensics. Regarding teachers, Forensics is exhausting, time-consuming with no material reward whatsoever. Success requires highly motivated individuals (both teachers and students), willing to sacrifice some of their invaluable free time. I could only counter-argue that both teachers and students will reach the tip of Maslow's pyramid.

### **Role of teacher/coach – Conclusion**

The pivotal role of the teacher in the success of the entire endeavour ought to be highlighted. Firstly, all teachers willing to try Forensics, they should embrace their new role, being more facilitators than evaluators. Therefore, teachers abandon the safety of their role as “sage in the center” and address the need for a different model of instruction. However, their involvement in Forensics can contribute to their personal and professional growth, as they have to reflect, self-evaluate and self-motivate themselves. It requires an attitude change regarding learning and the role they can play in it. Concluding, the Forensics framework makes the English language very attractive for young learners, help them acquire a multiple set of skills, not only linguistics ones, and allows teachers to circumvent the numerous problems of the State School Systems. Forensics has the potential to turn the students of today into the sophisticated global citizens of tomorrow, we would like them to be.



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*Teaching and Assessing Online Discussions: A Case Study*

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**Abstract**

This paper deals with some aspects of challenges faced by educators in teaching and assessing such interactions. The main purpose of this paper is to explore the challenges involved in assessing student interactions as well as for providing guidance and feedback to students. A Group Interaction Platform was created for students studying Communication Skills. An analysis of the posts based on the communicative function was performed. It was observed that while teaching and assessing online interaction, attention could be focused on production of meaning rather than on discrete units of such interaction. If students merely practice the discourse moves and do not contribute meaningfully to the discussion, the collaborative purpose of such interactions may not be achieved. Marking guidelines and rubrics that are based on discrete analysis of such discourse moves may reward students who indulge in a seemingly successful behaviour without contributing to the discussion. On the other hand, students who provide minimal but meaningful and timely responses may not be rewarded in such assessment environment.

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## Background

Educators frequently report some common problems that greatly reduce the effectiveness of such activities. The root of these common problems can be traced back to four issues.

1. Since this is a developing field, norms of behaviour and rules of governance have yet to take a concrete shape.
2. Although factors such as length and frequency of messages are frequently evaluated, the construction of meaning may be sidestepped in this process.
3. Since the criteria for 'effective' online interactions are less than concrete, even experienced educators find it hard to develop criteria to assess and evaluate online interactions (McNamara & Brown, 2008).
4. Due to the absence of specific criteria, educators find it difficult to provide useful guidance and feedback to students. An environment in which the students must elect their own leader further adds to these two challenges. (Pathak, 2011)

This paper is written with a belief that some aspects of these problems can be avoided if classroom teachers and course developers are able to take into account the developmental level of the groups and the group processes. (Pathak, 2011) By identifying factors that facilitate meaning-focused group interaction, educators would be in a better position to guide and assess online interaction. The main purpose of this paper is to explore the use of a meaning-focused approach to assess online interactions. Traditionally, educators' attention has been focused on analyzing turns and moves in online discourse (Wishart & Guy, 2009). We would like to make a departure from this approach and direct educators' attention to the concept of Conversational Floor (CF) which has been well-researched in communication literature (Edelsky, 1981; Simpson, 2005).

This approach can be used for assessing student interactions as well as for providing guidance and feedback. The paper is especially targeted at educators who use online interactions as a means of building professional communication skills. The idea of conversational floors as a method of analysis grew from the dissatisfaction with the method of analyzing turns and moves in a discourse. Researchers such as Cherny (1999), have acknowledged that "notions of shared or collaborative floor seem to be more helpful than the standard turn-taking literature." It has also been found that the notion of conversational floor appears "more useful for theorising multi-threaded topic discourse. (1999: 174). As Simpson (2005) points out, turn transfer is not well-coordinated in computer-mediated communication and hence conversational floor offers a better alternative as an organizing principle in the analysis of computer-mediated conversation.

The emergence of leadership on the conversational floor is not really dealt with in the theoretical literature, and this paper aims to make a small contribution towards filling in this gap. As pointed out earlier, a leaderless environment creates particular challenges for teaching and assessing online interactional behaviour. Hence, this paper focuses on a particular use of the construction of conversational floor: leader emergence.

In the Conversational Floor (CF) approach more attention is focused on "what's-going-on within a psychological time/space" (Edelsky, 1981). The happenings can be

the development of a topic or a function (e.g. sharing resources, asking for clarification) or an interaction of the topic with the function. Examples of such events are: 'He's talking about grades' or 'She's making a suggestion' or 'We're all answering her.' (Edelsky, 1981: 405) In asynchronous discussions, although they are seemingly controlled by one participant at a time, we also find examples of several interactions in quick succession. Simultaneous participations are, however, less likely in asynchronous discussion.

Later researchers suggest three definable elements to the floor: topic, communicative action, and participant perception. These three elements can provide us a beginning to form definitive guidelines to teach online interactions. (Pathak and Lee, 2006) Here is a brief description of the three elements.

1. **The topic of the discourse:** If the discourse has a well-defined topic, floor emergence is facilitated. On the other hand, multiple topics make it difficult for the participants to construct a floor, unless the discourse eventually focuses on a single topic or theme. In our study, we have chosen an interaction where the topic is leader emergence. Participants in this particular interaction co-construct a floor where the aim is to facilitate efficient and smooth emergence of a group leader.

2. **The communicative action:** The second element of a conversational floor is related to *how* things are being said in the discourse. Although this might be conceived as a 'move' as described in the traditional literature on discourse analysis, the illocutionary value of such communicative act is also taken into account at this stage. In our study, participants' attention is focused on taking appropriate communicative actions with an aim to facilitate leader emergence.

3. **The participants' sense of what is happening in the conversation:** The illocutionary value referred to earlier becomes important with respect to this element. In the analysis of a conversational floor, just as we focus on *what* is being said, and *how* it is being said, we also take into account how each communicative act is *perceived* by the audience.

As the features above suggest, the CF approach seems to be useful because of its emphasis on the contribution of the participants to the construction of meaning. Traditional and current practices are sometimes based on examining discrete discourse components in student interaction. Such discrete approach seems less useful when compared to the CF approach. Since the CF model focuses on production on meaning, it provides a more useful pathway for guidance and assessment. In the next section we describe the creation of a conversational floor in multi-threaded discussion. We hope that this case study approach will facilitate our understanding of the notions of conversational floor and its application as method of analysis. In a later section of this paper we aim to discuss how such understanding can be deployed by educators to guide and assess learning in this area.

## Context and Framework

Pathak (2011) elaborates on a study carried out using the CF model. Thirty students studying for a course in communication participated in this study. This course was offered in a blended learning environment and students use group discussion boards to discuss their projects and assignments. For the purpose of this research, attention was focused on assignments related to an oral presentation. Students were asked to

choose a topic related to professional issues for a group oral presentation. They used online discussions for preparation of their topic. Each group consisted of 4-6 students.

### **Preliminary Analysis**

In our study six different forums were created for six student groups. Each discussion forum resulted in creation of 19-27 posts. In total, 147 posts were generated in this experiment. An analysis of the posts based on the communicative function was performed. While 16 posts seem to be performing the communicative function of 'Initiating an Episode', 28 seem to be 'Responding' to the initiation move. As expected, a large number (54) of posts are Task-oriented and seem to be performing the 'Contributing' function. There are 9 posts which can be attributed to 'Contributing' to a social interaction. Lastly, 11 posts seem to be performing the task of 'Achieving closure' to the topic of discourse.

In order to analyze the various aspects of online interactions, including participation, initiation and response, response patterns and message types, a framework of message analysis was developed, drawing on concepts in conversational and discourse analysis. In the context of this study, any online discussion itself can be more meaningfully viewed as an *episode*, a discussion thread can be viewed as an interaction, and a message (post) can be viewed as a conversational turn (Kneser, Pilkington, & Treasure-Jones, 2001). A conversational move is then a unit within a post. A post may have one or more moves. (Schrite, 2006). For example, in our analysis we found a post that had three different moves: thanking, suggesting a plan of action, and proposing a time frame. Research has shown that rhetorical moves are commonly deployed "to maintain a specific power relationship" (McNair & Paretti, 2010:17). In our case analysis presented later in this paper, we present an episode in which a leader emerged through interactions and negotiations. One or more episodes create a *conversational floor*. For the creation of a conversational floor it is essential that a bid for initiation is made. A bid for initiation is 'wasted' or nullified if it receives no ratification. A bid is considered successful if one or more group members ratify the initiation. Further moves by the initiator and further ratification or confirmation by other members build a conversational floor.

### **Conversational Floor: An Analysis**

In the conversation floor described earlier (Pathak, 2011), the floor space was created to discuss an oral presentation task that the students were assigned to as part a Professional Communication course. Students were also encouraged to use the space for other tasks related to the course. After a few days of silence on the floor space (the Discussion Board), an initiator emerged. Although the post was brief, the initiator (Yang) had obviously composed his message very carefully. The initiator used a two-tier structure for the post: the main message and a postscript. The researchers (Pathak, 2011) hypothesized that the initiator might be willing to take over as a group leader. However, the initiator was careful not to impose the leadership on the group. He tried to convey both these ideas (Willingness to lead *and* reluctance to impose leadership) using a two-tier structure in this post. The post script can also be interpreted to be indicative of a hedging behaviour so that the leadership bid does not sound too desperate. Other researchers in this field have also found the first post (a so-called 'ice-breaker') of interest.

The interesting issue to observe at this stage is to see whether and how the first post is ratified by other members of the group. In this study (Pathak, 2011) Lek's post was neither a ratification nor a rejection of Yang's move. This created a tentative stand-off situation. For some time, it seemed that there were two initiators bidding to hold the floor. Interestingly, Yang (the initiator) continued to present himself as the leader. Yang used a different strategy this time. He presented a complete outline of the team presentation in a prescribed format. Interestingly, he gave proper credit to Lek (see the post above) and asked others to feel free if they wish to add any ideas to the outline. Once again he used the two-tier structure for his message. On one hand he tried to achieve closure to the brainstorming stage. On the other hand he suggested that the brainstorming was still going on (implying that he does not intend to force a closure on the ongoing discussion).

This strategy may be interpreted as a 'lurking' behavior on the part of the emergent leader. However, if the 'lurking' is responded to in the form of ratification, Yang would be willing to function as the leader. The ratification came soon (but not immediately) when Wang called Yang's topic "a good topic to follow up". Wang stated that he had added some points to Yang's proposal. As is the case usually, ratification comes in the form of commendation and (more importantly) positive and constructive feedback.

The ratification was seconded by Lek within minutes after Yang's message appeared, leading to the emergence of Yang as a leader. It is interesting to analyse Yang's post made after his emergence as a leader. The post was made just a couple of hours after the ratification by Wang and secondment by Lek. (The short time difference between ratification and Yang's follow-up post confirms our interpretation of Yang's earlier posts as a 'lurking' behavior.)

Yang's follow-up post (quoted above) shows the communication behavior of an 'emerged' (rather than 'emergent') leader. Following features of the post might indicate this behaviour.

1. There is a firm statement of closure. A vote of thanks is offered to group members for their contribution.
2. The future action plan is stated in no uncertain terms. imperative.
3. The discussion is now taken to the level of a face-to-face meeting.

Such smooth and successful construction of CF may not be observed in all cases. (Pathak, 2011). It is of course possible that the construction of a floor faces severe problems and in some cases the floor may not be successfully constructed. It would be interesting to see the issues faced in such 'unsuccessful' attempts at floor construction. From the data collected from the interactions within other groups, we can envisage the following possibilities and variations.

1. There may not be any bid for initiating the interaction.
2. The ratification comes in unclear terms, is delayed, or does not come at all.
3. There is unclear or delayed statement of emergence.

It might be concluded that the case chosen for analysis presents a pattern that is desirable, although the pattern may not exist in such a neat shape in many group interactions.

## Conclusion

It may be concluded that a number of factors related to the student psychology, needs, mindset, and context play an important part in the successful use of online discussions. As educators, we need to analyse the context and the setting before deciding to set up online discussion tasks and define the parameters for the collaborative work. It is also clear from this study that the patterns of face-to-face social interaction are sometimes replicated and at other times redefined in online interactions. Further research is needed in the area of the formulation of developmental stages in online discussions.

The approach demonstrated in this paper has the following concrete implications for classroom practice and pedagogy.

1. **Focus on Meaning:** While assessing online interaction formally or informally, attention should be focused on production of meaning rather than on discrete units of such interaction. Marking guidelines and rubrics that are based on discrete analysis of such discourse moves may reward students who indulge in a seemingly successful behaviour without contributing to the construction of the floor. On the other hand, students who provide minimal yet meaningful and timely responses may not be (but should be) rewarded in such assessment environment. (Pathak et al,2005; Pathak,2007)
2. **'Lurking' and Active Behaviour:**The behaviour labeled as 'lurking' as traditionally found upon. Teachers tend to demonstrate less tolerance towards students demonstrating such behaviour. They would probably identify such students and ask them to be more 'active' which would mean persuading them to take more turns or asking them to take hold of the floor. The analysis presented in this paper forces the practicing teacher to re-think these strategies. Much of the lurking behaviour can actually be quite active. In our analysis, these listeners play an active role in later interactions.
3. **Understanding of the Process:** Construction of a meaningful discussion is a complex and time-consuming activity. It is much more time consuming in asynchronous mode. An understanding of this phenomenon would help the educators to encourage students to be more involved in the discussion rather than being merely engaged in overt interaction behaviour.
4. **Participation in a Developed Context.** The focus is shifted from mere initiation or turn-taking to timely and value-oriented contribution to the discussion. Also, questions such as '*Who is listening?*' and '*How attentively?*' can be asked and answered with ease within the premises of the CF model. Active listening and meaningful contribution do stand out with such analysis.
5. **Encouraging Leaderless Environments:** Although leaderless environments initially present a challenge to the learner as well as to the teachers, it is seen from the case study that such environments create an enriched interaction experience. (Pathak and Cavallaro,2006)We recommend that mature students should begin with a leaderless environment and should attempt leadership emergence as their first interaction exercise.

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***The Effect of Integrating Diigo Social Bookmarking into Schoology Learning Management System on Autonomy and Reading comprehension of EFL Learners  
A Study on Introducing LMS into Conventional Learning Settings***

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**Abstract**

Since its first appearance in pedagogy, Web-Enhanced Language Learning (WELL) has turned educators' eyes to a novel approach in education. Though many believed that the integration of web into learning environments would go no farther than one way teacher-learner interaction, the development of web 2.0 has added to the sociality of the web even more than ever before. According to the socio-constructivist approach, this sociality can encourage student-generated content, which in turn, can lead to more autonomy on the part of the learner. Although extensive research shows the effectiveness of web 2.0, especially social networks, in promoting language learning and learner autonomy in a traditional classroom setting, researchers have not treated the effectiveness of integrating social networks into the context of web-based Learning Management System (LMS) in much detail. This case study investigated the impact of learning with Schoology® (the LMS selected for this study) on learners' autonomy and use of reading strategies while incorporating Diigo®, a social bookmarking website. The participants were twenty-two intermediate EFL adult learners divided into two control and experimental groups. The learners in both groups received instruction on different reading strategies and practiced using them by bookmarking several articles on a given topic with Diigo toolbar over a 7-session treatment period. While the control group only dealt with Diigo throughout the course, the experimental group additionally performed all the required course tasks using Schoology. At the end of the treatment, the students in both groups were compared in terms of using reading strategies and perception of learner autonomy.

Keywords: Learning Management System (LMS), Social Book Marking System (SBMS), Autonomy, Reading Strategies

## Introduction

Along with the public appeal for the use of the Internet as an information feed, the web became widely visited all around the globe. Between, as a multi-lingual medium, it offers language students a variety of online resources in their target language which are both authentic and easy to access. However, the World Wide Web could initially allow for Asynchronous Computer Mediated Communication (ACMC) (i.e. one-way communication at their best) which was considered to be static, centralized, content-based, readable, and inflexible. On the other hand this was an introduction to the creation of an individual virtual learning environment (Silva, Rahman & El Saddik, 2008). With the rise of socio-cultural approaches, pedagogical web design moved into "...consuming what was available on the Internet to producing the content on the Internet" (Manning & Johnson, 2011). Popularized by Tim O'Reilly (O'Reilly, 2007), Web 2.0 has been introduced as an environment where knowledge is created, shared, remixed, repurposed, and passed along (Mason & Rennie, 2008). The building of Learning Management Systems (LMS) or what is more broadly defined as open-source learning systems which offers the chance of creating online classes is an example of web 2.0 educational affordances.

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) or Massive Open Online Sources (MOOSs) – which are educational contents being delivered from a learning web platform - were formerly more in use. Open access via the web was probably the distinguishing feature of such learning systems, compared to other sources of learning. Additionally, as Sidorenko (2014) pointed out, other features such as bringing independence and autonomy to the learner, and efficiency of resources, cause MOOC to best aid learners as a self-study tool to promote language proficiency. Sidorenko's analysis led to a number of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of Online Open Sources which are listed below, in table 1.

Strenghts	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
1-High quality content 2-High technological support 3-Integration of language environment 4-Expanding the limits of teaching 5-Expanding professional and terminological vocabulary.	1-Inconsistency between the course content and learning programs 2-Lack of speech communication 3- Lower “language quality” requirements to communicate in forums; 4-learning process administration failure 5-Difficulty to follow up the outcomes 6-Long-term planning failure	1-Receiving new knowledge from the world’s leading universities 2-Global communication 3-Smoothing language and cultural barriers; 4-Flexible learning format and development of skills to manage academic freedom.	1-Disintegration of academic discipline: loss of consistency and succession 2-Loss of knowledge quality due to the lack of control; 3-Disruption of line schedules 4-Transformation of learning goals, discrepancy between obtained results and expected results of learning.

Table 1: The strehgths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of MOOCs according to Sidorenko (2014)

All in all, due to the absence of an essential factor, still this learning system can not replace in-class learning: management. To make up for this deficiency, Learning Management Systems (LMSs) were developed, which are a managing and tracking add-up to previous open learning platforms.

Along with the learning systems, web 2.0 made way for many other web tools such as bookmarking tools that may not be pedagogical in nature but can be adapted to be used for certain learning purposes such as practicing some reading strategies like using the context, skimming, and scanning. On the other hand, the learner-specific environment provided to the learners via the internet, promotes learner autonomy as it facilitates taking charge of one’s own learning and allows for inter-relational development of mutual interaction between learners and teachers (Lamb & Reinders, 2008).

### **A Cutting Edge in Web-based Technologies**

Presently, technology has become increasingly intertwined with language learning. The question of ‘why’ we should utilize computers in education during late 1970s has changed to ‘how’ to integrate them in language teaching and learning since late 1980s

(Rahimi & Yadollahi, 2011). Today, Computer Assisted Language Learning is defined as the full integration of technology into language learning (Kern, 2013). Therefore, a CALL integrated environment would be ideally one which provides comprehensible input and output and modified interaction between learner and the computer, an opportunity to focus on form and meaning and notice one's error (Chapelle, 1998).

Undoubtedly, World Wide Web has become the dominant essence of CALL. As its competitive edge, the second generation of the web has made user-generated content possible. The term learner/user-generated content has its root in the constructivism theory which suggests that learners are the creators of their course contents. In this path, web 2.0 has been particularly contributive by offering the necessary toolbelt (accessing, selecting, reading, editing, sharing, etc.) to build up this content. Through this process learners transform from a consumer to a creator, for a successive learning.

The creation of such web materials requires the use of a variety of tools. The number of the web tools that are being used now is enormous and their functions are different. However, all can be categorized under several headings according to their field of application. According to Manning and Johnson (2011) web tools are namely: a) The ones that help the user to stay organized, such as calendars, scheduling tools, mind-mapping or graphic organizer tools, social bookmarking, virtual storage and file management, b) Tools to communicate and collaborate, like discussion forums, Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP), instant messaging and chat, blogs, wikis, microblogs and web conferencing, c) Tools to present content. Instances are audio, video, screencasting and narrated slide shows and sharing images, d) Tools to help the instructors assess learning; such as quizzes, tests and surveys builders, rubrics, matrixes and e-portfolios and finally e) Tools to help the user transform their identity, like avatars, virtual worlds, social networks.

These tools are already being used excessively in language learning environments and by the learners themselves; however, the essentiality of employing web tools becomes more apparent when careful attention is paid to the social aspects they foster. Lee, Williams and Kim (2012) regard sociality as the essential foundation of web applications. Thus, the answer to the question of how these social technologies affect language learning and teaching can be trailed in the social learning theory (Bandura, 1977). According to this theory human beings can learn from their observations of interactions with a model from the real world, media and verbal instructions. Additionally, the capability of these tools in providing the learner with the opportunity to collect, transform, and generate the content highlights the constructivist nature of these social technologies.

Mindful of the benefits and deficits of web-based technologies, it is noted that employing a single technology per se is not enough for learning to occur, and one should not lose sight of other influential factors such as instructional pedagogy and the course content in this process (Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Furthermore in a technology-based learning environment, technical, administrative and educational considerations are also of great importance (Tay, Lim, Lye, Ng and Lim, 2011). Finally to make the most out of an online learning environment Selvi (2010) noted that learning and teaching processes, competencies of instructors, participant's

attention, the online learning environment/technical infrastructure and time management are effective.

### Learning Management System

Along with the wide application of web tools in learning, conventional learning environments have given their place to e-learning contexts, which in turn has opened up new horizons for the legendary accounts of managing a whole course online through a specifically organized system called Learning Management System (LMS). Electronic learning management system is a recently introduced web-based platform which offers the possibility to deliver online courses accompanied by electronic tools such as discussion board files, grade book, electronic mail, announcements, assessments, and multimedia elements to manage the course (Gautreau, 2011). It makes way for learner-centered teaching approaches, increased accessibility, online assessment and evaluation features, and improves management of course content and administrative tasks (Gautreau, 2011). A basic structure of an LMS has been illustrated in figure 1.

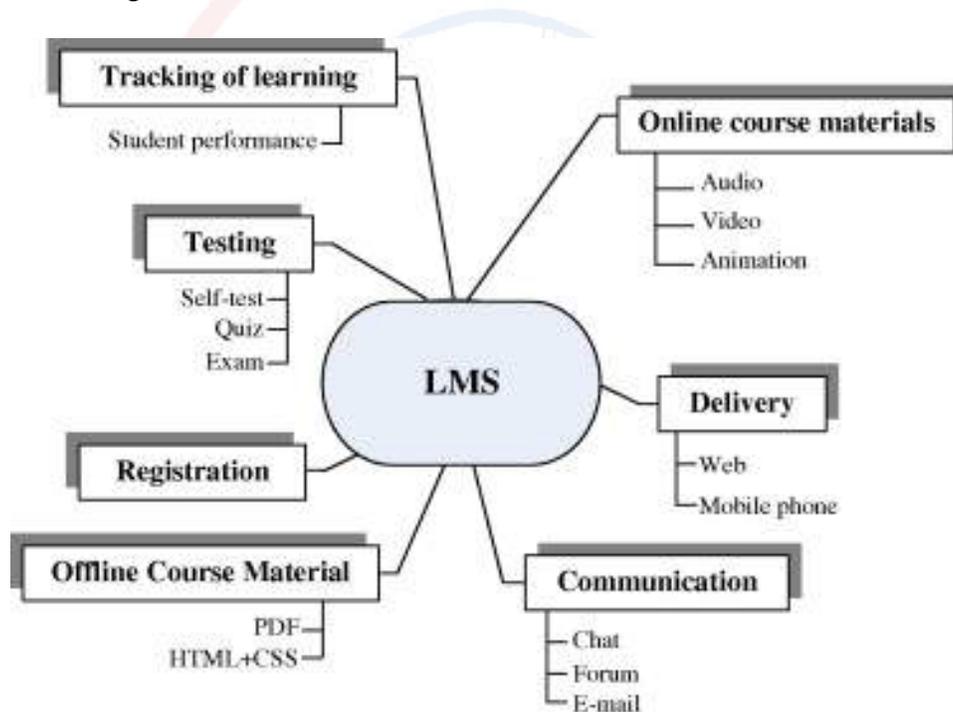


Figure 1: Structure of a Learning Management System (Sharpe, Benfield, Roberts & Francis, 2006).

As depicted in figure 1, LMS usually comprises of a ‘registration section’ through which students join the system and their attendance will be checked, and a ‘course materials section’ which is mainly accessible online and contains files in video, audio, PDF, PPT or word formats. There’s a ‘testing section’ which is designed to evaluate students’ achievements and a ‘communication section’ to enable teacher – learner and learner - learner interactions. Further, as LMS should emphasize the role of management in online learning, it provides the instructor with tracking tools to monitor students’ performance in each section. The delivery of all the aboves, occurs through the web or more recently through mobile phone applications.

However, the main component of LMS is the role of learners themselves both in teaching and learning. LMS encourages students to take the responsibility of their learning and use their creativity to utilize the aiding tools at their hands (Hussein, 2011), thus fosters learner-centeredness and learner autonomy.

As elaborated so far, LMSs and web 2.0 applications seem to have many features in common. Thus, the question that is raised here is ‘why do we need to integrate web 2.0 tools in a Learning Management System?’. First, the proliferation and popularity of these online social tools proves them to be successful in fulfilling the needs that they were designed for. At the same time, learners’ have shown positive attitudes towards the application of them in their learning process. In their analysis Sharpe, Benfield, Roberts & Francis (2006) claimed that the results of 300 studies on students’ experience of using e-learning systems in their learning process have shown that they respond in a positive fashion to the integration of ICT in higher education. Nevertheless, it has been reported that blended courses, i.e. a mixture of in-class and online instruction are more favorable than pure online classes (Sharpe, Benfield, Roberts & Francis, 2006).

Moreover, currently the communication features of conventional learning management systems are poorly being utilized by its users, while inclusion of web-based social technologies can reverse the situation in favor of the LMS.

### **Blended Learning**

Despite receiving worldwide attention, online courses are still not the mainstream in teaching and learning languages. Teachers would like to enjoy the advantages of online learning, while they can not ignore the benefits of in-class instruction. Thus many opt a combination of both, which is called blended learning.

In their study on the effects of integrating blended learning in a research methodology module, Sormus, Rannula and Piirsalu (2014) mentioned blended learning as a means of course delivery that combines face-to-face and technology-based studies and allows learners for the choice of time and the place to study. In another study on blending conventional class with Blackboard LMS by Kashghari and Asseel (2014), they highlighted ease of access to the course materials, ease of use of the LMS and its efficiency over using print media (course books, worksheets and paper exams). However, drawbacks such as experiencing technical problems, lack of proper training to the students and lack of enough technical facilities such as computer labs were also reported.

The most common advantages of blended learning as listed by Marsh (2012) are found to be a more individualized learning experience, a more personalized learning support, supporting and encouraging independent and collaborative learning between learners, increased learner engagement, adapting many different learning styles, creating a place to practice the target language beyond the classroom, creating a less stressful practice environment for the target language, flexibility in meeting learners’ needs and helping learners develop the necessary skills for cutting edges in the field of learning. Web-enhanced Reading

The free and synchronous series of online databases and communication services are rapidly growing and increasingly emphasizing the need for learning a foreign language and developing computer literacy. Here, reading is the primary mode of Internet communication and knowing about useful reading strategies is fundamental to foreign language learners' comprehension of the texts. On the other hand, effective and efficient use of ICT is now considered a must in the modern global business and job market (Tinio, 2003) and so for educational systems. Hence, the functions of web 2.0 tools in computer-assisted language learning can be of prime importance in the development of such reading strategies and enhancement of both digital and language literacy.

### **Learner Autonomy in Web-based Learning Environments**

During the past few decades, the paradigm shift in learning theory has changed many conventional perceptions regarding the learner's role. As Simina and Hamel (2005) pointed out, today learner is assumed as the center of learning and no longer a passive recipient of the content being taught. Similarly, the theory of constructivism has considered the learner as being responsible for constructing the knowledge throughout his interaction with the environment and reflecting on his own experiences. As discussed later, technology-based learning environments encourage both learner-centeredness and constructivism which in turn promote learner's autonomy. However, the definition of autonomy when state-of-the-art technologies are being used may not be as clear as it is in other contexts.

Benson (2011) has described autonomy and autonomous learning as the capacity of the learners in controlling their learning. He added that autonomous behavior would be developed through the process of dealing with learning and this leads to self-directed learning. Cooke (2013) proposed that the creation of a program which can provide an environment for autonomous activity might encourage the development of learner's autonomy. On the other hand, in their study, Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) suggested that factors such as 'lack of motivation', 'limited experience of independent learning' and 'fixed curriculum' hinder the development of learner autonomy. Shams (2013) proposed that an autonomous learner takes responsibility for his/her learning, monitor the learning progresss, can do self-evaluation and can deal with difficulties in learning whitout teacher intervention.

Indeed, more modern tools are being released every day, and their role in learner autonomy demands more investigation. The present study examined the effects of an LMS integrated reading comprehension course on FL learners' autonomy and mastery of reading strategies.

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## **Study**

### **Research Question**

This study addressed the following research question:

1. Does integrating web 2.0 social bookmarking into a Learning Management System lead to a change in EFL learners' perception of learner autonomy?
2. Does integrating web 2.0 social bookmarking into a Learning Management System affect EFL learners' use of reading strategies?

### **Participants**

The present study was conducted as a part of a general English course at a Language Institute. Two classes with the total number of 22 intermediate level, female students, aged between 13 and 63 with low to average computer skills were studied. In one of the classes the participants (the control group) received instruction on how to use reading strategies and practiced using them by bookmarking articles with Diigo social bookmarking on the Internet, while the other class (experimental group) received the same instruction and practiced the strategies by including the Diigo bookmarks in Schoology learning management system.

### **Instruments and Materials**

The following instruments were used to collect the required data:

- a. A reading comprehension pre-test
- b. An autonomy questionnaire (Spratt, Humphreys & Chan, 2002)
- c. A reading comprehension post-test
- d. Two Diigo® accounts for the participants in experimental and control group to invite them to join the network in separately
- e. One Schoology® account to create the online class for the experimental group
- f. Interactive power point slides to teach each reading strategy followed by specifically designed exercises prepared by the researchers
- g. A course time table detailing the reading strategies (using context clues, scanning and skimming, finding the topic and the main idea, identifying the supporting details, understanding the connecting words, and making inferences) that are going to be taught and the reading topics for each session
- h. A video tutorial detailing the steps in using the required web tools

### **Procedure**

At the outset of the study, a reading comprehension pre-test and an attitude to autonomy questionnaire were given to the participants. Then the participants were provided with a timetable regarding the reading strategies to be taught and the topics to be searched for. The target reading strategies included using context clues, scanning and skimming, finding the topic and the main idea, identifying the supporting details, understanding the connecting words, and making inferences. Next, a training session was held to prepare the participants for using the bookmarking tool and the LMS. In the course of the treatment, each session the students learnt about a

reading strategy through interactive power point slides and received some related exercise sheets as controlled practice. Then as a free form of practice, outside the class, they were asked to search for the topic of the day on the Internet, find several articles, bookmark them in their Diigo accounts, and share them with their peers. While enjoying what their classmates had bookmarked, the students also practiced the reading strategy of the day both in the class and at home.

The following session, before moving to a new reading strategy, a previously selected group (of usually three students) was assigned to present a summary of the bookmarked articles in the power point slides to the whole class. Then the teacher raised several comprehension check questions which required them to employ the learnt reading strategies. However, in the experimental group, the bookmarks were posted by the students in the discussion room of the Learning Management System (Schoolology), where they were viewed and discussed by the teacher and the learners. Once all the bookmarks had been viewed, the summary presentation assignment was given to the students with an exact submission time and date using the timing features of Schoolology.

The uploaded assignments were then collected and scored by the instructor and discussed in LMS's chat room. The participants could view their peers' uploads there and comment on them, while the instructor posted some comprehension check questions about the summaries for them to answer. All the materials presented in the class were available to the students on the LMS. In the control pair, the same activities were performed as in a conventional class. The above procedure lasted for a period of two months. Finally, a reading comprehension post test and the same autonomy questionnaire were given to the participants to check the effects of the treatment.

### **Data collection and results**

Initially, the pairs were given a multiple-choice reading pre test measuring their use of reading strategies. They were also asked to fill in a five-point likert scale autonomy questionnaire. The results indicated that there were no significant differences between the control and experimental group in terms of autonomy and reading strategy use (Independent T-test  $p = .084 > .05$ ) at the beginning of the course. After the two-month treatment period, the same autonomy questionnaire and a multiple-choice reading post test were given to the students. Their marks were considered from 0 - 100 in the reading test and in a 1-5 scale for the autonomy questionnaire.

The results indicated that the experimental group had obtained a significantly higher mean score on the second administration of the autonomy questionnaire (Paired T-test  $p = .03 < 0.05$ ). The control pair have also scored higher on this instrument compared to its first administration, however it was not significant (Paired T-test  $p = .14 > 0.05$ ).

Both groups gained slightly higher mean scores at the end of the treatment in terms of reading comprehension (table 2), though none of them could outperform the other in this regard ( $p = .60$  and  $p = .53 > 0.05$ ).

Table 1 – Comparison of the mean scores of control and experimental groups post and pre test scores on the use of reading strategies and their significance

Group		Mean	SD	Sig.
Control	Reading pre-test	20.63	20.20	0.60
	Reading post-test	30.34	11.61	
Experimental	Reading pre-test	42.90	8.57	0.53
	Reading post-test	43.59	9.32	

## Discussion

This study investigated the effects of the integration of social bookmarking into a learning management system on EFL learners' autonomy and use of reading strategies.

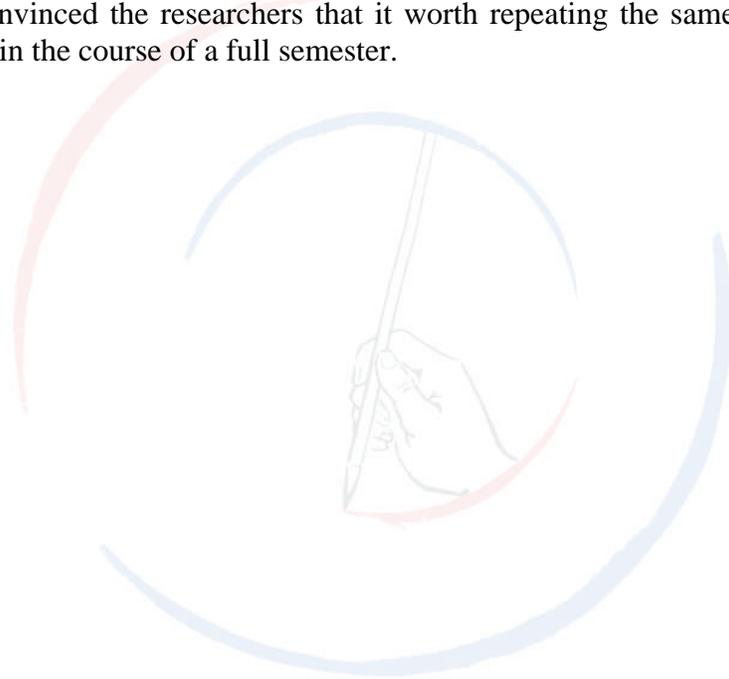
A comparison of the groups' mean scores on the autonomy questionnaire in pre and post administration indicated that the technique had significantly affected the participants' attitude towards learner autonomy as both groups reached a higher mean score. The analysis of the results of the post administration of the questionnaire showed that the experimental group scored significantly higher than the control. The researchers attribute this to what learners experienced in the process of moving from consumers to creators of their class materials by posting their bookmarks in the LMS and the opportunity that it provides for them to experience learning on their own.

Apparently, the experimental group could not significantly outperform the control group regarding the use of reading strategies. This could indicate that 7 weeks was not long enough for the treatment to lead to significant changes either in the learners' mastery of reading strategies or in getting used to the procedure of the course which was quite novel for them. Therefore it prompted the researchers to carry out a full-scale study on the same variables over a longer period. However, a comparison of the groups' pre and post mean scores on the reading test indicated that both groups scored higher in this regard at the end of the course, provides support for the efficiency of web 2.0 tools in helping the learners to employ more reading strategies and, possibly, become better L2 readers. On the other hand,

In course of the experiment, the researchers observed several interesting facts. The participants entered the study with a rather low level of computer skills. However, at the end of the course, both control and experimental groups had noticeably progressed in this area and stated that they had enjoyed using the technological tools used in this study, which granted them more freedom in terms of the time and place of learning. The experimental pair felt more strongly in this regard since all the learning aids, such as the resources and exercises, were only a few clicks away from them anytime and anywhere during the course. They also believed that the access to the Internet in the class was a motivating element for them in the process of learning.

Besides, in a feedback session at the end of the course, the experimental group stated that the LMS had affected their sense of autonomy. This was because not only could they freely interact with the other learners and their teacher even after the class time, but they could also submit their assignments and participate in discussions, knowing that all of them were being observed and controlled by the teacher through the learning management system.

Finally, the students were quite surprised to see how applying reading strategies could facilitate their understanding of a text. All participants stated that they did not know, at least consciously, that such strategies existed. More importantly, they were satisfied with the way they could use the reading strategies to understand authentic English texts on the Internet. Interestingly enough, the experimental group expressed their willingness in attending other similar courses and said that they would recommend their friends to volunteer for future classes of this type. Overall, the findings of this case study convinced the researchers that it worth repeating the same experience in larger classes in the course of a full semester.



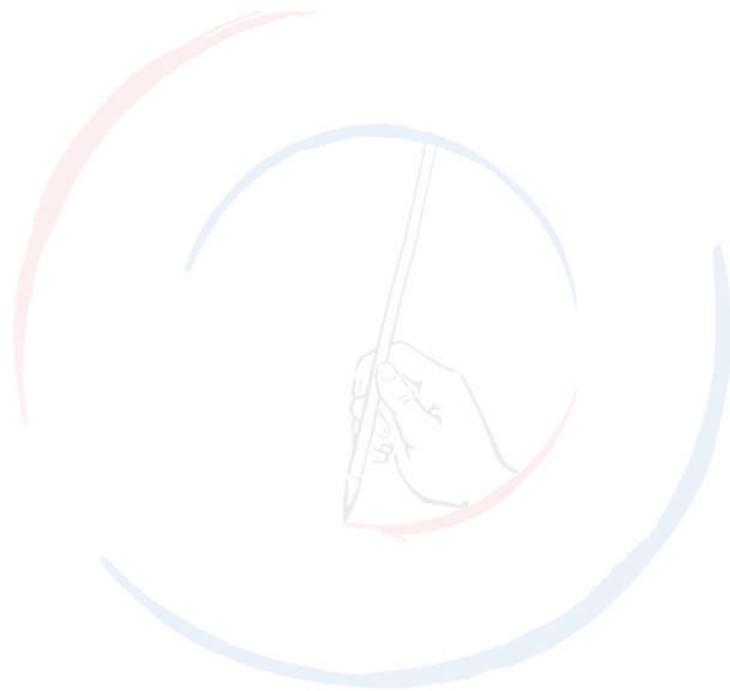
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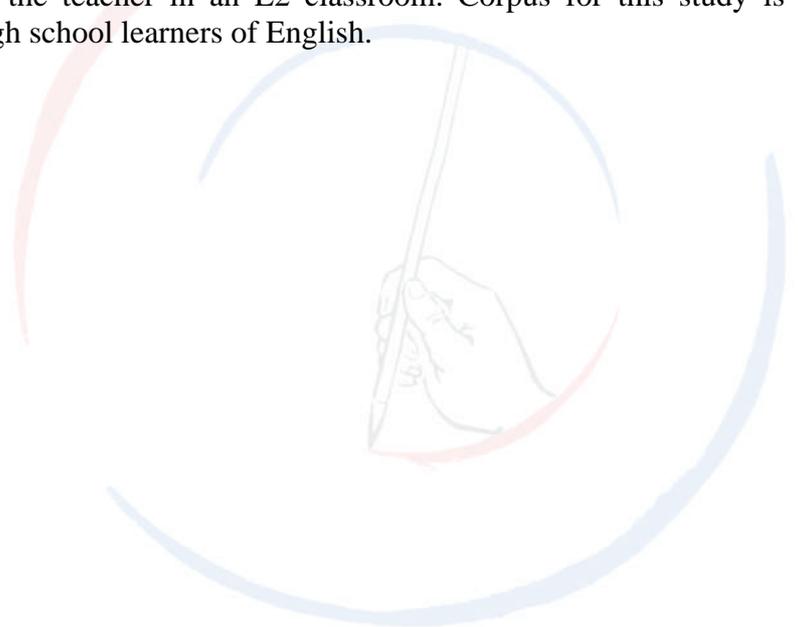
## *Questions and Mutual Understanding in L2 Classroom*

Affiong Clement Isok

IAFOR International Conference on Language Learning - Dubai 2015  
Official Conference Proceedings

### **Abstract**

An integration of questions in the teaching of L2 is strongly supported in educational arguments. However, the nature of the constructs that underlie these questions in order to ensure mutual understanding is not defined. Many assessments of learners have shown that learners provide answers which are considered correct but not the appropriate one to the question posed by the teacher. This paper investigates the construct that underlies an assessment which ensures the mutual understanding of a learner and the teacher in an L2 classroom. Corpus for this study is drawn from Nigerian high school learners of English.



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## Introduction

Asking questions is the preoccupation of every teacher and a very important one too if mutual understanding must be achieved because questions are used by the teacher to check on how the mind of the learner is processing the information taught and to also enhance the learner's learning by subtly guiding his thoughts. Douglas (2010) while describing the setting of a normal second language (L2) classroom, observes that teachers are constantly assessing their students not so much because the teacher is assessing his/her methodology of teaching but principally to make inferences about the learners' language abilities. The inferences drawn from these assessments are very important to the future of the learner because they define the learner's potentiality for higher duties where the language ability is crucially important. Therefore, asking the questions correctly such that it will not only test the learner's language ability but reflect the specific information the teacher sought, constitute effective questioning. An effective question is expected to demand from the learner to perform precisely the skill the teacher wishes to test (Cf. Hughes 2003).

Discussing how teachers can ask the best questions in class, Kelly, M. (2014) referred to Casteel (1994) "Effective teaching", as providing a definition of what constitutes an effective question. According to this source, effective questions are those that follow a clear sequence, are contextual solicitations, and are hypothetico-deductive. These types of questions are said to be effective because they have a high student response rate and increased quality of students' responses. It is also claimed that 80% of classroom questioning is based on low order, factual recall questions which do not foster a culture of enquiry that enriches understanding. Effective questioning however is said to enrich understanding because it makes thinking visible by identifying prior knowledge, reasoning ability and the specific degree of student understanding. What is particularly impressive about effective questioning is that it is said to remove misconceptions.

According to Kelly (2014), questions that follow a clear sequence, are contextual soliciting and are hypothetico-deductive, will be without misconceptions. The implication made here is that these types of questions would enhance mutual understanding. But how can one identify a question that follows a clear sequence, is contextual soliciting and hypothetico-deductive? The source provided the answer to this by explaining that clear sequence questions are the simplest form of effective questioning and consist of little questions that gradually build up to a larger overall question. The little questions are said to be important because they establish the basis for the overall question.

The problem with these little questions is that it is not clear what shape they take and how they establish the basis for the larger overall question. Contextual soliciting questions on the other hand are said to provide a context that prompts an intellectual thought. According to the source, this type of question sometimes uses a conditional language that relates the context to the information required. As much as this may sound simple and straight forward, it is difficult to say in definite terms that the context of the question does prompt the information required in the mind of the student. This is because many context soliciting questions have been asked by teachers but the student has missed the specific information the teacher required

because the context prompted another idea quite different from what the teacher intended to communicate.

Here is an example of a context soliciting question: Re-do this short passage so that it can serve as a suitable paragraph in your letter to your former Head of Department.

*Life as a corper is not as easy-going as it was in your days. The miserable allowance of Nine Thousand Naira is not enough for feeding. I've been able to buy some pots for cooking. I can't travel because I don't have enough money for that.*

It is obvious that the question seeks to know if the student can recognize the appropriate style of the letter to be a formal letter. However, is the student expected to provide the features of a formal letter in terms of the addresses, salutation and so forth or to simply write out the contracted words in full and change slangs to formal expressions? Hypothetico-deductive questions are like context soliciting questions in that they provide a context but the context is a hypothetical one. This type of question makes use of verbs like assume, suppose and so forth. The hypothetical context is supposed to serve as a link to the information the teacher seeks in the question. The issue in question is how to ensure that the student and the teacher have a mutual understanding of the specific information sought in the question.

Experience has shown that teachers and examiners ask questions and expect a particular sort of answers as appropriate (c.f. Edwards and Mercer, 1987). Often times, the student's answer is not wrong but is not just what the teacher expected. The teacher seeks and expects specific information but specific information cannot be given if the student is not aware that it is specific information and must be treated as specific. The teacher's expectations fall under an implicit rule which the student does not share with the teacher. This is why there must be mutual understanding between the teacher and the student in the questions posed by the teacher. The issue of mutual understanding falls within the scope of Pragmatics. For this reason, we shall treat mutual understanding under the theoretical framework of Relevance theory.

### **Theoretical Background**

Pragmatics is generally defined as the theory of utterance interpretation. The basic question in utterance interpretation is: what is the intention of the speaker in the utterance? Relevance theory of pragmatics proposes that utterance interpretation is an inferential process whose premises are the logical form of the sentence uttered and the context. Most importantly, the crux of Relevance theory is to demonstrate that correct interpretation (mutual understanding) of utterances is determined by the propositions that are most relevant to the context. According to Sperber and Wilson (1995), in a communicative situation such as questioning in an L2 classroom, it is expected that the communicator first provides the ostensive stimulus which must be sufficient for the addressee to derive the specific intended message.

According to this source, addressees in a communication situation must focus their attention to what appears to be the most relevant information in the communication they receive because their duty in a communication situation is to take in what is provided and infer the intended meaning. According to Sperber and Wilson (1995), every act of communication communicates the presumption of its own optimal relevance, implying that a communicator intentionally creates in his speech that which

makes his intention recognizable to the addressee. Psycholinguistics evidence shows that addressees in a communication situation tend to select the most salient interpretation from a range of contextually available interpretations.

The most salient interpretation is usually one that the assumptions are made manifest in the communication and cost the least processing effort to construct (Gernsbacher 1995). We are optimistic that Relevance theory can provide a descriptively adequate mutual understanding in an L2 classroom.

### **Mutual understanding in the classroom**

An L2 classroom is a formal context where abstract logical problems and hypothetical problems are solved. Such a situation requires that the transmission of instruction depends upon mutual understanding which is defined by a sharing of the rules of interpretation. The transmission of instruction in an L2 classroom is one of a model of communication where the transmitter attempts to select and send a particular message he intends to communicate from a set of possible messages. In the attempt to decode the message, the receiver may meet with assumptions that act as noises because they interfere with the signal transmission and distract the receiver from the intended message.

If the message was well coded, we expect that it will raise assumptions that will form contingent affordances that will guide the receiver to the intended message. These affordances can then be added to the context background information to derive implications that help interpret the message. Sometimes, the interpretation received does not match with the transmitter's intended message even though it may match sometimes. But often times, the receivers' interpretation is based on a selection of a set of background assumptions as premises for the derivation of the expected contextual implications which is the interpretation of the message received. The selected set of background assumptions depend either on their degree of accessibility in a particular context, or on the potential contextual implications they yield.

The student who is the receiver of an instruction infers the teacher's (transmitter) intended meaning from evidence that the teacher has provided in his linguistically-coded information (c.f. Sperber and Wilson, 2002). This linguistically-coded information is, according to Sperber and Wilson (1995) presumed to contain the lexical information that is relevant and would guide the student in this case to the teacher's intended meaning. In order for the student to interpret the teacher's instruction, the student needs to perceive a relevant link in the lexical information he has received from the instruction.

Whatever link the student perceives, is what will guide his interpretation of what is the teacher's intended meaning. To demonstrate the need for mutual understanding to exist between the teacher and the student, the following sample instructions were drawn from a Nigerian High School teacher's terminal examination questions and the answers given against each question represents the responses of 30%- 36% of his student. The presentation of the data has also attempted to summarize the teacher's marking guide in order to demonstrate the teacher's intended meaning and expectations for each of the questions exemplified.

The instruction for question 1, was: *Change the following sentence into indirect speech.*

1. The saint said to his disciples, “God is omniscient.”  
The student’s response was:
  - Jesus said to his disciples God is omniscient.  
The instruction for question 2, was: *This sentence is ambiguous. Rewrite it to achieve specificity and precision.*
2. Mary can only speak English.  
The student’s response was:
  - Mary would speak English if only she attends classes and focuses on it.  
The instruction for question 3, was: *Re-do this short passage so that it can serve as a suitable paragraph in your letter to your former Head of Department.*
3. Life as a corper is not as easy-going as it was in your days. The miserable allowance of Nine Thousand Naira is not enough for feeding. I’ve been able to buy some pots for cooking. I can’t travel because I don’t have enough money for that.  
The student’s response was:
  - Dear Sir,  
Youth service is not as easy as it was in the days of old, because of devaluation of Naira in the country and the increment in transport.

Question 1, failed to enhance mutual understanding between the teacher and the student. Even though this question may be a lower level question but that is not why it failed to enhance mutual understanding between the teacher and the student. The question failed because its construct does not underlie mutual understanding. In this question, what the teacher sought was evidence of ability to recognize, identify and use the features of an indirect speech. Even though the absence of inverted commas may suggest that the student recognizes and can identify the features of an indirect speech but the change of the subject of the sentence from **the saint** to **Jesus** indicates that the student was actually not thinking in the same line as his teacher. It is common knowledge that Jesus had disciples and also taught them that God is omniscient but the same cannot be said of **the saint**. It is therefore most probable that the student was questioning the veracity of the teacher’s statement, **“The saint said to his disciples, “God is omniscient”.**’, rather than simply changing the sentence to its indirect speech form. The student and his teacher obviously did not share meaning in the question the teacher asked.

Question 2, also failed to enhance mutual understanding between the teacher and the student though it is a contextual question and therefore should be an effective question. The question failed to enhance mutual understanding between the teacher and the student because its construct does not underlie mutual understanding. In this question, what the teacher sought was evidence of ability to recognize, identify and avoid vague words, dangling modifiers, pronouns with no specific antecedents and imprecise structuring with no logical ordering of ideas. The teacher sought for evidence of ability to use precise words to be informative. What the student has done in her answer is giving over and above the interpretation of the sentence given rather than simply achieving specificity of the imprecise structure, **only speak English**. If we take a close look at the sentence given by the student, we will realize that the student has actually been informative but has not addressed the teacher’s expectation because the student was obviously not thinking in the same line as her teacher. The

answer the teacher would have considered appropriate in that situation would be either: **Mary can only speak English, she cannot write it** or **Mary can only speak in English she cannot speak in French.**

Question 3, failed to enhance mutual understanding between the teacher and the student. Although question 3 is regarded as an effective question (question 3 is a contextual question), nevertheless, the construct does not underlie mutual understanding. In question 3, what the teacher sought was evidence of ability to recognize and identify when to use a formal language, and the ability to identify and use the features of a formal language. The student's answer shows that she can identify when to use a formal language and the features of a formal language. The salutation the student used indicates that the student knows that the teacher is expecting a formal letter and therefore a formal language.

But the student's answer is considered inappropriate here because the teacher expected that this ability be demonstrated on specific words in the short passage given. For example, the slang, *corper*, in **Life as a corper**, should be rephrased as **a National Youth Service Corps member**, *easy-going*, should be rephrased as **easy**, while **miserable allowance**, should be rephrased as **meagre allowance**, and all the contracted words be written out in full as in; **I've : I have, I can't : I cannot, I don't : I do not**. These expectations of the teacher fall under an implicit rule which the student does not share with the teacher.

These questions as posed by the teacher are good but they are not effective because they have not communicated to the student the teacher's expectations. If the teacher is seeking specific information, the communication should make manifest evidence of the teacher's intended meaning. Pragmatic studies of verbal communication start from the assumption that essential features of human communication (both verbal and non-verbal) is the expression of intentions in which the audience infers the speaker's intended meaning from evidence that the speaker has provided ( Sperber and Wilson 2002).

Human verbal communication requires an utterance as input and such utterance must be manifest by ostensive provisioning of an addressee with evidence in the utterance to enable him infer the speaker's meaning. The implication here is that to grasp the communicative intention of a speaker in the course of an utterance communication, the addressee has to infer what is behind the speaker's utterance. Sperber and Wilson propose that in order to save an addressee of the communication from going through a lot of fruitless processing, a speaker aiming at optimal relevance, phrases her utterance in such a way as to facilitate early and correct disambiguation, reference assignment and enrichment. With these in place, mutual understanding is ensured.

### **Constructs that define questions of mutual understanding**

In an ostensive-inferential communicative model like a verbal communication, the speaker shows the hearer his informative and communicative intention by means of ostensive behaviors (the verbal stimulus), thus providing the addressee with the necessary grounds of judgment for inference. Sperber and Wilson (1995:vii) suggest that "individuals must focus their attention on what seems to them to be the most relevant information available" and this is because the role of the addressee in a

communication is to take in what is said and infer the intended meaning. The communication which in this case is the teacher's question, must contain lexical information that would necessarily enable the student infer the teacher's intended meaning therefore providing grounds for mutual understanding between the teacher and the student.

An utterance is said to automatically create expectations (through the words) which guide an addressee towards the speaker's meaning. It is in fact claimed by relevance theorists (Carston, Sperber and Wilson), that the expectations of relevance raised by an utterance are precise and predictable enough to guide an addressee towards the speaker's meaning. The source, Wilson and Sperber (2004), opines that an addressee's goal is to construct a hypothesis about the speaker's meaning which satisfies the presumption of relevance conveyed by the utterance. We therefore expect that a teacher's question must be explicit on the teacher's expectation so that teacher and student can have mutual understanding of what is expected.

In line with this expectation, an explicit question must have words which are relevant to and convey the expectations of the teacher. Let us consider question 1 above in this regard. *Change the following sentence into indirect speech*, has not specified that the ability to recognize, identify and use the features of an indirect speech is what is required and no more. The sample direct speech given (The saint said to his disciples, "God is omniscient."), contains information that connects with background information that the student has available to yield conclusions that matter to him (c.f. Wilson and Sperber 2004).

This background information is that it is common knowledge that Jesus had disciples and also taught them that God is omniscient. In order for the teacher to avoid the student meeting with assumptions that interfere with the teacher's intended meaning and distract the student from the intended message, the teacher should introduce specific information that will not allow for misconceptions. Let us consider rephrasing question 1 as: *Using the sample of a direct speech below, change it into an indirect speech to demonstrate the features of an indirect speech*. With the introduction of the word *sample*, the student will understand that the direct speech given is not representative of real life and therefore does not need to consider its truth or falsity. More so, the introduction of the information *to demonstrate the features of an indirect speech*, makes the teacher's intention manifest so that the student now understands exactly what the teacher expects from him. Misconceptions are herein avoided.

Even though question 2 is a contextual question, it is not constructed to enable mutual understanding. The question, *This sentence is ambiguous. Rewrite it to achieve specificity and precision*, does not contain any word that would counter the likely misconceptions the words, *precision and specificity*, would arouse in the mind of the student. What the teacher sought for was evidence of ability to recognize, identify and avoid vague words, and imprecise structuring with no logical ordering of ideas while using precise words to be informative. The student understands that precision and specificity translate into being informative and the student was informative. The question did not make relevant that evidence of ability to recognize, identify and avoid vague and imprecise structure was needed. The question merely said, *Rewrite it to achieve specificity and precision*. However the student can achieve specificity and precision is entirely the student's business.

However, if we rephrase the question to read, *This sentence is ambiguous. Rewrite the ambiguous item to achieve specificity and precision*, the teacher's intention to evaluate the ability to identify the imprecise word becomes apparent to the student. The student would then know that there is a particular item she has to focus on. The rephrasing of the question as indicated above enables mutual understanding between the teacher and the student. The question is constructed to make manifest, what is relevant to understanding the teacher's expectation. Without the introduction of *the ambiguous item*, in the question, *Rewrite the ambiguous item to achieve specificity and precision*, the student would not be properly guided to the teacher's expectation.

In the case of question 3, the teacher sought evidence of ability to recognize and identify when to use a formal language, as well as identify and use the features of a formal language. But above all, the teacher expected that the ability to identify and use the features of a formal language should be demonstrated on specific words. While the question had indicated in an ostensive manner the teacher's intention as far as seeking evidence of ability to recognize and identify when to use a formal language and the ability to identify and use the features of a formal language, the question did not do same for the teacher's intention as far as seeking this ability to be demonstrated on specific words. The question: *Re-do this short passage so that it can serve as a suitable paragraph in your letter to your former Head of Department*, makes manifest the teacher's intention to evaluate the ability to recognize and identify when to use a formal language, as well as identify and use the features of a formal language.

The words that make these intentions manifest are, *letter to your former Head of Department*. But if the question were to be rephrased as, *Re-do this short passage so that the words would be appropriate to fit into a letter to your former Head of Department*, the teacher's intention that the ability to identify and use the features of a formal language be demonstrated on specific words, would have been made manifest to the student. This intention would have been inferred from *so that the words would be appropriate to fit into a letter to your former Head of Department*. The mention of *the words* would have stimulated the student and guided him to the teacher's intention so that the student would then focus on specific words rather than going through a lot of fruitless processing. The construct that defines questions of mutual understanding is the strategy that the teacher employs to make manifest his intentions and expectations to the student in order for him and the student to have mutual understanding of the instruction given in the classroom. This unique relationship between the teacher and the student is enabled by the use of this strategy to construct effective questions.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

Based on the above analysis, we argue that though clear sequence questions, contextual solicitations, and hypothetico-deductive questions are said to be effective because they have a high student response rate, increased quality of students' responses and are without misconceptions but the nature of the constructs that underlie these questions in order to ensure mutual understanding is not defined.

When teachers and examiners ask questions, they expect a particular sort of answers as appropriate. Often this expectation is available to the teacher or examiner alone. The student cannot access information that is not made available to him. Therefore, for effective communication and comprehension, there must be mutual understanding between the teacher and the student.

We have attempted to provide strategies that would construct questions that ensure mutual understanding in an L2 classroom. The corpus for this study was drawn from Nigerian High School learners of English.



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*The Development of an Instructional Design Model on Facebook Based Collaborative Learning to Enhance EFL Students Writing Skills*

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**Abstract**

Writing is one of the essential skills that EFL students, specifically in Thailand, need to achieve during their learning English at tertiary education. However, they have few chances to practice writing skills in their learning. This study has been conducted to develop an instructional design model to assist students to learn collaboratively in Facebook groups to enhance their English writing skills at the beginning stage of their learning at university. In this study, together with collaborative learning and writing, theory of instructional design, five previous instructional design models were analyzed, synthesized; and the seven steps model in designing an instructional model by Brahmawong and Vate-U-Lan (2009) was adapted to develop the instructional design model. Then the model was evaluated by the experts in the field of technology and English language teaching. The results of the study showed that the elements of the FBCL Model was satisfactory and appropriate to EFL writing instructions in Facebook groups. It could also be beneficial to the instructional framework for EFL writing instructors and instructional designers.

**Keywords:** EFL writing skills, Facebook-based collaborative language learning, instructional model

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## 1. Introduction

Writing is a basic and main tool to communicate with other people from all over the world (Torwong 2003). Moreover, there are various purposes to write in English to communicate with other people from other countries (Tribble 1996); and writing can be considered a tool to reflect students' understanding of English learning (Kitchakarn 2012). Besides, it is not easy to acquire this skill; therefore students need to be trained and practiced to gain this writing skill.

Thai students of English who have limitations of their abilities in English learning should be paid much attention to and need a suitable and effective writing teaching techniques or activities (Kitchakarn 2012). Especially, students at Suranaree University of Technology (SUT) hardly have opportunities to practice writing skill in English in classroom instructions. Student's low proficiency level of English at SUT (Chongapirattanakul 1999) might result from their little exposure to the English speaking environment. They learn English in a very traditional lecture teaching style; therefore, they have minimal chance to use English and participate into the learning. SUT students, thus, need to have more chances to practice English outside the classroom since teachers do not have sufficient time to cover or explain in details the knowledge from the textbook with the purpose of improving their English knowledge and skills, especially their writing skills.

In this information age, technology is an inevitable tool in teaching and learning languages in many educational institutions and schools. With the rocketed development of computers and Internet, especially social networking sites, there are a lot of changes in the ways of teaching and learning a foreign language, such as teaching and learning a language on the Internet/ online teaching and learning. Among a number of popular social networking sites, Facebook becomes the most popular one with more than billion active users around the globe (Facebook, 2013). Facebook is also regarded as an educational tool for university students (Bumgarner, 2007; Mason, 2006) and with 80 percent of students who use social networking sites as a useful tool for their study (Lepi, 2013). With these advantages that Facebook brings to Facebook users, Facebook seems to be an effective and useful tool for students to improve language learning, esp. to improve writing skills (Yunus & Salehi, 2012).

In searching for an interesting and effective way to assist students in their EFL learning, the activities of posting comments were incorporated as a social interaction activity in online learning course in Facebook groups as a learning method of collaborative learning. Facebook groups are, thus, expected to be a good online learning environment for Thai students to learn EFL writing skills in particular and EFL in general with group mates independently and collaboratively.

Together with the integration of ASEAN Economic Community in 2015, ASEAN citizens need to use English to work or collaborate (in learning and working) with other ASEAN citizens in the community. Another issue is about General English courses at SUT which have five courses of English and concentrate on English for communication, specifically Listening and Speaking, writing skill is not paid attention, even in the examinations. Therefore, students do not have any chances to practice writing skills. From those mentioned, the study to develop an instructional design

model on Facebook based collaborative learning to enhance EFL students' writing skills was conducted with the expectation of giving light to EFL teaching to writing for English 1 course. The first year university students who take English 1, the first course of English at SUT, are new to the university life and need to practice their English language skills more in order to have a stronger background to continue with other English courses at SUT. They are expected to be more interested to join the course with the assistance of technology enhancement to the online course which is implemented to the classroom instruction. Furthermore, they are expected to be more independent in their own study not only after this course but also in their lifelong learning.

The research study was aimed to develop an instructional model on Facebook based collaborative learning to enhance EFL students writing skills. Therefore, two research questions were set up for the study.

- 1) *What are the components and logical steps of developing an instructional model on Facebook based collaborative learning to enhance EFL students' writing skills?*
- 2) *What are the expert's opinions toward the development of an instructional design model on Facebook based collaborative learning lessons to enhance EFL students' writing skills based on the evaluation form?*

## **2. Review of Related Literature**

### **2.1 Instructional Design**

Instructional Design (also called Instructional Systems Design (ISD)) is the framework in which teachers will base on to carry out the planned teaching and learning steps in a lesson (Richards & Lockart, 1994). Instructional design can be said to be a system of procedures specifying the planning, design, development, implementation and evaluation of effective and efficient instruction in a variety of educational environments. The specifications of instructional design process are both functional and attractive to learners. Moreover, Gustafson and Branch (2002) also believe that the procedures in instructional design can make clear approaches to be more effective, efficient, and relevant to instruction.

### **2.2 Instructional Design Models**

With those primary functions in the process of instructional design models, a great number of instructional design models have been developed for various educational settings. "Many models exist, ranging from simple to complex. All provide step-by-step guidance for developing instruction" was pointed out by Suppasetserree (2005). In this study, some related instructional design models; including the ADDIE Model, Dick and Carey Model, Kemp Model, SREO Model, and the OTIL Model are presented as follows.

The ADDIE Model which is the most basic and applicable is a generic and systematic instructional systems design model (Reiser and Dempsey 2007). Among five core elements of the model, Analysis is one of the most crucial element in the ID process (Sugie 2012). There are more than 100 different ISD models, but almost all are based on the generic ADDIE Model (Kruse 2011). However, according to Molenda (2003), the original reference of the source for the ADDIE Model is invisible and he seems to be satisfied with his conclusion that

“the ADDIE Model is merely a colloquial term used to describe a systematic approach to instructional development, virtually synonymous with instructional systems development (ISD). The label seems not to have a single author, but rather to have evolved informally through oral tradition. There is no original, fully elaborated model, just an umbrella term that refers to a family of models that share a common underlying structure”.(p.34)

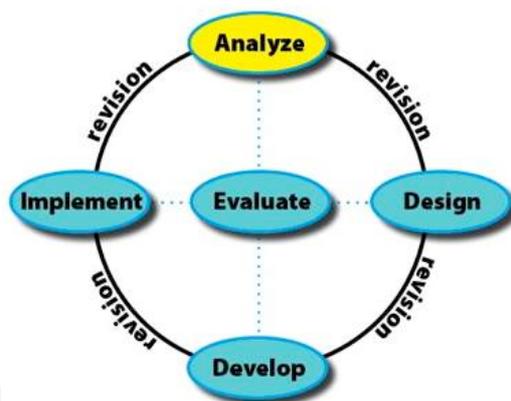


Figure 2.1 The elements of Instructional Design (ADDIE) (Gustafson and Branch 2002)

### 2.3 Dick and Carey Model

Dick and Carey Model (2005) is another well-known and influential instructional design model. Dick, Carey, and Carey (2005) consider this model as a systems approach because components of the system (i.e. teacher, learners, instructional materials and learning environment) are important to the success of students’ learning and integrated to each other. They have an input and an output in each component of the process.

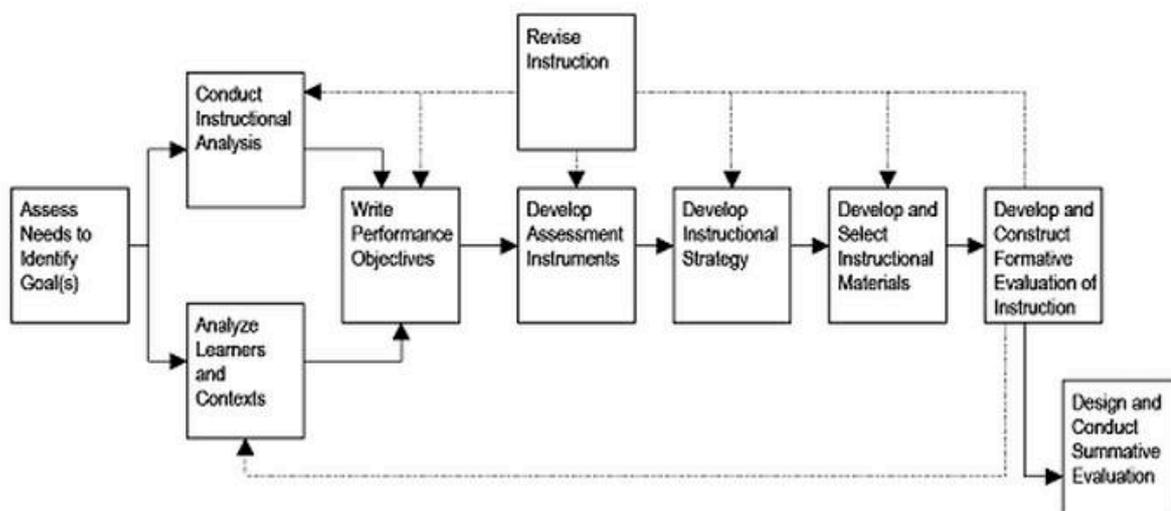


Figure 2.2 Dick and Carey Systems Approach Model (Dick, Carey et al. 2005)

### 2.4 Kemp Model

The Kemp Model, known from the Morrison, Ross and Kemp Model, is a comprehensive instructional design plan. This model describes the holistic approach to instructional design that considers all factors in the environment. The Kemp Model,

which is extremely flexible, focuses on content analysis and appeals to classroom-based instructors. According to Morrison, Ross et al. (2010), this model has nine core elements to instructional design:

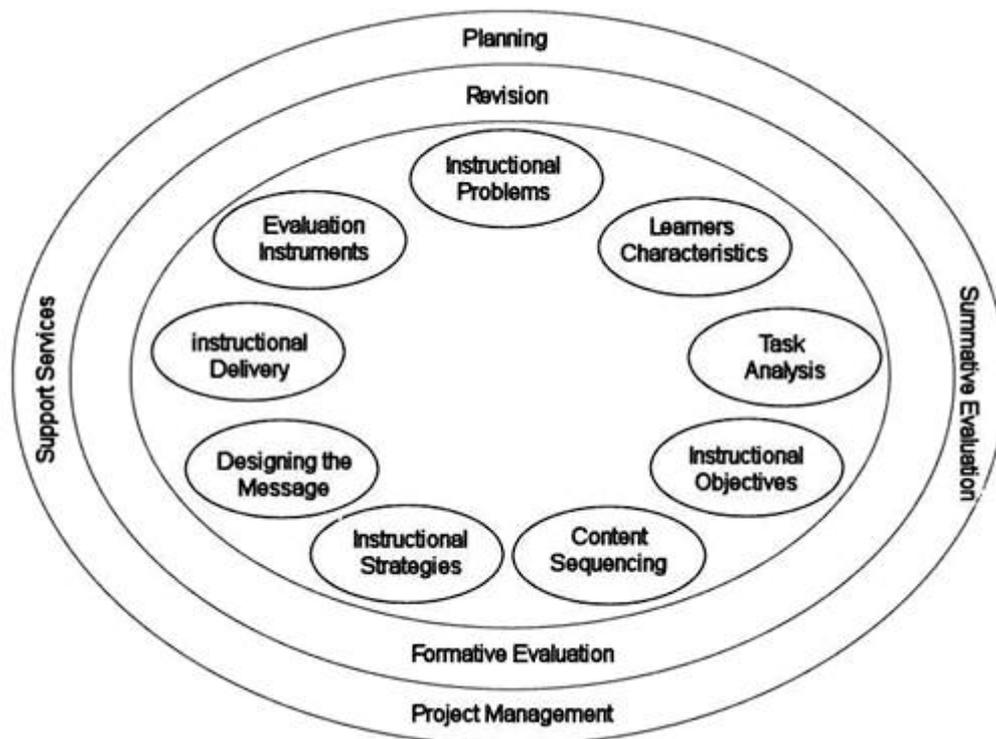


Figure 2.3 The Elements of Kemp Model (Morrison et al., 2004)

### 2.5 SREO Model

The SREO Model or Suppasetsee's Remedial English Online (SREO) was designed by Dr. SuksanSuppasetsee in 2005. It is an Internet based instructional system for teaching Remedial English to first year students at Suranaree University of Technology. According to Suppasetsee (2005), the SREO Model was developed from many instructional designers, such as Dick and Carey, the Kemp Model, Klausmeier and Ripple Model, Gerlach and Ely Model. The SREO Model comprised six major steps and 16 sub-steps.

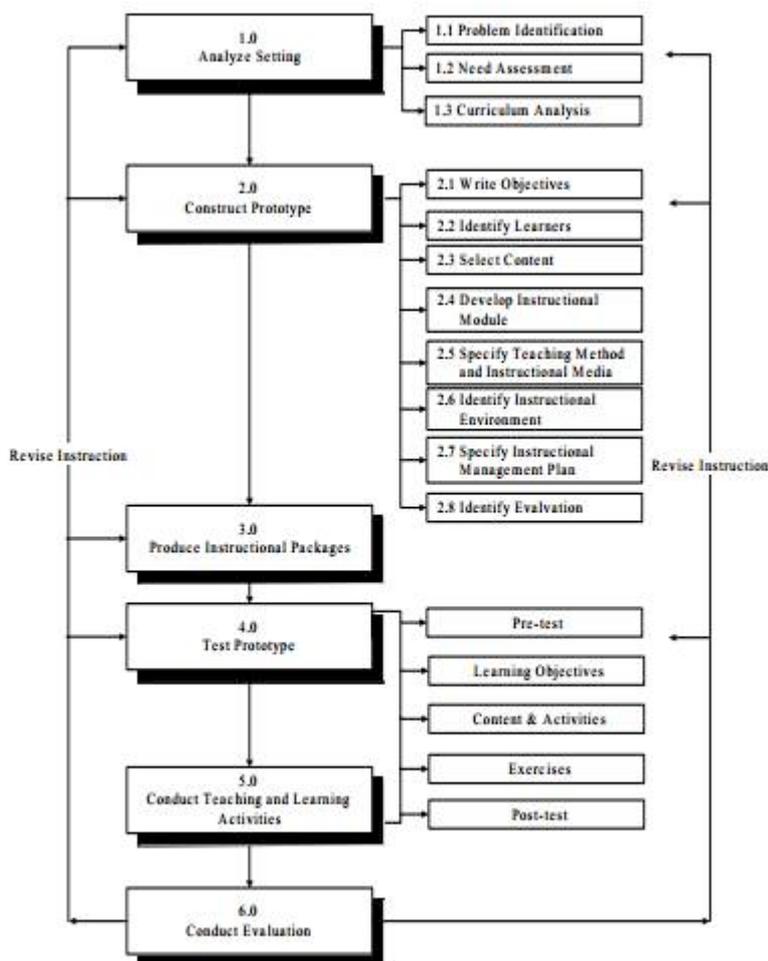


Figure 2.4 SREO Model (Suppatseree, 2005, p.108)

## 2.6 OTIL Model

The OTIL Model is short for the online instructional model for task-based interactive listening for EFL learners. This model is a set of problem-solving procedures which specify six phases and seventeen steps in the process.

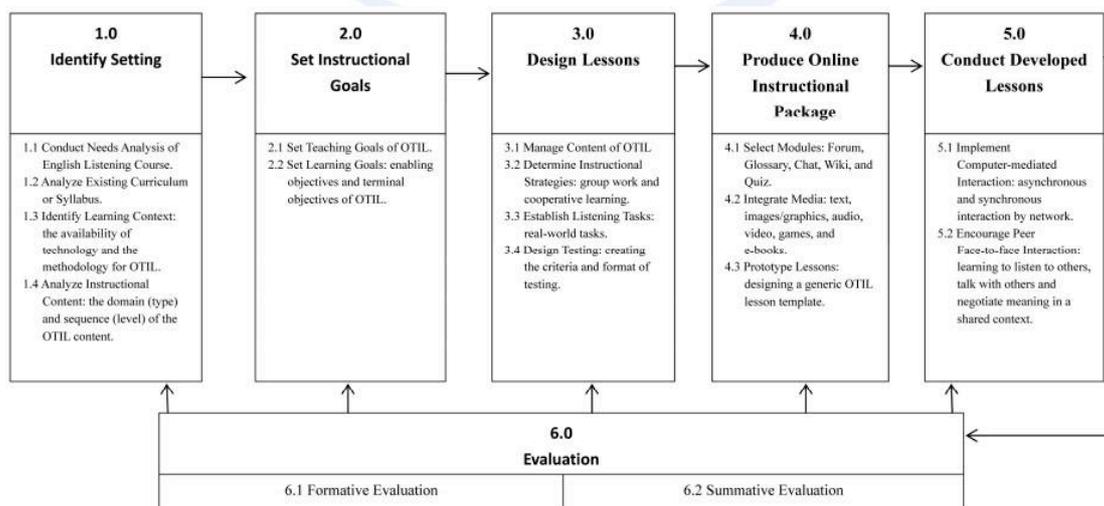


Figure 2.5 The Instructional Model for Online Task-based Interactive Listening (OTIL Model) for EFL Learners (Tian, 2012, p. 153)

The ADDIE Model is a fundamental and simplified instructional systems design model. Most of the instructional design models are based on this generic ADDIE Model (Kruse, 2011). All of five core elements in the ADDIE model are all present in Dick and Carey model since they use different terminology (Gustafson & Branch, 2002). Dick and Carey Model is the systems-oriented instructional design while the Kemp Model is a classroom-based model that considers all factors in the environment. The first three models are based on traditional classrooms whereas SREO and OTIL Models are two online models for language teaching. The SREO Model is an Internet-based instructional design which focuses on interactivity or interaction involving learners with the content. Moreover, the OTIL Model has an online instruction and systematic orientation which applies interactive listening teaching with task-based approach.

Although those models have contributed to the world of instructional design processes, they also have several limitations for designers/ instructors to develop the models. The ADDIE Model is the guideline for the instructional designer to create instruction. The ADDIE and Dick and Carey Model are the two generic models which do not have details of steps for each stage. Consequently, instructional designers have to decide themselves how much detail is needed for each stage. However, the Kemp Model is a classroom-oriented model which can get the output from a few hours of instruction (The Herridge Group 2004). The components of this model are independent of each other. Therefore, with the limits of few or no additional resources to develop instruction, much of the content is in the heads of the facilitator, not in the hands of the learner. In addition, all these three models can be applicable to print-based instruction (The Herridge Group 2004) but the SREO and OTIL Models are the Internet-based instructional systems design (Suppatseree 2005, Tian 2012). However, the last two Internet-based models focused on Remedial English and for listening skills only, respectively; therefore the instructional design model on Facebook based collaborative learning to enhance EFL writing skills was developed in this study.

From the synthesis and limitations, some elements in each model were adapted to construct the model for this study since it is hard for the researcher to find out the appropriate model among those five instructional models to be applied in the present study. Therefore, this study was conducted to develop an appropriate instructional design model on Facebook-based collaborative learning to enhance EFL writing skills for Thai undergraduate students. The orientation of this model is Facebook-based instruction, using comment-posting, discussing with their group mates and teachers.

### **3. Research Methodology**

There are two stages in the process of developing the instructional design model on Facebook based collaborative learning to enhance EFL writing skills. In the first stage, synthesis and analysis of previous instructional design models, the seven-steps to build an instructional model, the framework for building the instructional design model on FBCL, the description of each steps of the FBCL model were carried out to develop the FBCL Model. In the second stage, the evaluation form of the FBCL model to enhance EFL writing skills was sent to the experts in the field of Instructional Design and English Language Teaching for their evaluation.

### 3.1 Development of the FBCL model

During the first stage, five previously described instructional models were analyzed and synthesized to design the instructional design model on Facebook based collaborative learning to enhance EFL students' writing skills. The FBCL model was developed following the seven steps in developing the model by Brahmawong and Vate-U-Lan (2009).

Here are seven steps in developing an instructional design model that this study was based on.

**Step I:** Review of related body of knowledge through documentary research (DR), interviews, field visits, and Internet searches on the R&D Prototype;

**Step II:** Conduct a survey of need assessment on the R&D Prototype (First Survey);

**Step III:** Develop the Conceptual Framework of the R&D Prototype;

**Step IV:** Survey of Experts' Opinions through questionnaires, Delphi Technique, or a focus group (Second Survey);

**Step V:** Develop the first draft of the R&D Prototype making use of the knowledge and information crystallized from Step 1, 2, and 3

**Step VI:** Seek Experts' Verification of the Prototype OR Conduct Developmental Testing of the R&D Prototype: Tryout and Trial Run

**Step VII:** Revise and Finalize the R&D Prototype

(Brahmawong, 1999, cited in Brahmawong & Vate-U-Lan, 2009)

Based on the research purpose and research questions, review of related literature, seven steps to develop the instructional design model on FBCL, it was come up with the research conceptual framework for the study and the seven steps to develop the FBCL Model as follows.

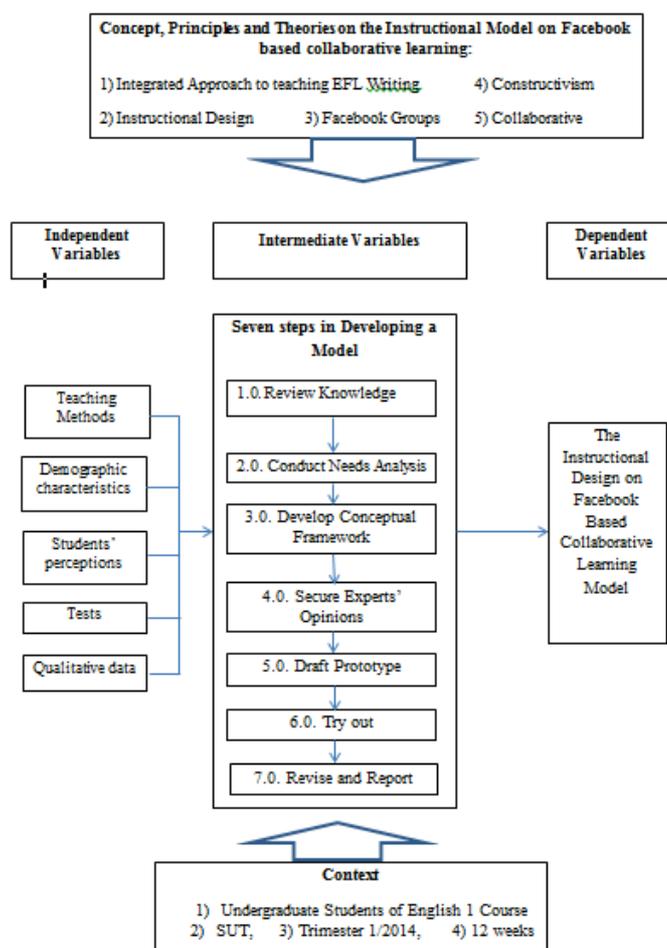


Figure 3.1. Research Conceptual Framework for the FBCL Model

In this research conceptual framework, integrated approaches of teaching writing, constructivism, collaborative learning and writing, instructional design, and Facebook groups were applied in developing the FBCL Model. They are the foundational concepts, theories, principles which can be synthesized and examined to have independent and dependent variables for the study. All teaching methods of writing skills, demographic characteristics, students' perceptions, pretests and posttests, and qualitative data were manipulated under the context and immediate variables that affected the FBCL Model.

### 3.2 Evaluation of the FBCL Model

In the second stage of the study, the evaluation form was designed by the researcher. The form together with the description of the instructional model on Facebook based collaborative learning to enhance EFL writing skills were sent to experts in the field of Instructional Design and English Language Teaching for their evaluation. The form has two parts. The first part uses a five-point scale (5=very strongly agree, 4= strongly agree, 3= agree, 2=slightly agree, and 1=least agree). The second part is an open-ended question about the participants' ideas and comments on the model. Then, the model was revised according to the experts' evaluation and suggestions.

To evaluate the efficiency of the FBCL model, the data obtained from the evaluation form of the FBCL model were calculated for the arithmetic means. The criteria of means will be adopted from Suppasetserree (2005). They are in Table 3.2

**Table 3.2 The Criterion of the Efficiency of the FBCL Model**

<b>Means</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
1.00 – 2.33	The FBCL model is least appropriate
2.34 – 3.67	The FBCL model is appropriate
3.68 – 5.00	The FBCL model is very appropriate

These means indicate that the experts' judgment toward the efficiency of the FBCL model.

## **4. Results**

### **4.1 Results of the Development of an Instructional Design Model on Facebook based Collaborative Learning to enhance EFL Writing skills**

The FBCL Model is an online instructional design for enhancing EFL writing skills. It focuses on learner-centered teaching model which learners can construct their EFL skills by doing and practicing individually and with their group-mates. The FBCL Model was designed and constructed by the researcher after reviewing, analyzing, and synthesizing the five previous versions of instructional design models, namely ADDIE Model, Kemp Model, Dick and Carey Model, SREO Model, and OTIL Model. This FBCL Model was developed with six steps and sixteen sub-steps in the process. The sub-steps of each step of the FBCL Model are described briefly as follows.

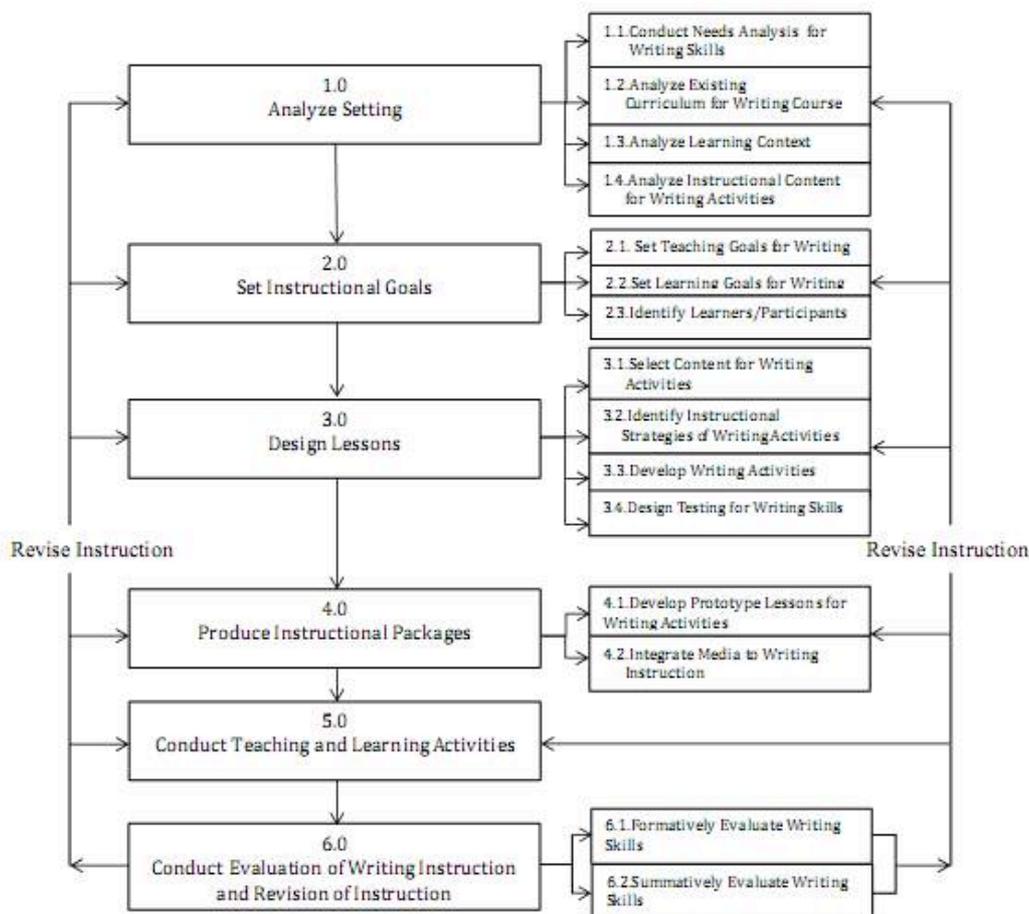


Figure 3.3 The Instructional Design Model on Facebook-Based Collaborative Learning to enhance EFL writing skills (*The FBCL Model*)

### Step 1 Analyze Setting

This is the foundation step for the instructional design model and can provide the crucial information to fulfill all other steps of the whole design process of the instructional model on Facebook based collaborative learning to enhance EFL writing skills.

#### 1.1 Conduct Needs Analysis for Writing Skills

This sub-step is to identify the needs and problems of first year SUT students in EFL writing skills. The analysis focuses on the background knowledge and current situations of the students before they take the Facebook-based collaborative learning lessons and their expectations from the lessons.

#### 1.2 Analyze Existing Curriculum for Writing Course

It is necessary to analyze the existing curriculum or syllabus to know its prescription of the course of study. The instructor should concentrate on the requirements of the curriculum or syllabus to have a suitable complementary course for SUT students to develop their English skills thoroughly.

#### 1.3 Analyze Learning Context

The purpose of this sub-step is to identify the availability of technology and methodology for Facebook-based collaborative learning lessons. For the technical environment, the instructor should be concerned about the minimum requirements of

the technical facilities including computers (with speakers, microphones, headsets), and the Internet. In this supplementary writing course, students can utilize their computer, laptop, tablet, or any mobile devices which can have the Internet browser or Facebook application to participate. For the instructional structure, the instructor should search for the appropriate teaching methodology for teaching and learning with Facebook-based collaborative learning lessons. Besides, the appropriate allocation of time during the course is also paid attention to.

#### 1.4 Analyze Instructional Content for Writing Activities

From the content analysis, the instructor should analyze the type (domain) and level (sequence) of the instructional content, and they are able to state specific lesson objectives, instructional strategies and assessment methods for use in the instructional step which are required in the course (Chyung and Trenas 2009, Punithavathy and Mangai 2011).

### **Step 2.0 Set Instructional Goals**

After various analyses of background information to the development of the instructional model, the instructor needs to identify what the students will be expected to achieve when they complete the instruction. The instructional goals should be clear, concise, thorough, and manageable.

#### 2.1 Set Teaching Goals for Writing

Teaching goals are about what the instructor plans to teach, what the instructor will include in this writing course, and how the instructor will include it.

#### 2.2 Set Learning Goals for Writing

Learning goals are exactly what the instructor expects learners will achieve in the writing course. Bloom's Taxonomy will also be examined to make sure the objectives which will be set at the appropriate level for students' learning context. Learning goals involve enabling objectives and terminal objectives.

#### 2.3 Identify Learners/ Participants

The instructor needs to determine the learners of the course basing on the instructional goals. This sub-step is helpful to know the required skills the learners have to join the writing instruction. The learners should have computer and Internet skills, especially they are Facebook users.

### **Step 3.0 Design Lessons**

In this main step from the findings of prior analyses, the course will be planned in details to construct the writing instruction. The instructor needs to plan how to achieve the instructional goals. And the effectiveness of the writing lesson elements and criteria for designing assessment should be paid attention to.

#### 3.1 Select Content for Writing Activities

Authentic materials found from textbooks, the Internet, or other media are required to support the writing instruction and the learners.

#### 3.2 Identify Instructional Strategies for Writing Activities

Based on learning objectives, the instructor will determine the appropriate instructional strategies to maximize the learning effectiveness. Based on the nature of writing and features of writing instruction, the instructional design model on Facebook-based collaborative learning focuses on online writing activities through

which students work with their peers and individually to learn. It is very important for the instructor to outline the topics and design real world activities which include watching videos, listening to talks, reading newspapers/ short articles, discussing with peers, brainstorming, peer feedback, and revising their writing journals.

### 3.3 Develop Writing Activities

Writing activities should be directly based on learners' target communicative goals or pedagogic tasks with audience, and what students write must be clear, precise and specific: define the length, scope and purpose of the exercises before writing (Hyland, 2003) . The three components of the real world writing activities should embody correctness of form, appropriateness of style, and unity of theme and topic. For the level of first year students of English 1 at SUT, the controlled writing activities with guided questions will be the main ones on the learning process.

### 3.4 Design Testing for Writing Skills

During the design of tests, learning goals and performance measures should be taken into consideration. In this sub-step, the instructor needs to create the format and criteria of testing, considering different types of testing, namely from proficiency to achievement, from norm-referenced to criterion-referenced, from direct to indirect, from discrete-point to integrative, from normative to summative assessment. The pre-test and post-test were designed for the study.

## **Step 4.0 Produce Instructional Package**

In this step, the instructor should decide which technologies and media are utilized to deliver the lessons basing on the analysis of learning context.

### 4.1 Develop Prototype Lessons for Writing Activities

Prototyping is to design the generic Facebook-based collaborative learning lesson template for the instruction which includes all aspects of each lesson. The prototype will be evaluated in a formative way to check whether it serves the instructional goals.

### 4.2 Integrate Media to Writing Instruction

The instructor should manage the media content properly to integrate into the instruction in order to add value and support effectively to the learning activities.

## **Step 5.0 Conduct Teaching and Learning Activities**

In this step, the instructor provides the lessons in an interactive and effective way. Learner-centered learning of controlled writing activities with guided questions and online interaction are mainly focused in the teaching process. Teacher-students and student-student interactions are encouraged in the teaching process as well. Students are expected to write their responses in the discussion board or discuss with their teacher or peers via comments in the Facebook groups synchronously and asynchronously.

## **Step 6.0 Conduct Evaluation and Revision of Writing Instruction**

It is very essential to evaluate the learning processes and the outcomes. Then instruction is not complete until it shows that students can reach the instructional goals. There are two types of evaluation: formative and summative evaluation.

### 6.1 Formative Evaluation of Writing Skills

The results of formative evaluation during the development of the FBCL model can be used to serve the suitability of objectives, contents, learning methods, materials, and delivery of the writing course.

### 6.2 Summative Evaluation of Writing Skills

Summative evaluation will be conducted at the end of the writing instruction. Data from the post-test are collected to evaluate the effectiveness of the instruction.

### 6.3 Revision of Instruction

Revision is a constant process. Whenever instructors find any parts in the learning process that was hard or unclear for students, revision is constantly done to adjust the lessons.

## 4.2 Results from the Evaluation Form of the FBCL model

After the description of FBCL Model, together with the evaluation form were sent to three experts in the field of instructional design and English language teaching, the data were collected, analyzed in descriptive statistics. From Table 3.2, it shows the level of appropriateness of the FBCL Model to enhance EFL writing skills. If the mean scores from the results of the evaluation form from 2.34 to 3.67, it shows that the FBCL Model is appropriate. And if the means from 3.68 to 5.00, it shows that the FBCL Model is very appropriate.

*Table 4.1 Result of Expert's Evaluation on the Development of the Instructional Model on FBCL Model to enhance EFL Writing Skills*

No.	Item	Mean	SD
1	Step 1 Analyze Setting is appropriate	4.67	.577
2	Step 2 Set Instructional Goals is appropriate	4.67	.577
3	Step 3 Design Lessons is appropriate	4.33	.577
4	Step 4 Produce Instructional Packages is appropriate	4.33	.577
5	Step 5 Conduct Teaching and Learning Activities is appropriate	4.33	.577
6	Step 6 Conduct Evaluation and Revision of Writing Instruction is appropriate	4.67	.577
7	The steps in the FBCL model are clear and easy to implement.	4.33	.577
8	Each element of the FBCL model has appropriate connection.	4.67	.577
9	The FBCL model can help student-student interaction.	4.33	.577
10	The FBCL model has sufficient capability of being effective in teaching FBCL lessons to enhance EFL writing skills.	4.33	.577
	<b>Total</b>	<b>4.47</b>	<b>.577</b>

The findings from the evaluation revealed that all three experts agreed and approved on the more general views that each element of the model was very appropriate ( $\bar{x} = 4.47$ ,  $SD=.577$ ), according to the criterion of the efficiency of the FBCL model described on Table 3.1.

Specifically, the items 1, 2, 6, and 8 received higher mean scores ( $x = 4.67$ ,  $SD = .577$ ) whereas the other items received slightly lower mean score values ( $\bar{x} = 4.33$ ,  $SD = .577$ ) including items 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, and 10. The findings of the evaluation indicate that all of three experts agreed that 1) Each step of the FBCL model are appropriate, clear and easy to implement; 2) Each elements of the FBCL model are appropriately connected; 3) The FBCL model can help student-student interaction; and 4) The FBCL model has sufficient capability of being effective in teaching FBCL lessons to enhance EFL writing skills.

## 5. Discussion

Kitchakarn (2012) and Suthiwartnarueput and Wasanasomsithi (2012) mentioned that Thai students have limited abilities in English learning, writing difficulties and need a suitable and effective writing teaching techniques or activities. Together with searching for a way to assist SUT students to practice writing skills in English, and an instructional design model on the Facebook based collaborative language learning to enhance EFL student's writing skills was developed.

The FBCL model was based on the collaborative learning which students can have social interaction to construct knowledge, and a social media site called Facebook which can help students learn how to write collaboratively with their group-mates. Moreover, several instructional design models (such as the ADDIE Model, The Dick and Kerry Model, the Morrison, Ross and Kemp Model, SREO Model, and OTIL Model) had also been extensively reviewed, analyzed, and synthesized. The FBCL Model was developed in compliance with Brahmawong's Seven-Step Model for research and development. Every element in a systematic process of developing the model is essential to successful learning (Dick, et al, 2005). All of the interrelated elements of the FBCL model show their connection in working toward the instructional goal of teaching EFL writing skills.

In Step 4 of the Seven-Step Model, the evaluation form of the FBCL Model was sent to three experts to receive their evaluation and opinions through the questionnaire. Among those items, three other major steps including the Setting Analysis, Instructional Goals Setting, and Evaluation and Revision of Writing Instruction ( $\bar{x} = 4.67$ ,  $SD = .577$ ) are also very appropriate since those are the foundation steps which provide the essential and background information for other steps of the whole process of developing the FBCL Model. Moreover, the elements of the FBCL Model was closely related and connected because it was perhaps the profound analyses and syntheses of previous instructional design models and the fundamental principles of the instructional design on which the FBCL Model was designed and developed.

In the FBCL Model, 6 major steps and 15 sub-steps could be considered impartially complicated for novice instructional designers and teachers. In addition, Facebook based learning activities and collaborative learning have been integrated into writing instruction; this could be challenging to them as the integration has not been widely applied in normal classrooms in Thailand. As a consequence, it might be a demanding task for the teacher to employ this model to their teaching. It might take time for the teacher to understand and implement the model fully. Hence, the other more specific aspects such as designing lessons, producing instructional packages, conducting teaching and learning activities, implementing the steps of the model, promoting

student-student interaction, and being effective in teaching the FBCL lessons to enhance EFL writing skills obtained slightly lower mean scores ( $\bar{x} = 4.67$ ,  $SD = .577$ ) from the experts. Those slightly slower, but still very appropriate, mean scores, might come from the influences of foundation steps which led to these steps. These steps were developed basing on the prior analyses of background and essential information.

The results from the evaluation from three experts on the FBCL Model were consistent with those of many previous studies. The FBCL Model was regarded as a system-oriented model which concentrates on learner-centeredness and online learning like Suppasetseree's (2005) SREO Model, Dennis' (2011) BOLA Package, Tian's (2012) OTIL Model, and Walakanon's WRC Instructional Model (2014). Additionally, all of these instructional models paid more attention to student's autonomous learning, which let students learn online at their own pace and at their preferences. Another strong point of the FBCL Model is the very appropriate connection among the elements of the model as supported by the experts. This logical connection shows the efficiency and satisfaction of the entire model.

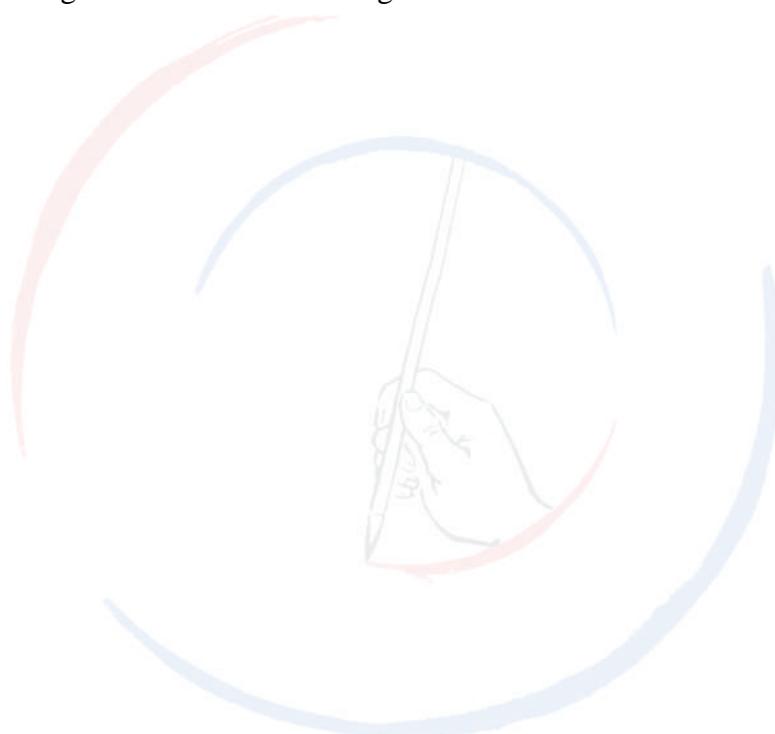
To sum up, the FBCL Model was developed in compliance with the principles of instructional design and Brahmawong's Seven-Step Model for research and development, together with the analyses and syntheses of several instructional models. Every major and sub-steps in designing and developing the FBCL Model was prudently evaluated by the three experts. According to the experts' comments, the model was revised and approved as having appropriate relationship among major and sub-steps of the FBCL model, appropriateness in analyzing setting, instructional goals, and conducting evaluation and revision of writing instructions together with the integration of the utilization of Facebook groups and collaborative writing.

## **6. Implications**

This study also conveys some pedagogical implications. First, in the process of designing the online instructional model to enhance student's collaborative learning, the instructional designer should pay much attention to the existing learning problems of the institutions. After the problems of the institutions have been solved and found, the designer can find the effective instructional interventions. Then, the designers can set up clear objectives to develop the instructional model. Another point that designers need to take into consideration is the availability and compatibility of the instructional platform with the instructional design. It can be known that in the present study, Facebook group was used as the main platform that supports and assists student's collaboration in group writing activity.

## 7. Conclusion

The present study was conducted in order to probably contribute to a significant change for perspectives of EFL teachers and learners, particularly Thai instructors and Thai learners of teaching and learning English writing. This study additionally provides knowledge of an instructional design model for writing instructors on how to use Facebook groups in teaching writing in the classroom. The findings of the study revealed that the FBCL Model was satisfactory and appropriate for teaching EFL writing skills online to undergraduate students. The FBCL Model brings broad changes from classroom based teaching approach in teaching EFL writing skills to online teaching and the interaction between teachers and students. Students could join the course and practice it anytime and anywhere through FBCL. It is hopeful that this study offers the practical solutions for the development of an English course to enhance EFL student's writing skills; and the FBCL Model could serve as the instructional design model for EFL writing teachers and instructional designers.



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***The Impact of Group Work in Improving EFL Medical Students' Academic Performance***

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**Abstract:**

Group work is modern instructional approach in which students learn best when they are actively involved in the process of learning. Researchers report that, regardless of the subject matter, students who work in small groups usually like to learn more of what is taught and keep it longer than when the same content is presented in other instructional techniques. This study aimed at investigating the impact of group work on the students' academic performance. It aimed also at creating healthy climate. Students learn effectively in groups, encourage each other to ask, explain, justify opinions, evaluate and reflect upon their knowledge. It is adopted the descriptive and empirical methods. The data for this study was collected by means of a questionnaire of 20 items distributed to 50 students from medical college at Jazan university in 2014. SPSS was the tool analysis. the analysis reveals that group work proves to be an effective, suitable and interesting technique for both instructors and students.

**Keywords:** Group Work, academic performance, instructional approach, interaction, knowledge, motivation.

### **Introduction:**

The researcher sees that old techniques threaten the objectives of the (TEFL) Teaching English as a Foreign Language in Saudi Arabia (KSA). KSA is the largest country in Western Asia and the second-largest geographically in the Arab world after Algeria and a multicultural semi-continent country of more than 28 million population. It consists of various ethnic groups and tribes living in 13 regions.

Therefore, a great care of dealing with this situation, the investigator hoped that by working in small groups the students might come to know and understand each other better, and consequently be able both to help each other with their writing patterns in the small groups and to communicate more effectively in discussions.

This study is intended to show the development in teaching English as a Foreign Language and to contribute to the student's intellectual, personal and professional growth. It aims at finding effective techniques, which facilitate the process of interaction between the student and the instructor used inside the classroom.

This thesis will suggest techniques and activities through which the Small-Group Work can realize the educational process and achieve its objectives.

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

The main reason that motivates the researcher to design this paper is to find out whether the group work, which is used in TEFL in the KSA and particularly; at Medical college in Jazan University. The investigator observed that, students avoid speaking English (TL) with each other or with their teachers, except in greetings and some fixed expressions. In observation that, interactions which permit or require language use for negotiation of meaning tend not to occur in the classroom.

EFL students in Saudi Arabia at university level are suffering from a severe shortage of their communicative competence. These are clearly reflected when they are communicating and interacting with native speakers through social settings. In addition, students' performance while speaking to their teachers and peers shows that they use little English just for the purpose of greeting and saying some simple expression. In the same regard, students are still having problems in adopting accurate pronunciation patterns.

### **Objectives of the Research:**

This paper tries to explore the learning of medical terminology by Saudi students of medicine at Jazan University. It focuses on using group work as an effective strategy by them in learning medical terminology and to identify the strategies related to success or failure in learning the target. In brief, this study attempts to clarify the strategies used most and least frequently by the learners; comparing the two groups one is an experimented group who have been learned through group work and another group who have been taught through classical method in individuality. The objectives of the research can be summarized in the following.

- ❖ To investigate the strategies of group work which improve the students' achievements and performance.
- ❖ To create a healthy classroom climate group work activities develop EFL medical students' performance.
- ❖ To encourage EFL students to be active participants, and develop their self-learning strategies and techniques by participating in group activities.
- ❖ To enable EFL students to communicate effectively by creating a healthy classroom atmosphere.
- ❖ To promote group work learning by exchanging ideas and discussions among the students themselves, their teachers and others.
- ❖ To create instructional activities for ELL that model successful integrated strategies by using group work.

### **The Significance of the Research:**

Applying Small-group techniques and strategies for enhancing classroom instruction have become a trend. This paper attempts to explore the the impact of group work on the students' academic performance and to approach their interaction in a creative way. Many studies and researches have been carried out investigating the ways in which group work strategy can be successfully integrated along with methods of teaching English in Saudi Arabia.

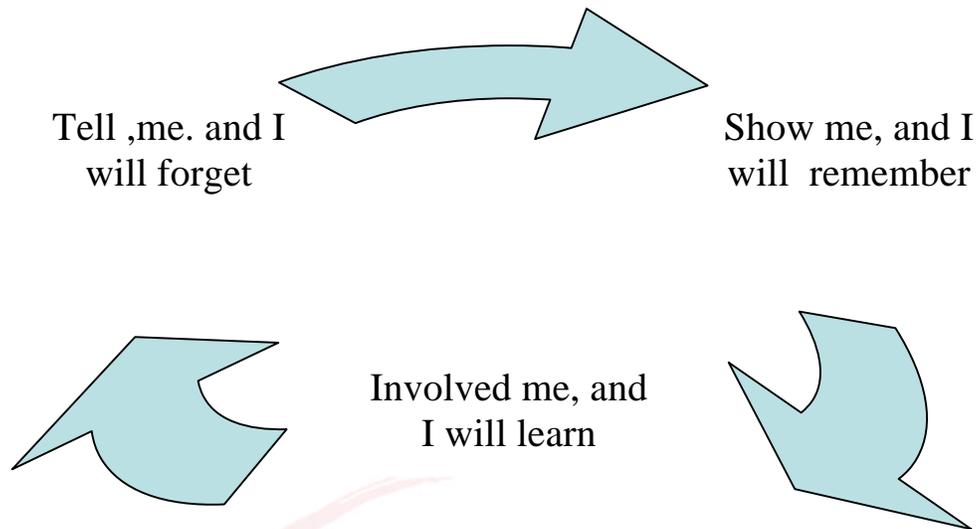
The importance of this study is that using group work strategies in the Saudi classes enhances the students' motivation, engagement and willingness to learn collaboratively through creative thinking in medical problems solving, sharing information and knowledge...etc.

The study attempts to examine the learning opportunities and possibilities of the grouping application may offer for fresh EFL medical students at universities and higher institutions to pave their way to master the language learning terminologies in an effective way. In addition, the researcher hopes that using small-group work may increase their motivation and interest level and turn them into a positive attitude towards learning English language.

### **Literature Review:**

Small-Group Work is a learning activity, which involves a small group of learners working together. The group may work on a single task, or on different parts of larger task. The members of the group often select tasks for group members.

Alhaj (2008:3) Group work or cooperative learning can be characterized in the following Chinese proverb:



### **Definition *Group Work***

- It means a group of people with a complementary skills interact to achieve a common objective.
- A group of people committed to achieve a task, common performance goal and an approach for which they hold themselves collectively responsible.

Group or cooperative work can be defined as a strategy for classroom that is used to increase motivation and retention, to help the students develop a positive image of self and others, to provide a vehicle for critical thinking and problem solving, and to encourage collaborative social skills. (Calderon 1987)

In group work, each student plays a great role in discussion and he participates in his position towards his group goals and achievements.

### **Using collaborative learning for Saudi Students**

- ❖ Most students in the KSA are rather passive or mainly depend upon their teachers in the educational process.
- ❖ They prefer to follow step-by-step instructions from the faculty members rather than to take an active role to explore themselves.
- ❖ From my observation in teaching English as a foreign language at Jazan university, that the academic performance is the main concern for the most students at the university.

### **Characteristics of Group Work:**

The above-mentioned definitions bring out the following characteristics of the group work.

- ❖ Group Work provides community and a social life.
- ❖ It allows students to interact with each other in real life.
- ❖ Group work is a cooperative learning activity.
- ❖ It encourages critical thinking skills and solve problems.
- ❖ Group work is an activity through which solution of a problem is found out by the students themselves.
- ❖ It is against the regular routine of old methods.
- ❖ Small-Group work versus individual work.
- ❖ Small-Group work is better technique in competition than individuals.
- ❖ It is an effective technique for motivating and involving students.
- ❖ In grouping, students feel free because they live in social climate.
- ❖ Students can relate to each other easily and in the same time, both students and the teacher are one side to improve academic performance.
- ❖ Students are independent and responsible for their learning.

### **The Advantages of Small-Group Work:**

An organization student into groups has many advantages. According to Prophy (1998: 140) that the potential learning benefits, it encourages students in the social construction of knowledge:

- ❖ The students get more right answers.
- ❖ They help each other and relate to one another.
- ❖ Be stronger. “Three heads are better than one”
- ❖ Protect each other by interacting with their classmates.
- ❖ It creates friendly a climate by getting good cooperation.
- ❖ Motivational benefits because, it responds directly to the students' relatedness.

In brief, there is better cooperation and more friendliness in group work than individuals. Small-Group work creates a positive social climate, in which, students help one another and they have good relationships with their teacher and with each other.

### **Disadvantages of Small-Group Work:**

- ❖ Students need to go at different speeds
- ❖ Someone may try to take over the group
- ❖ For some people; grouping is not fair!
- ❖ Some students use their own language during group work tasks.
- ❖ One group member may not contribute as much as the others do to do tasks.

Some learners need to go at different speeds while doing the task to fully understand the information. It seems that while working in a group, someone is either slowed down or forced to catch up faster than they would like to. This speed may cause tension to other groups.

### **The Classroom as a Social Environment:**

Psychologists and teacher educators try to bridge the gap educational psychological theory- which emphasis on the individual students- and educational practice which focuses on the interaction between the teacher and a group of students.

It views that the classroom as a complex social system in which the behavior of the teacher and each students is affected by many dynamic social forces or characteristics. There forces include friendships, communication patterns, power and influence; leadership style, peer group norms, attraction, communication, cohesiveness, goals, and even the physical environment. These properties illustrated in (Schmuck and Schmuck (1971:18), Clark and Starr (1976:35), (Smith and Luster man (1979: 209).

### **The Main Factors of Group Success:**

To make Group work learning a success, there must be some kind of "glue" that holds the group together. Group members should feel they need each another, and need to learn and help each other learn, They must have personal interdependence. Those experienced in successful small group work have found five essential components (*i.e.*, the "glue") that are necessary:

- ❖ Positive interdependence
- ❖ Face-to-face interactions
- ❖ Individual accountability and personal responsibility
- ❖ Teamwork and social skills
- ❖ Group processing and activities.

### **Grouping Process and Requirements:**

#### **The Requirements of Group Learning:**

Procedures for using small groups are easy because elaborate planning is not demanded as stated by Grambs; et al (19970:188) set four requirements of 'SGW':

- ❖ No special expenditure of funds, it means that the instructor needs not money to have students sit in circles.
- ❖ No special equipment needed to make groups.
- ❖ No permission, it usual work.
- ❖ No special professor talent. Professors of different abilities can apply this kind of work.

### **Classroom Rules:**

- ❖ Obey all our group rules.
- ❖ Respect and be kind to others.
- ❖ Listen carefully to directions, and obey them.
- ❖ Do not touch others.
- ❖ Work quietly and keep calm we are future Drs.
- ❖ Listen quietly while others are speaking.
- ❖ Raise your hand before you ask a question.
- ❖ Listen quietly while others are speaking.

### **Individual Group Tasks:**

Each group member is expected to...

- ❖ support the work of the team
- ❖ contribute ideas about content and process
- ❖ listen carefully to others
- ❖ build on others' ideas
- ❖ help move the team to its goal
- ❖ keep on task
- ❖ maintain a positive attitude
- ❖ clean up when the activity is completed.

### **Students' Promises:**

- ❖ Get along with each other and with our teachers.
- ❖ Respect each other be friendly to everyone.
- ❖ On task very kind to each other and making fun.
- ❖ Using a quiet voice is a must.
- ❖ Participation. Each partner should be active and share.
- ❖ Stay with your group.

### **Small-Group Work activities:**

The challenge confronting the English Foreign Language teacher becomes one of designing techniques and activities which encourage natural communication practice. Therefore, the EFL teacher should carry out his task effectively in order to cultivate competence in his students in grouping. The teacher should select different techniques and activities that permit students to share their ideas and experiences through acting, discussion, using schedules, contrasting techniques, classification, role-playing, inquiring, dialogue, guessing games and storytelling.

### **Group work discussion:**

The main part of Gastroenterology System is the 'stomach'. In Small Groups of five DISCUSS the statement concerning the 'stomach':

1. Anatomy
2. Functions

3. Diseases
4. Treatments

**Using Schedules:**

Methodology for teaching medical terminology by using a flexible and effective *schedule*. E.g., 3 stages. These stages are:

1. prefixes
  2. suffixes
  3. specializations
- In group of five students are asked to list prefixes within (2-3) proceeding to suffixes from next two weeks. Then introducing roots represent different specialties and specialists. For example by listing words starts with (ab) abdominal abnormal, abstract, abduction...etc.

**Contrasting Techniques:**

In groups Students are asked to show the differences between.

Medical Terminology	Its opposites
Hyperglycaemia	Hypoglycaemia
Hypertension	Hypotension
Hyperthyroidism	Hypothyroidism

**Classification:**

In grouping students can relate to each other and being active classifying medical terms and giving their meanings.

Suffix	Suffix Meaning	Terminology	Meaning of the Medical Term
A ,an	No. not or without	anemia	Deficiency of hemoglobin or number of RBCs
Ectomy-	Surgical removal	nephrectomy	Removal of the kidney
Sub-	Below, under	Subcutaneous	Pertaining to under the skin
Endo-	Within	endoscope	An instrument to visual examine an organ or a cavity

**Research Methodology**

**Research Design**

The researcher will use a qualitative and quantitative standard of research.

**Participants:**

The study was conducted at Medical College, Jazan University in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the second semester in 2014. Fifty EFL students who participated in this study. All of these participants from the students side are native speakers of Arabic language. They are all Saudi. They study at the first year of medical college, level II (MED 164-3prep courses). All students are Saudi and their native language is

Arabic. Their average age is 19. The study was constructed to provide general information about the students' attitudes toward small-group learning. It was also concerned with the identification of their problems in small groups.

### **Research Questions:**

- ❖ To what extent does group work create a positive classroom climate?
- ❖ Are there any significant differences between the control and experimental groups in using group work techniques?
- ❖ To what extent can group work activities develop EFL medical students' performance?
- ❖ To what extent does the group work help students to be well-motivated?
- ❖ To what extent does group work facilitate a democratic learning environment by creating a healthy classroom atmosphere?

### **Assumptions:**

- ❖ Group work creates a healthy classroom atmosphere.
- ❖ There is no significance difference between learning through 'SGW' and learning in individuality.
- ❖ There's a possibility that 'SGW' can develop EFL students' communicative skills and academic performance.
- ❖ Work in grouping may maximize medical students' learning opportunity by interacting with their instructors and peers effectively.
- ❖ Using group work techniques may allow EFL students the choice to actively participate in discussions in a democratic climate.

In order to find persuasive answers to the research questions and find out the practical solutions of the problems and also the practicality of 'SGW', the research will adopt the empirical method in which two kinds of treatments will be involved i.e. control and experimental groups.

### **The Instrument:**

- Questionnaire
- Achievement Test

### **Research Design:**

The researcher will use a qualitative and quantitative standard of research.

### **Discussion:**

This study followed the statistical analysis for overall results of Small-group work 'SGW' that use in teaching and learning English as a foreign language. The presentation will be in the form of tabular charts and graphs, and the analysis will be done in the form of the comparison of the percentage of the two groups of teaching: controlled and experimental of 'SGW' using inside the classroom.

Having a look at the table below, it is found that, students can relate easily to one another more than the teacher and increase their performance.

Sample	Agree%	Neutral%	Disagree %	Mean	Std. Devi
Ss	74.3	15.4	10.3	2.64	0.67
Ss	85.3	8.4	6.3	1.71	0.83
Ss	72.6	9.4	18	1.28	0.79
Ss	87	3.3	12.7	1.69	0.68
General mean				1.66	

Regarding the participants' perception of the using of 'SGW' (question number 3), results showed positive perception of this effectiveness. The participants' mean score on the using group work techniques variable was quite positive, particularly in the posttest. Participants reported that 'SGW' increased their course achievement, performance, and grades according to the following percentage (74.3, 85.3, 72.6 and 87 % respectively). In addition, they reported that 'SGW' activities increased their interaction with the instructor and colleagues.

About the achievement test that was conducted for both groups out of 40 marks. It is found that the experimental group who received their learning through small group techniques and activities, they got ( 35-40) in general percentage of 87.5%. On the other hand, another group got less marks than the first one, they got marks between ( 24-37) in general percentage of 76.25%. From this results, it is clear that learning in small groups has a great effect on the students' motivation and better outcomes.

### Findings and Conclusion

The results of this study indicated that students in general prefer working in small groups, and collaborative strategies. In addition, the students most proficient in medical terminology used various kinds of strategies more often than the less proficient students did. The survey of literature revealed a significant relationship between participation in these experiences and deeper learning as well as the development of learning and collaborative learning skills. Further, collaborative learning appears to increase a sense of community, which has been shown to be closely linked to students' enhancement, motivation, encouragement, satisfaction and retention. It was also found that the effective teaching and learning a language needs innovative and effective learning methods, strategies and techniques through collaborative learning. Also, it is found that the 'SGW' creates a healthy classroom environment providing ample opportunities which enable instructors to make good relation with their students who are motivated to help and relate to one another, and therefore can do more work in a short time. In the light of the findings of this study, the researcher has come to conclusion that:

- ❖ There are significant differences between the control and experimental groups in using 'SGW' techniques.
- ❖ 'SGW' has a great influence on the students' achievements.
- ❖ 'SGW' is interesting for both teachers and their students. Students in grouping perform better.
- ❖ Students relate to each other and help one another in the Group Work
- ❖ 'SGW' is an effective interaction and suitable technique.

- ❖ There is more participation and production from the students in 'SGW' activities if the teacher speaks less than them.
- ❖ Students are more active and motivated in group work than in individual learning.

Group work learning is a feature of positive interpersonal climate in the classroom and learning community norms of collaboration. “*Students are likely to experience enhanced intrinsic motivation when they participate in learning activities that allow them to interact with their classmates.*” (Brohpy1998:140). The students in group work have influences with one another and in the same time; with their teacher in an open communication. These different group processes can create a positive atmosphere. (Schmuck and Schmuck (1971:18)

It is found that the Small-Group Work creates a positive climate and healthy classroom environment in which the students are very active and more motivated by helping and relating to one another. It is hoped that teachers make benefits of this research and arrange their classes setting and allow their students to sit face to face so as to increase their motivation and interests and help each other.

#### **Implication for Further Research and Development:**

There is much that is good about small-group work 'SGW' and much that still students can learn more effectively from using such kind of learning. As this study is limited in its nature many possibilities are open for further research. There is need for further studies with different age groups, and with a larger population in other colleges and institutions in Saudi Arabia.

#### **Acknowledgements:**

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## Appendices:

### Appendix A Students' Questionnaire

Dear Student please answer the following questions by ticking on only one answer.

- SA      AO      SDO      DO      NSO      O
1. I can communicate with my friends easily through Group Work.
- SA      AO      SDO      DO      NSO      O
2. Group Work enhances my communicative skills.
- SA      AO      SDO      DO      NSO      O
3. Group work activities help me to do better inside the classroom.
- SA      AO      SDO      DO      NSO      O
4. English is a difficult subject and it needs Group Work to be understood.
- SA      AO      SDO      DO      NSO      O
5. I do not like to speak English with my friends.
- SA      AO      SDO      DO      NSO      O
6. It is better for me to do all language activities in groups.
- SA      AO      SDO      DO      NSO      O
7. I feel more confident in Group Work.
- SA      AO      SDO      DO      NSO      O
8. I would prefer if the lecturer used Group Work.
- SA      AO      SDO      DO      NSO      O
9. Group Work learning offers opportunity for me.
- SA      AO      SDO      DO      NSO      O
10. I am able to interact easily with my friends and my teacher during Group Work.
- SA      AO      SDO      DO      NSO      O
11. I feel the need to work in grouping with other students in class.
- SA      AO      SDO      DO      NSO      O
12. Group Work learning improves my performance.
- SA      AO      SDO      DO      NSO      O
13. I can usually get a lot more done in a shorter time through Group Work.
- SA      AO      SDO      DO      NSO      O
14. It is good to help each other doing exercises except during the test.
- SA      AO      SDO      DO      NSO      O
15. I'm able to learn more and understand things better through Group Work.
- SA      AO      SDO      DO      NSO      O
16. Group Work makes assignment more fun.
- SA      AO      SDO      DO      NSO      O
17. I can solve a problem in a faster and easier way collaborating with friends.
- SA      AO      SDO      DO      NSO      O
18. To me "three heads are better than one" is definitely true.
- SA      AO      SDO      DO      NSO      O
19. We can relate to each other more than the teacher in grouping.
- SA      AO      SDO      DO      NSO      O
20. I really like working in groups.
- SA      AO      SDO      DO      NSO      O

**Appendix B**  
**Medical Achievement Test**

**Q.1. Choose the correct answer:**

1. Femur is a .....  
a. backbone      b. wrist      c. thigh bone      d. tail bone
2. .... is a sign of high blood sugar.  
a. Hypertension      b. Polyuria      c. Hyperglycemia      d. Diarrhea
3. ....means chronic.  
a. last long time      b. short time      c. unlimited time      d. right now
4. ....treats disorders of childhood.  
a. Urologist      b. Pediatrician      c. Obstetrician      d. Hematologist

**Q.2. Read the case and answer the questions**

Mr. Zak suffers from *dyspepsia* and sharp abdominal pain. A recent episode of *hematemesis* has left him very weak and anemic. *Gastroscopy* and an upper GI series with *barium* revealed the presence of large *ulcer*. Mr. Zak will be admitted to hospital and scheduled for partial *gastrectomy*.

1. Which specialist can treat Mr. Zak?.....
2. Write the meaning of the underline words.  
a) .....  
b) .....  
c) .....

**Q.3. Write the meanings to the following terms:**

1. Arteriosclerosis:.....
2. Dysmenorrheal: .....
3. Anemia: .....
4. Rectocele .....

**Q.4. Complete the sentences with the words in the box:**

angina\ gynecology \ vasculitis \ hematemesis\ oncology

1. Vomiting blood.....
2. .... is an inflammation of blood vessels.
3. The study of women diseases is .....
4. Sharp pain in the chest is .....

**Q.5. Match the terms in (A) with their meanings in (B):**

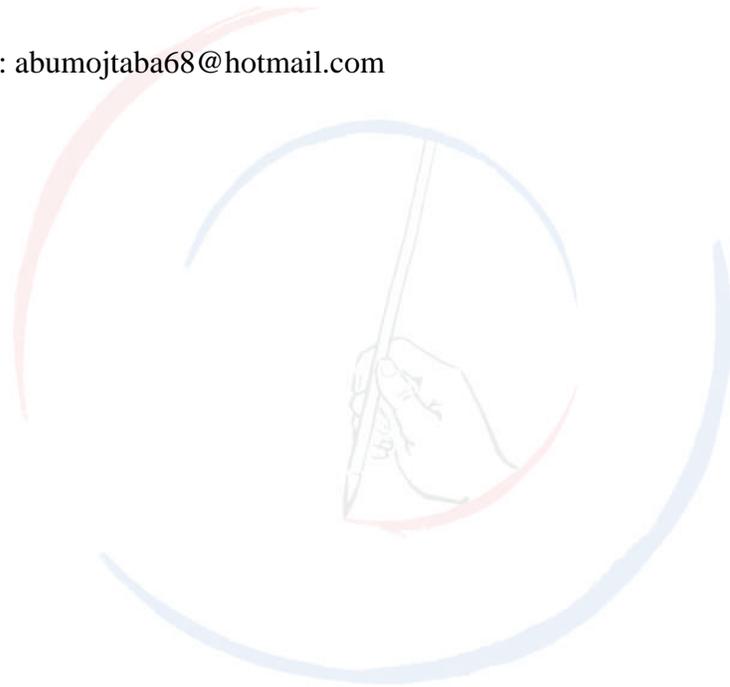
- | (A)                | (B)  |
|--------------------|--|
| 1. Lymphadenopathy | a. Inflammation of the appendix.                               |
| 2. Anticoagulant   | b. Use of kidney machine to filter blood from waste materials. |
| 3. Hemodialysis    | c. Disease of lymph glands                                     |
| 4. Appendicitis    | d. drugs that works against clotting.                          |

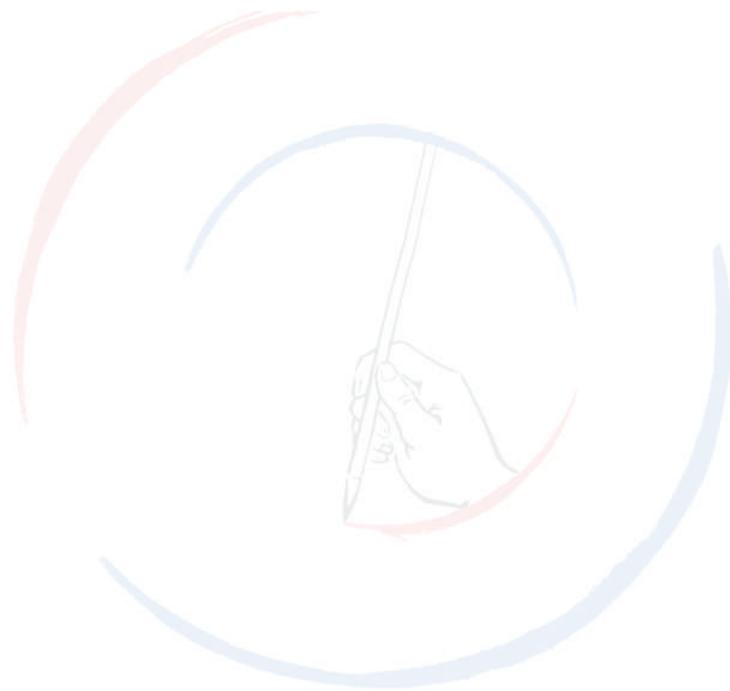
Terms (A)	1	2	3	4
Meanings(B)				

End of the Questions

Good Luck

Contact email: abumojtaba68@hotmail.com





*The Effectiveness of Noor Method  
In Teaching and Learning The Phrase Number*

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**Abstract**

The study was conducted to test the effectiveness of Noor Methods in teaching and learning the phrase count (مركب عددي). The phrase count (مركب عددي) is one of the most complex grammatical topic and difficult to learn in Arabic language. This is because the phrase countr (مركب عددي) has ten skills related with it. Starting with matching the skills between the numbers (أرقام) and the counting (أعداد), matching between the counting (عدد) and the words that is counted (معدود) until to the explanation of the various flexibility (إعراب). The diversity of the phrase forms, make the students confused to understand their teachers' explanation, and also not sure how to use the methods of phrase formation in constructing the expression through writing and speaking. The study used two groups, the experimental and the control groups. The participants were randomly selected to sit for pre-test and post-test. The experimental group used Noor Method while the control group used traditional method which usually used by their lecturers. The study indicated of significant mean differences in achievements between the expereimental group and the control group in the post-test. This further support the use of Noor Method which make participants more interested in learning Arabic Language grammar which were considered difficult before, an further accepting that Noor Method as a very systematic, neat and complete method of stuyding Arabic grammar.

**Keywords:** Phrase Count, Arabic Grammar, Noor Method, Noor Grafic, Noor Card.

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## **Introduction**

The structure of the Arabic language is very much different from the structure of the Malay language, especially the phrase count. This is because the phrase count in the Malay language has only one form, whereas phrase count in Arabic language has various composite forms. There are many grammatical terms involved in the construction of correct and accurate phrase count. Hence this study was conducted to see the mastery of Malay students in mastering the phrase count in Arabic language.

This study was not meant to compare between languages. This study did not look at the skills of counting or calculating, as in mathematics. This study only focuses on building up the skills phrase count, involving only the basic skills in mathematics, that is, trying to relate numbers and counting without involving mathematical operations. As a teacher who has been teaching Arabic language and teach teachers how to teach Arabic language effectively to pupils in primary and secondary school level, hence exposed the researcher to the real cause of the problems faced by teachers and students in teaching and learning phrase count in Arabic language.

## **Problem Statement**

Phrase count involves many grammatical terms that must be well understood so that it can be applied efficiently. The formation of correct phrase count requires efficiency using grammatical terms in which Arabic language has many skills which need to be appreciated. This study does not take this as a problem as in previous studies that analyze the wrong use of the phrase count at various stages. Rather, we look at it as skills that need to be mastered in stages with correct and accurate usage.

Many Arabic grammatical errors analysis were conducted, and they found out that, the phrase count is among the most frequent mistakes made among students at various levels of education, especially to users whose Arabic language are not their own native languages. Those studies have proposed improvements to the problems associated with phrase count so that these problems can be solved as quickly as possible. There were many attempts had been tried to overcome these problems. Word matching skills with features that match a wide range of Arabic language structure is one of the example tried.

This is because there exist a form of matching words in Arabic but not in Malay language. This is an aspect that is rather odd in view of the Malay language speakers. Moreover, there are various forms of the match in the phrase count which is considered to be very complex and difficult to master it well. The researcher feels compelled to contribute in the Arab world language education by submitting Noor Method as a way to help resolve these problems related to this phrase count. This study was conducted to see the effect of the method of teaching and learning phrases in Arabic number.

## Objective Of The Study

The objective of this study is to identify:

1. The effectiveness of Noor Method based on Noor Graphics in the teaching and learning phrase count.
2. How are the process and procedure of using Noor Method in the teaching and learning phrase count becomes effective.

## Literature Review

Many of the grammatical errors frequently occurred among students in secondary schools. This is based on analysis with regard to grammatical mistake from various aspects undertaken in various stages, whether at the secondary levels or at higher learning institution (Ab. Halim, 2002; Bakhit, 1998; Hanizam, 2005; Ibrahim; 1989; Ismail Young, 1999; Norasmazura, 2005; Sohair, 1990; Wan Ahmad, 1994; Zainol, 2003; Zarima, 2005)

Among the most common grammatical errors made by students are genders and countings, whether they are associated with signs of flexion for gender and counting or those related to the formation of phrases and sentences related to aspects of gender equality and the counting or constrating gender aspects and different counting as in phrase counting ( Abdul Hadi, 1998; Abd. Ghani, 1999; Bakhit, 1998; achievement, 2005; Sohair, 1990; Wan Ahmad, 1994; Zarima, 2005).

Language error better known as *al-Lahn* is a language error in terms of construction of words, word patterns and in terms of flexion (Hasan Awn, 1952). Ishak Mohd Rejab (1993) found numerous problems related to the teaching of Arabic language to teachers, pupils and the use of textbooks. Mustafa Che Omar (1995) found various problems related to the Arabic language in his study. Ariffin (1998) in his study that focused on detecting errors in the use of adjectives among the students, and he found that no student has achieved very good command of grammar and language skills.

Mohamed Awang (1996) made a survey on Arabic teacher from several schools, and found that there were some problems mainly related to teaching grammar of Phrase counting. Ab. Halim (2002) outlines the teacher's own acknowledgment of the source language mistakes made by students, among them, (a) negative attitude towards the subject of the Arabic language, (b) learning strategies are less effective, (c) less studying, (d) lazy, (e) learning lightly, (f) embarrassed for trying, (g) low self-esteem, (h) lack of confidence, (i) is quieter and less participate in learning activities. Ra'uf Syalabi (1983) found that mastery of the Arabic language is still too weak in terms of teaching and control at the tertiary level.

Students do not truly understand the rules of use of the word in terms of gender; masculine and feminine (التذكير والتأنيث), general and specific (التعريف والتذكير) counting of singular, dual and plural (المفرد والمثنى والجمع) and flexion (الإعراب). Abu Maghli (1986) pointed out that most of the factors that caused students to flee from *qawai'd* is because teachers are not proficient enough in the use of effective approaches in conveying the understanding of phrase counts to students.

This statement concludes that, the causes of the failure of teachers in selecting or providing an effective approach in their teaching.

Nasif and Mokhtar (1991) suggested the use of cards for teaching Arabic grammar structure. Jasir (2006) considered his book, *al-Mafatih al-Zahabiyyah fi al-Nahw wa al-I'rab wa Awzan al-Sarf* (المفاتيح الذهبية في النحو والإعراب وأوزان الصرف) as the key to undo all the grammatical problems. Grammar dictionary of terms is provided for easy reference. He used concept maps and tables to explain the category signs of flexion. Explanation related to *al-tatabuq* still used long sentences. Book written by al-Mahjari (2002) *al-Lughah al-Jamiah al-Arabiyyah Mutatallabat* (اللغة العربية متطلبات الجامعة), make use of functional graphic extensively in variety of roles.

This study used the approach proposed by Tai'mah (1986) who had divided the teaching of Arabic Language into two stages:

1. Stage of Arabic Language acceptance (مستوى استقبال اللغة العربية)
2. Stage of Arabic language task (توظيف اللغة العربية)

The first stage is the stage of introducing the language learned in terms of its pronunciation and form of writing. The second stage is the formation stage that is to understand the various elements in building phrases and sentences in Arabic language with different of language styles (Tai'mah, 1986)

From the analysis of student errors in the use of phrase counting either in speech or in writing, this study categorizes the error ratio to form the skills to be mastered gradually by students (Al-Yaari, 2013). This study divides the skills to build phrase counting to ten levels of skills to be learned gradually. Every level of skills need to be mastered completely before moving on to the next skill level of the next phrase. Method of developing varied phrase count, is arranged in stages based on the skills which need to be masterd first by students.

This arrangement is based on the basic skills to advanced skills. These skills are trying to solve the problems related to counts and word count before moving to the next skills related to phrase count. This study is based on the 10 forms of word matching in phrase count. There are various methods of phrase count being arranged in stages, which are based on the skills being mastered by students. This arrangement is made from simple skills to more complex skills. These skills are trying to solve the problems related to the count themselves before moving to the skills related to the formation of phrase count. Study focused on the effects of Noor Method in analysing the problems associated with phrase count, hence the objective of the research are related to the use of Noor Methods in problem solving related to the following skills. There are ten matching forms between words in phrase count as shown below:

1. Matching between single numbers, compound numbers and counting.
2. Matching between the numbers and counting in terms of masculine and feminine.
3. Matching between numbers and counting in terms of definite and indefinite noun.
4. Matching between numbers and counting in term of static and non-static.
5. Matches between numbers and counting in terms of casus - nominative, accusative and genitive.
6. Matching between counting and the word being counted in the number it self.

7. Matching between counting and the word being counted in term of word arrangement made in front and followed by words in phrase counting.
8. Matching counting and words being counted with the same match based on masculine and feminine.
9. Matching counting with word being counted with opposite match in term of masculine and feminine.
10. Matching the counted word and flexi word.

وجوه المطابقة للمركب العددي :

- (1) المطابقة بين الرقم المفرد والعدد المفرد ، نحو : ( 1 : واحد )  
والمطابقة بين الرقم المركب والعدد المركب ، نحو :  
• ( 13 : ثلاثة عشر ) : من اليمين إلى اليسار  
• ( 24 : أربعة وعشرون ) : من اليمين إلى اليسار  
• ( 136 : مائة وستة وثلاثون ) : ابتداءً باليسار ثم من اليمين إلى اليسار  
• ( 4768 : أربعة آلاف وسبع مائة وثمانية وستون ) : ابتداءً من اليسار إلى اليمين ثم من اليمين إلى اليسار
- (2) المطابقة بين الرقم وجنس العدد (مذكر ومؤنث) ، نحو : ( 1 : واحد ، واحدة )
- (3) المطابقة بين الرقم وتعيين العدد (نكرة ومعرفة) ، نحو : ( 1 : واحد ، الواحد )
- (4) المطابقة بين الرقم والعدد المبني (مبني على الفتح) ، نحو : ( 11 : أحد عشر ) .
- (5) المطابقة بين الرقم والعدد المعرب (مرفوع ومنصوب ومجرور) ، نحو : ( 1 : واحد ، واحدًا ، واحدٍ ، الواحدُ ، الواحدِ ، الواحدِ ، الواحدِ ، ثلاثمائة ، ثلاثمائة ، ثلاثمائة )
- (6) المطابقة بين العدد والمعدود في الرقم نفسه (مرفوع ومنصوب ومجرور وصفة و مضاف إليه و تمييز ومفرد ومثنى وجمع) ، نحو : ستمائة ، ثلاثة آلاف ، خمسة وستون ألفا ، سبع مائة ألف .
- (7) المطابقة بين العدد والمعدود في التقديم والتأخير ، نحو ( كتاب واحد ) ، ( أربعة كتب ) .
- (8) المطابقة بين العدد والمعدود مطابقة موافقة بين التذكير والتأنيث ، نحو : ( كتاب واحد ، مسطرة واحدة )
- (9) المطابقة بين العدد والمعدود مطابقة مخالفة بين التذكير والتأنيث ، نحو : ( ثلاثة كتب ، ثلاث مساطر )
- (10) المطابقة بين العدد والمعدود وموقع الإعراب وعلامته (مرفوع ومنصوب ومجرور وصفة ومضاف إليه وتمييز ومفرد ومثنى وجمع)

Of all the skills listed above, there are 30 grammatical terms that are directly involved with the phrase counting. This explains that, the phrase counting forms the largest count in terms of grammar usage compared to other types of other phrases. Therefore, the process of teaching and learning processes of phrase count make the teachers not happy and thus make students difficult to understand it effectively.

With this, the source of many mistakes made by respondents were identified. Skills in building up phrase count mean things that students must know and able to understand and use the phrase count correctly and precisely. Each of these skills are not available in phrase count in Malay language. As long as students cannot master a skill, teachers can not move up to the next skill. This is to avoid the teachers from teaching all the skills in a lesson which make students more confusing and make teachers more difficult to continue the lesson. Noor Method try to reduce the use of grammatical terms and avoid confusion among the student.

### Noor Method

The essence of this study is the use of methods in the teaching and learning of phrase count. Noor Method has been proven effective in matching skills formation (المطابقة) words in Arabic language. However, its use specifically in teaching Phrase count has not been as thoroughly tested. Therefore, this study attempts to detect the effects of

the use of methods in the teaching and learning of phrase count that encompasses all aspects of basic skills related to the phrase count up to the most complex skills such as analyzing flexion Phrase count. Phrase matching number have various forms involving the use of various grammatical terms that can cause confusion. With the use of Noor Method, they will reduce the use of these terms in the description of the teacher. But still can be understood by students and students still have the opportunity to master the phrase count and the results were satisfactory.

Based on the experience of supervising teachers teaching the Arabic language in primary and secondary school level, researchers have gained exposure to the real cause of the problems faced by teachers and students in teaching and learning phrases in Arabic number. Therefore, the researcher prefers to think of ways to help teachers in the classroom in order to perform their duties effectively. With a sense of wanting to help, researchers make a trial of using the method in the teaching and learning of phrase count.

Noor Method is a method of teaching and learning Arabic grammar using Noor Graphic as a fundamental and extend to the use of the Noor Card. Noor Method focuses more on the usage of Noor Graphic and Noor Card in the teaching and learning of Arabic grammar .

### Skills in Matching Between Numbers and Counting

90 -10	19 -11	9 1	900 100	9000 1000
عشرة/عشر	أحد عشر/ إحدى عشرة	واحد/واحدة	مائة	ألف
عشرون/ عشرين	اثنا عشر/ اثنتا عشرة	اثنان/ اثنتان	مئتان/ مئتين	ألفان/ ألفين
ثلاثون/ ثلاثين	ثلاثة عشر/ ثلاث عشرة	ثلاثة/ ثلاث	ثلاثمائة	ثلاثة آلاف
أربعون/ أربعين	أربعة عشر/ أربع عشرة	أربعة/ أربع	أربعمائة	أربعة آلاف
خمسون/ خمسين	خمس عشرة/ خمس عشرة	خمس/ خمسة	خمسمائة	خمس آلاف
ستون/ ستين	ستة عشر/ ست عشرة	ستة/ ست	ستمائة	ستة آلاف
سبعون/ سبعين	سبعة عشر/ سبع عشرة	سبعة/ سبع	سبعمائة	سبعة آلاف
ثمانون/ ثمانين	ثمانية عشر/ ثمان عشرة	ثمانية/ ثمان	ثمانمائة	ثمانية آلاف
تسعون/ تسعين	تسعة عشر/ تسع عشرة	تسعة/ تسع	تسعمائة	تسعة آلاف

Table 1: Counting 1 – 9999 Following Order of Pronunciation الأعداد

The table numbers used in Noor Method contain numbers arranged according to the first and the last. The purpose of this arrangement is to familiarize respondents with the form of the number being said. The digit on the right is the number to be read first. So with the rest of the number, right digit to the left digit.

From the Noor Graph being used, some of the content are extracted in the form of Noor Card. Next Noor Card was used for subsequent exercises so that respondents could actually used the phrase counting skills correctly and accurately in speaking and writing them without being burdened with the grammatical terms which confused them. However, respondents still abled to understand them and used them correctly and accurately as required. Here are a number of Noor Cards being used. This arrangement allows the respondents to use by themselves directly without requesting any lengthy explanation from the teacher .

1. Number compiled using Noor Card to facilitate respondents choose the right card for the right to build phrase count

واحدة	واحد	واحدة	واحدًا	واحدة	واحد
اثنتين	اثنين	اثنتين	اثنين	اثنتان	اثنان

Figure 1: Noor Card: Count 1 & 2: Uncountable Noun

الواحدة	الواحد	الواحدة	الواحد	الواحدة	الواحد
الاثنتين	الاثنين	الاثنتين	الاثنين	الاثنتان	اثنان

Figure 2: Noor Card: Count 1 & 2: Countable Noun

					-
					-
ثلاثة	ثلاث	ثلاثة	ثلاث	ثلاثة	ثلاث

Figure 3: Noor Card: Count 3 – 10

إحدى عشرة	أحد عشر
اثنتا عشرة	اثنا عشر
ثلاثة عشر	ثلاث عشرة

Figure 4: Noor Card: Count 11 – 19

واحدة	واحد	واحدة	واحدًا	واحدة	واحد
اثنتين	اثنين	اثنتين	اثنين	اثنتان	اثنان
ثلاثة	ثلاث	ثلاثة	ثلاثًا	ثلاثة	ثلاث

Figure 5: Noor Card: Count 21 – 99

	عشرين		عشرين		عشرون

Figure 6: Noor Card: Count 20 – 90

مائة		مائة		مائة	
مئتي		مئتي		مئتا	
مائة	ثلاث	مائة	ثلاث	مائة	ثلاث

Figure 7: Noor Card: Count 100 – 900

1. Establishing phrase count by combining the number and the words counted

واحدة	واحد
اثنان	اثنان

طالبة	طالب
طالبتان	طالبان

Figure 8: Noor Card: Counting made later and Same Matching

طالبات	طلاب

-	-
-	-
ثلاثة	ثلاث

Figure 9: Noor Card: Counting Made Earlier and Not Equal Matching

2. Flexion analysis phrase count.

كسرة	كسرة
الياء	الياء
كسرة	الياء/كسرة

فتحة	فتحة
الياء	الياء
كسرة	الياء/فتحة

ضمة	ضمة
الألف	الألف
ضمة	الواو/ضمة

Figure 10: Noor Card: Flexi Sign For Nouns

## Methodology

This study used the experimental design. Pre-tests and post tests were given to both the experiment groups and control groups. Data were then collected and analysed. Respondents were randomly selected from semester 1 students of various disciplines of studies. All of them had studied Arabic language at both primary and secondary schools and had obtained credit in Arabic language in Malaysian Certificate of Education examination. This shows that they are good students academically at secondary school level. Experimental group studying the relevant phrase number using materials that are built based on the concept of Noor Method. While the control group studying relevant phrase count using the traditional materials, which are available in language laboratory of any secondary school for teaching Arabic language.

The experimental group studied the phrase count using Noor Method and related supporting materials. While the control group studied the phrase count using material technology developed by their lecturers without using Noor Method. Experimental groups are also studying the relevant phrase count using materials that are built on the concept of Noor Method. While the control group studying related phrases based on the number of traditional materials, which can be obtained from the library. Data from of pre and post tests of both groups compared to the effect of using Noor Method and the effect of using traditional methods and the usual technological materials.

Pre and post test items contained verses that had numbers and students were asked to convert each number assigned to complete the word by providing accurate spelling and correct signs (*dhammah, fathah and kasrah*) and coincide with all the elements associated with it according to its place in the perfect verse. Any error made would result in loss of marks for each number provided. Sign is part of the spelling words.

Therefore, every word must be properly ascertained from the point of spelling and the sign. Although only one, on one sign only, one mark would be deducted. This is because the emphasis was on the signs and correct spelling

### Data Analysis

Given that, many mistakes made by students who had long since left the Arabic language lessons at schools, then a systematic review methods should be given to them. Most of the mistakes made were due to lack of attention given to the pronunciation forms, spelling along with the *signs* (*dhammah, kasrah and fathah*). Most of the respondents ignored the flexion position and flexion *sign* for a number. They only focus on bringing the correct count from the numbers assigned.

It is a wrong approach because in Arabic language every letter and *signs* has its own influence on the meaning of ayats. Errors made by respondents in this sixth skill is the least frequent made by students. However, confusions of the respondents mainly came from the counting of numbers. They confused how to begin the counting, whether begin counting from right to left or from left to right. Based on the many mistakes made by students because they had long left the Arabic language study at school level, than the method of systematic review should be given to them.

Table 2: Pre-test Scores for Control and the Experimental Group

Groups	N	Mean	t	df	P
Control	30	34.47	1.415	58	.162
Experiment	30	32.73			

Table 2 above shows the mean scores of pre-test for control group with  $n = 30$ , equal to 34.47 while the mean score of pre-test of experimental group ( $n = 30$ ) equal to 32.73. Both groups are considered equivalent in terms of their performance in their pre-test scores where there is no significant difference statistically between the control and the experimental group with  $t_{(58)} = 1.415$ ,  $p > 0.05$ .

Table 3: Post-test Scores For Control and the Experimental Group

Group	N	Mean	t	df	P
Control	30	57.87	-33.516	58	.000
Experiment	30	86.03			

Table 3 above shows the mean score post-test for control group ( $n = 30$ ) was 57.87 while the mean score post-test of experimental group ( $n = 30$ ) was 86.03. Both groups were equivalent terms of their achievement in the pre-test, but was significantly different statistically in the post-test.

This shows that, the performance of the experimental group who had used Noor Method in the teaching and learning of phrase count scored higher than the control group in post-test using traditional methods. There is a significant difference statistically with  $t(58) = -33.52, p < 0.01$

Table 4: Pre-Test and Post-test Scores of the Control Groups

<b>Tests</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>P</b>
Pre-Test	30	34.47	20.434	58	.000
Post-Test	30	57.87			

Table 4 above shows the mean scores obtained by the control group for pre and post-test. The mean score of pre-test (  $n = 30$  ) was 34.47 while the mean score for post-test (  $n = 30$  ) was 57.87. This indicates that the achievement of the control group using traditional methods in teaching and learning Phrase count increased in post-test as compared to its pre-test score . This indicate that, there was an increase between pre-test and post test though using the traditional method, and its increas is statistically significant too, with  $t(58) = 20.434, P < 0.01$

Table 5: Pre-Test and Post-test Scores of the Experimental Groups

<b>Tests</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Df</b>	<b>P</b>
Pre-Test	30	32.73	56.333	58	.000
Post-Test	30	86.03			

Table 5 above shows the mean scores obtained in the experimental group for pre and post-test. Mean score in the pre-test (  $n = 30$  ) was 32.73 while the mean score during the post-test increased to 86.03. This indicates that the achievement of the Experimental group using the Noor Method increased very much higher the the control group. T-test was again conducted to see the differences in score between the pre-test and the post-test, and was found out that the differences is significant statistically with  $t(58) = 56.33, P < 0.001$

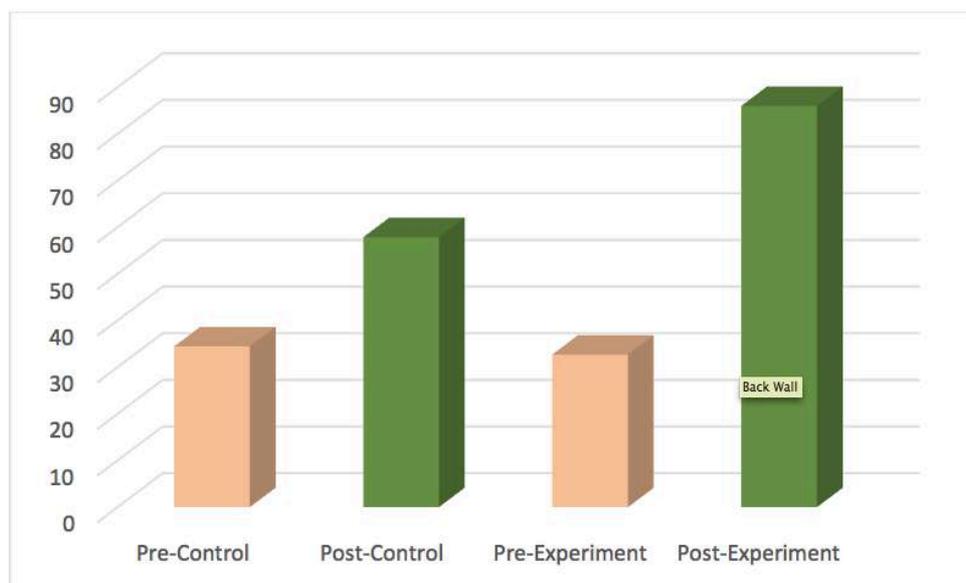


Figure 11: Comparison of the Scores

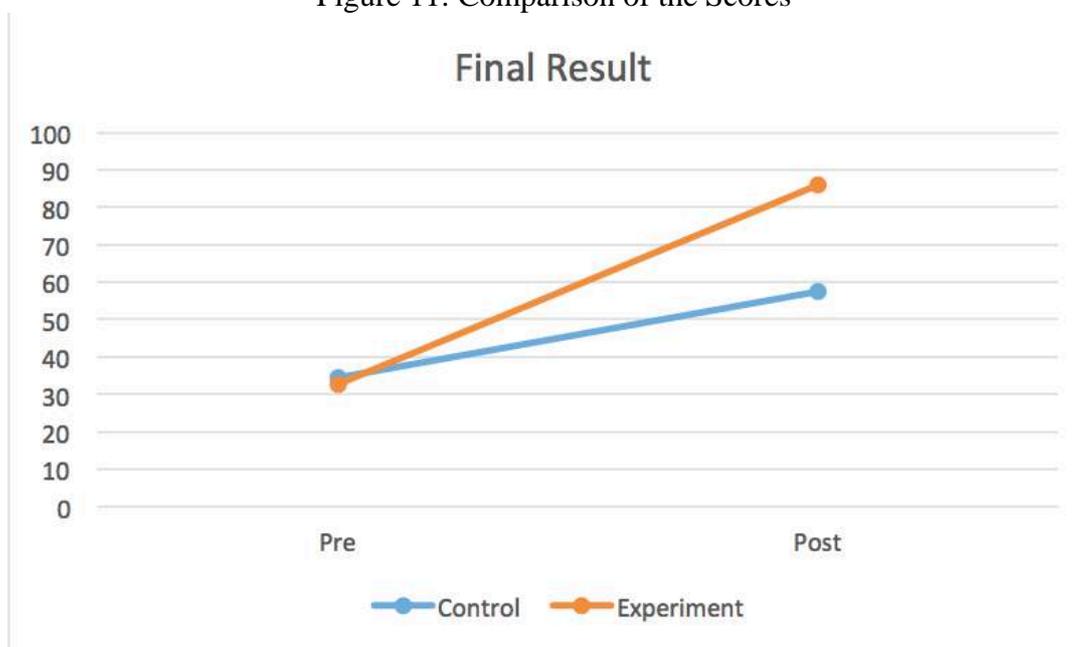


Figure 12: Comparison of the Scores

The above chart clearly shows the achievement of the experimental group and the control group in the pre-test and post-test. Although the experimental group obtained lower score (mean=32.73) then the control group (mean=34.47) during the pre-test, but using the Noor Method, the experimental group (mean=86.03) managed to surpass the control group (mean=57.87) during the post-test. As a result of these findings, it can be said that Noor Method is an effective method to simplify the process of teaching and learning Phrase count up to a satisfactory level.

## Conclusion

Results of the study were presented in general. It was found that Noor Method had been successful in helping students to master the formation of phrase count used in their daily lives. The skills in the formation of such complex phrases count in the process of teaching and learning had been successfully made simple by the use of Noor Method. Only the matching skills and the singular counts (*mufrad*) had been well understood by respondents in the pre test and at the post- test. At the very early stage, the skills in matching numbers and count, the respondents were found to be confused about the position of the digit starting from the front to the rear or from the rear to the front. Confusion also extends to the implementation and to categorisation of words counted based on gender and the counting of single word (*mufrad*) and multiple words (جمع لغير العاقل) jama' of which all are associated with مفرد مؤنث .

With the use of Noor Method, it has proven that it can successfully overcome all the problems that arise when the Noor Method which look at the method of forming number phrase as skills that need to be mastered in stages using Noor Method. Noor Method has also been successfully undo flexion problems which are considered as the element of Arabic grammar most difficult and the results were very satisfactory. With this, Noor Method has managed to highlight two phrase count and flexion.

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***Grammarly Grammatical Grammar: An Investigation into Writing Issues***

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**Abstract**

The paper used an electronic writing enhancement platform to identify the writing issues in two essays of Level 4 Foundation students. In six broad categories – Spelling, Grammar, Punctuation, Enhancement Suggestion, Sentence Structure and Style – the upper group had 3,551 issues clustered into 28 sub-categories while the lower group recorded 3,974 issues bundled into 27 sub-categories. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences was used to get the mean, standard deviation and significant difference between groups in terms of issues and sexes. It was found out that the writing issues between the two groups were significantly different with p-value of 0.016. Specifically, the writing issues means in Essay 1 at p-value of 0.001 was found to be significant. On the other hand, writing issues in Essay 2 has no significant difference with p-value of 0.965. Moreover, there is no significant difference in the writing issues between sexes as confirmed by the computed p-value of 0.557.

**Keywords:** electronic enhancement writing platform, writing issues, essay writing

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## **Introduction**

The skill of writing effective essays in English among EFL students is essential in progressing to higher studies since more write-ups are expected until the end of the Bachelor's level. But, writing is complex that demands a lot of cognitive and linguistic abilities. EFL learners suffer from the foreignness of the language used that they commit a lot of errors when completing a particular essay. Studies conducted by Khansir et al. (2013), Kuar and Singh (2013), Chkotau (2011), Abusaedi (2015), Chan (2010), Koroglu (2014), Sattayatham and Ratanapinyowong (2008), Darus and Ching (2009), Hourani (2008), and Uhrikova (2011) demonstrate the seriousness of the number of various errors found in written outputs of students in paragraph, letter, and essay. These studies made use of writing experts to identify the errors. However, the present study is different that it made use of an electronic enhancement writing platform available on the web known as Grammarly. Thus, using Grammarly the study investigates the types of errors and significant differences between groups and sexes on the essays of Level 4 students.

## **Aim of the Study**

The present study aims to find out the writing issues and significant differences between groups and sexes of Level 4 Foundation students of the English Language Centre at Ibra College of Technology in two essays written during the mid-semester examination. The issues included spelling, grammar, punctuation, enhancement suggestion, sentence structure, and style check.

## **Research Questions**

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the means of the upper and lower groups in Essay 1 – Division and Classification and Essay 2 – Causes and Effects with respect to the issue on: (a) Spelling Correction; (b) Grammar; (c) Punctuation; (d) Enhancement Suggestion; (e) Sentence Structure; and (f) Style Check?
2. Is there a significant difference between the means of the upper and the lower group with respect to the issue on: (a) Spelling Correction; (b) Grammar; (c) Punctuation; (d) Enhancement Suggestion; (e) Sentence Structure; and (f) Style Check?
3. What are the means of the males and females in Essay 1 – Division and Classification and Essay 2 – Causes and Effects with respect to the issue on: (a) Spelling Correction; (b) Grammar; (c) Punctuation; (d) Enhancement Suggestion; (e) Sentence Structure; and (f) Style Check?
4. Is there a significant difference between the means of the males and females with respect to the issue on: (a) Spelling Correction; (b) Grammar; (c) Punctuation; (d) Enhancement Suggestion; (e) Sentence Structure; and (f) Style Check?
5. What are the means of the writing errors of the upper and lower groups in Essay 1 – Division and Classification and Essay 2 – Causes and Effects?
6. Is there a significant difference on the writing errors between the upper group and the lower group? What caused the significance, if any?
7. What are the means of the writing errors of the males and females in Essay 1 – Division and Classification and Essay 2 – Causes and Effects?

8. Is there a significant difference on the writing errors between sexes? What caused the significance, if any?

### **Limitations of the Study**

The study was limited to a sample of 122 Level 4 Foundation students taking courses in English Language at the English Language Centre of Ibra College of Technology.

The study was also made use of the terms issues and errors interchangeably. Therefore, this study counted all errors on the essays of students using an electronic enhancement platform.

### **Significance of the Study**

Identifying writing issues will show where and what students lack in writing essays. These issues can be used as pointers for students to be reminded of what they need to avoid in writing their essays. In addition, writing teachers can capitalize on the use of the errors when teaching students to write essays.

### **Methodology**

The study comprised of 122 Level 4 Foundation students divided into 60 upper group students and 62 lower group students. The distribution of the sample into male and female are 58 and 64 students respectively.

A period of five weeks was delegated to teaching and learning a Division and Classification and Causes and Effects Essays. The sixth week was the scheduled mid-semester examination. Students wrote a typical five-paragraph essay on the previously mentioned types of essays in exactly 80 minutes. The Division and Classification essay was written by the students with guidewords and phrases placed in a table form. On the other hand, the Causes and Effects essay is more of a free writing with only a choice of two topics for a Causes essay and Effects essay. After a one-week period of marking the essays, the upper and lower groups were identified by the overall passing percentages of each section.

The first three sections with the highest passing percentages were labeled the upper group. While the last three sections with the lowest passing percentages were named the lower group. Then, the writing exam papers of the upper and lower groups were encoded over a period of one month. This also included a first and second reading of the encoded essays to establish the accuracy of an actual copy of the exact essay written by the students. Then, the essays of the student were uploaded into an electronic enhancement writing platform known as Grammarly. The generated report from the writing platform on Spelling Correction; Grammar; Punctuation; Enhancement Suggestion; Sentence Structure; and Style Check were tallied and were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.

## Data Analysis and Discussion

Writing error categories were identified from the reports generated by the electronic enhancement writing platform, namely, Spelling Correction, Grammar, Punctuation, Enhancement Suggestion, Sentence Structure, and Style Check. Also, specific issues per category were taken from the reports of the electronic platform, and corresponding writing error means were summarized in Table 1 to Table 6. More specifically, writing error means per specific issue according to sex and/or group membership in Essay 1, in Essay 2, or in both essays were also found in the tables.

Table 1 shows that for the Spelling Correction category, most of the errors of the students were on Spelling issue with an overall mean of 12.41, and some were on Accidentally Confused Words with overall mean of 2.5. Moreover, only few errors were on Commonly Confused Words (0.25) and on Unknown Words issues (0.02).

Table 1

*Writing Error Means Per Specific Issue on Spelling Correction*

Issue	Upper Group						Lower Group						Total								
	Essay 1		Essay 2		Total		Essay 1		Essay 2		Total		Essay 1		Essay 2		Total				
	F	M	F	M	F	M	Total	F	M	F	M	F	M	Total	F	M	F	M	F	M	Total
Spelling	7.51	8.17	14.69	15.25	11	11.71	11.28	0.64	10.09	15	16.85	12.51	14.47	19.5	8.39	0.28	14.93	17.56	11.58	11.93	12.41
Accidentally Confused Words	1.83	1.42	2.53	1.71	2.18	2.06	2.19	3.07	3.38	2.48	2.47	2.73	2.89	2.83	2.58	1.57	2.48	2.57	2.49	2.57	2.5
Commonly Confused Words	0.22	0.39	0.72	0.29	0.47	0.31	0.41	0.21	0	0.11	0.12	0.16	0.06	0.1	0.22	0.14	0.45	0.18	0.34	0.16	0.25
Unknown Words	0	0.08	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.06	0.03	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.03	0.02

There are thirteen identified specific issues on Grammar category. Table 2 shows that only few errors were committed under this category. However, the following are the identified specific issues according to their frequency of occurrence: Subject and Verb Agreement (1.47), Use of Articles/Determiners (1.41), Verb Form Use (1.38), Modal Verbs (0.27), Use of Nouns (0.17), Pronoun Agreement (0.1), Use of Adjectives and Adverbs(0.09), Passive Voice Use (0.09), Incorrect Use of Prepositions (0.06), Verb Agreement (0.05), Use of Qualifiers and Quantifiers (0.03), Conditional Sentences (0.01), and Use of Conjunctions (0.01).

Table 2  
*Writing Error Means Per Specific Issue on Grammar*

Issue	Upper Group									Lower Group						Total											
	Essay 1			Essay 2			Total			Essay 1			Essay 2			Total			Essay 1			Essay 2			Total		
	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total
Use of Articles / Determiners	1.06	1.08	2.12	1.54	1.89	1.31	1.66	0.94	0.47	2.43	1.33	1.43	0.9	1.16	0.83	0.72	2.59	1.41	1.71	1.07	1.41	1.07	1.41	1.33	1.38	1.38	1.38
Verb Form Use	1.14	1.58	1.5	2.17	1.33	1.87	1.54	1.82	1.15	1.21	0.82	1.52	0.99	1.33	1.44	1.33	1.37	1.33	1.41	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35
Modal Verbs	0.36	0.21	0.42	0.17	0.49	0.19	0.37	0.25	0.33	0.07	0.06	0.16	0.21	0.19	0.42	0.29	0.27	0.1	0.34	0.2	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27
Subject and Verb Agreement	1.36	1.63	1.47	1.5	1.42	1.56	1.48	2.11	0.82	1.79	1.32	1.93	1.07	1.47	1.69	1.16	1.61	1.4	1.63	1.28	1.47	1.47	1.47	1.47	1.47	1.47	1.47
Incorrect Use of Prepositions	0.08	0	0.14	0.04	0.11	0.02	0.07	0.11	0.03	0.04	0	0.07	0.01	0.04	0.09	0.02	0.09	0.02	0.09	0.02	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06
Use of Nouns	0.14	0.13	0.17	0.42	0.13	0.27	0.2	0.07	0.03	0.43	0.09	0.23	0.06	0.13	0.11	0.07	0.28	0.22	0.2	0.15	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17
Conditional Sentences	0	0	0	0.04	0	0.02	0.01	0	0	0.04	0	0.02	0	0.01	0	0	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Use of Adjectives and Adverbs	0.06	0	0.14	0	0.1	0	0.06	0.11	0.06	0.21	0.09	0.16	0.07	0.11	0.08	0.03	0.17	0.03	0.13	0.04	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09
Pronoun Agreement	0.22	0	0.17	0	0.19	0	0.12	0.04	0.06	0.21	0.06	0.13	0.06	0.09	0.14	0.03	0.19	0.03	0.16	0.03	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Verb Agreement	0.03	0.04	0.06	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0	0.03	0.04	0.15	0.02	0.09	0.06	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.1	0.03	0.07	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
Use of Qualifiers and Quantifiers	0.03	0	0.06	0.04	0.04	0.02	0.03	0.04	0	0.07	0.03	0.03	0.01	0.03	0.03	0	0.06	0.03	0.05	0.02	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03
Passive Voice Use	0	0	0.06	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.32	0.13	0.11	0	0.21	0.07	0.14	0.14	0.09	0.03	0.03	0.11	0.06	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09
Use of Conjunction	0	0	0	0.04	0	0.02	0.01	0	0	0.06	0	0.03	0.02	0	0	0	0.03	0	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03

On the Punctuation category, four specific issues were identified as reflected in Table 3, namely, Punctuation Within a Clause with overall mean of 1.58, Punctuation Between Clauses (0.64), Special Character Punctuation (0.22), and Closing Punctuation (0.16).

Table 3  
*Writing Error Means Per Specific Issue on Punctuation*

Issue	Upper Group									Lower Group						Total											
	Essay 1			Essay 2			Total			Essay 1			Essay 2			Total			Essay 1			Essay 2			Total		
	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total
Punctuation Within a Clause	1.49	1.63	1.31	1.13	1.5	1.37	1.48	2.36	1.5	1.86	1.26	2.11	1.38	1.71	1.98	1.53	1.53	1.21	1.77	1.38	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58
Punctuation Between Clauses	0.42	0.38	0.33	0.38	0.63	0.33	0.61	0.39	0.44	1.18	0.68	0.79	0.36	0.66	0.41	0.5	0.98	0.64	0.7	0.37	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64
Closing Punctuation	0.08	0.21	0.25	0.13	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.04	0.06	0.21	0.26	0.13	0.16	0.15	0.06	0.12	0.23	0.21	0.15	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16
Special Character Punctuation	0.14	0.23	0.22	0.29	0.18	0.27	0.22	0.32	0.26	0.11	0.21	0.21	0.24	0.23	0.22	0.26	0.17	0.24	0.2	0.23	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22

Students' writing error was also high on the Enhancement Suggestion category, wherein the overall mean for the sole detected issue, the Word Choice issue, is 4.29 as shown in Table 4.

Table 4  
*Writing Error Means Per Specific Issue on Enhancement Suggestion*

Issue	Upper Group									Lower Group						Total											
	Essay 1			Essay 2			Total			Essay 1			Essay 2			Total			Essay 1			Essay 2			Total		
	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total	F	M	Total
Word Choice	4.38	4.93	3.33	4.08	4.08	4.46	4.23	6.61	3.82	4.32	3.00	5.46	3.41	4.34	5.47	4.34	3.91	3.43	4.69	3.94	4.29	4.29	4.29	4.29	4.29	4.29	4.29

However, there are less writing errors committed under the Sentence Structure category. Table 5 summarizes the three specific issues identified in this category, namely, Sentence Fragment with overall mean of 0.81, Word Order (0.05), and Faulty Parallelism (0.05).

Table 5  
*Writing Error Means Per Specific Issue on Sentence Structure*

Issue	Upper Group						Lower Group						Total								
	Essay 1		Essay 2		Total		Essay 1		Essay 2		Total		Essay 1		Essay 2		Total				
	F	M	F	M	F	M	Total	F	M	F	M	F	M	Total	F	M	F	M	F	M	Total
Sentence Fragment	0.81	0.67	1.14	1	0.97	0.83	0.92	0.86	0.5	0.79	0.74	0.82	0.62	0.71	0.83	0.87	0.98	0.84	0.91	0.71	0.81
Word Order	0.08	0	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.04	0.07	0.07	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.08	0.02	0.06	0.03	0.07	0.03	0.03
Faulty Parallelism	0.17	0.04	0	0	0.08	0.02	0.06	0.07	0.12	0	0	0.04	0.06	0.05	0.13	0.09	0	0	0.06	0.04	0.03

Finally, as shown in Table 6, there are three specific issues identified in the Style Check category. Most writing errors committed by the students under this category is on Improper Formatting with overall mean of 2.18. On the other hand, only few errors are under the issues on Wordiness (0.32) and Usage of Colloquial Speech (0.23).

Table 6  
*Writing Error Means Per Specific Issue on Style Check*

Issue	Upper Group						Lower Group						Total								
	Essay 1		Essay 2		Total		Essay 1		Essay 2		Total		Essay 1		Essay 2		Total				
	F	M	F	M	F	M	Total	F	M	F	M	F	M	Total	F	M	F	M	F	M	Total
Improper Formatting	1.67	1.31	2.11	2.08	1.89	1.63	1.79	2.64	3.33	1.79	2.33	2.21	2.83	2.56	2.09	2.47	1.97	2.24	2.03	2.33	2.18
Wordiness	0.11	0.54	0.36	0.23	0.24	0.4	0.3	0.36	0.26	0.43	0.29	0.39	0.28	0.33	0.22	0.33	0.39	0.28	0.3	0.33	0.32
Usage of Colloquial Speech	0.22	0.29	0.23	0.34	0.24	0.42	0.31	0.07	0.24	0.14	0.12	0.11	0.18	0.15	0.16	0.26	0.2	0.29	0.18	0.23	0.23

The writing error per category of each respondent was quantified by adding the writing errors under the specific issues corresponding to the category. Writing error means and standard deviations per category according to sex and/or group membership in Essay 1, in Essay 1 or in both essays were also calculated and shown in Table 7. For example, the writing error with respect to spelling correction in Essay 1 of the 36 females in the upper group has a mean of 9.36 and standard deviation of 6.114, while in Essay 2, the mean and standard deviation were 17.97 and 9.167, respectively. Moreover, the combined (Essay 1 and 2) writing error mean with respect to spelling correction of the females in the upper group was 13.67 and the standard deviation was 8.868.

Answers for the second and fourth problem of the study were also found in Tables 7a and 7b -- writing error means according to group membership and according to sex membership. For the Spelling Correction category, the writing error mean of the upper group is 13.86 and the standard deviation is 8.441, while of the lower group were 16.45 and 10.057, respectively. In the Grammar category, the mean and standard deviation of the upper group were 5.68 and 3.644, respectively, while of the lower group were 4.67 and 3.421, respectively. Also, in the Punctuation category, the mean

and standard deviation of the upper group were 2.53 and 2.037, respectively, while of the lower group were 2.83 and 2.935, respectively. In the Enhancement Suggestion category, the mean and standard deviation of the upper group were 4.24 and 4.046, respectively, while of the lower group were 4.34 and 3.167, respectively. Then, in the Sentence Structure category, the mean and standard deviation of the upper group were 1.05 and 1.327, respectively, while of the lower group were 0.81 and 1.054, respectively. Lastly, in the Style Check category, the mean and standard deviation of the upper group were 2.43 and 2.479, respectively, while of the lower group were 3.03 and 3.213, respectively.

On the other hand, writing error means according to sex membership were computed as follows: For the Spelling Correction category, the writing error mean of the female group is 14.35 and the standard deviation is 8.781, while of the male group were 16.09 and 9.936, respectively. In the Grammar category, the mean and standard deviation of the female group were 5.91 and 3.633, respectively, while of the male group were 4.34 and 3.305, respectively. Also, in the Punctuation category, the mean and standard deviation of the female group were 2.92 and 2.725, respectively, while of the male group were 2.42 and 2.285, respectively.

In the Enhancement Suggestion category, the mean and standard deviation of the female group were 4.7 and 4.013, respectively, while of the male group were 3.84 and 3.083, respectively. Then, in the Sentence Structure category, the mean and standard deviation of the female group were 1.06 and 1.321, respectively, while of the male group were 0.78 and 1.037, respectively. Lastly, in the Style Check category, the mean and standard deviation of the female group were 2.53 and 2.763, respectively, while of the male group were 2.96 and 3.011, respectively.

Table 7a.

*Descriptive Statistics of the Writing Errors per Category*

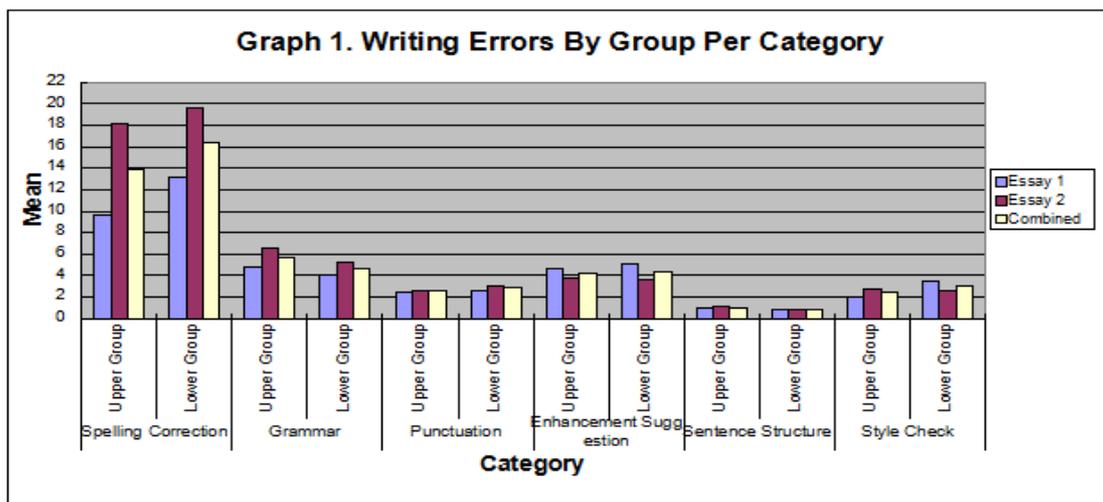
Writing Error Category	Group	Sex	Mean			Std. Deviation			N
			Essay 1	Essay 2	Combined	Essay 1	Essay 2	Combined	
Spelling Correction	Upper Group	Female	9.36	17.97	13.67	6.114	9.167	8.868	36
		Male	10	18.29	14.15	5.54	7.681	7.839	24
		Total	9.62	18.1	13.86	5.852	8.536	8.441	60
	Lower Group	Female	12.93	17.54	15.23	6.515	9.98	8.668	28
		Male	13.47	21.44	17.46	7.411	12.63	11.034	34
		Total	13.23	19.68	16.45	6.969	11.585	10.057	62
Total	Female	10.92	17.78	14.35	6.491	9.456	8.781	64	
	Male	12.03	20.14	16.09	6.867	10.891	9.936	58	
	Total	11.45	18.9	15.18	6.668	10.189	9.369	122	
Grammar	Upper Group	Female	4.75	6.97	5.86	2.719	4.352	3.773	36
		Male	4.75	6.08	5.42	2.739	4.01	3.463	24
		Total	4.75	6.62	5.68	2.704	4.207	3.644	60
	Lower Group	Female	5.32	6.64	5.98	3.465	3.423	3.477	28
		Male	3.15	4.03	3.59	2.765	3.176	2.989	34
		Total	4.13	5.21	4.67	3.262	3.516	3.421	62
Total	Female	5	6.83	5.91	3.055	3.946	3.633	64	
	Male	3.81	4.88	4.34	2.844	3.657	3.305	58	
	Total	4.43	5.9	5.17	3.004	3.919	3.561	122	
Punctuation	Upper Group	Female	2.33	2.81	2.57	1.805	1.687	1.751	36
		Male	2.63	2.33	2.48	2.584	2.297	2.423	24
		Total	2.45	2.62	2.53	2.135	1.949	2.037	60
	Lower Group	Female	3.14	3.61	3.37	3.913	3.27	3.581	28
		Male	2.26	2.5	2.38	2.02	2.39	2.199	34
		Total	2.66	3	2.83	3.03	2.852	2.935	62
Total	Female	2.69	3.16	2.92	2.922	2.515	2.725	64	
	Male	2.41	2.43	2.42	2.256	2.333	2.285	58	
	Total	2.56	2.81	2.68	2.619	2.447	2.533	122	

Table 7b.

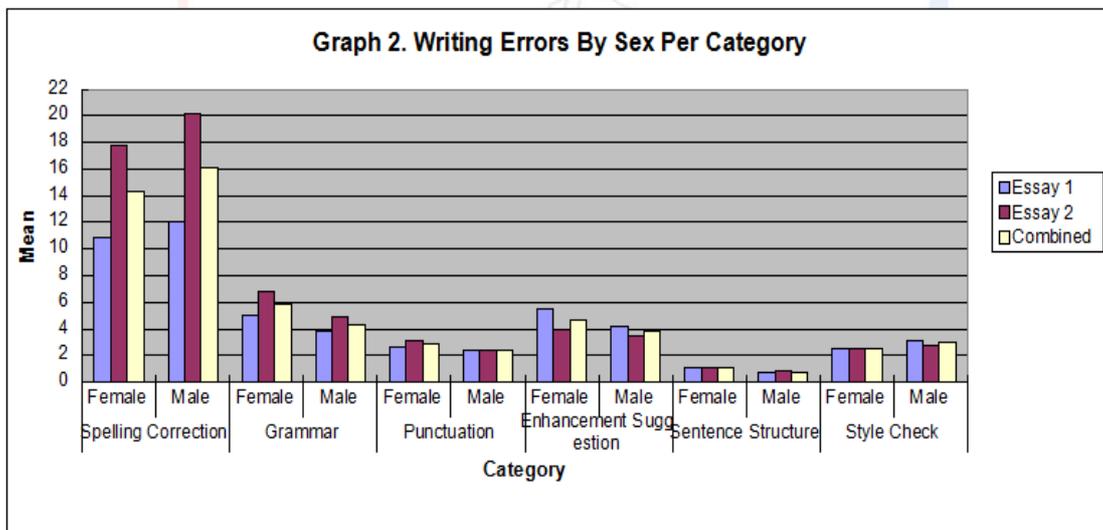
*Descriptive Statistics of the Writing Errors per Category*

Writing Error Category	Group	Sex	Mean			Std. Deviation			N
			Essay 1	Essay 2	Combined	Essay 1	Essay 2	Combined	
Enhancement Suggestion	Upper Group	Female	4.61	3.58	4.1	5.101	3.459	4.358	36
		Male	4.83	4.08	4.46	3.784	3.361	3.561	24
		Total	4.7	3.78	4.24	4.586	3.4	4.046	60
	Lower Group	Female	6.61	4.32	5.46	3.5	2.945	3.406	28
		Male	3.82	3	3.41	2.736	2.511	2.639	34
		Total	5.08	3.6	4.34	3.379	2.773	3.167	62
Total	Female	5.48	3.91	4.7	4.55	3.24	4.013	64	
	Male	4.24	3.45	3.84	3.219	2.915	3.083	58	
	Total	4.89	3.69	4.29	4.006	3.086	3.619	122	
Sentence Structure	Upper Group	Female	1.08	1.22	1.15	1.204	1.742	1.489	36
		Male	0.71	1.08	0.9	0.859	1.176	1.036	24
		Total	0.93	1.17	1.05	1.087	1.531	1.327	60
	Lower Group	Female	1	0.89	0.95	1.217	0.916	1.069	28
		Male	0.65	0.76	0.71	0.917	1.156	1.037	34
		Total	0.81	0.82	0.81	1.069	1.048	1.054	62
Total	Female	1.05	1.08	1.06	1.201	1.44	1.321	64	
	Male	0.67	0.9	0.78	0.886	1.165	1.037	58	
	Total	0.87	0.99	0.93	1.075	1.314	1.2	122	
Style Check	Upper Group	Female	2.08	2.72	2.4	1.977	2.711	2.377	36
		Male	2.04	2.88	2.46	2.236	2.997	2.649	24
		Total	2.07	2.78	2.43	2.066	2.805	2.479	60
	Lower Group	Female	3.07	2.32	2.7	3.981	2.195	3.207	28
		Male	3.85	2.76	3.31	3.743	2.523	3.215	34
		Total	3.5	2.56	3.03	3.84	2.372	3.213	62
Total	Female	2.52	2.55	2.53	3.034	2.488	2.763	64	
	Male	3.1	2.81	2.96	3.307	2.704	3.011	58	
	Total	2.8	2.67	2.73	3.167	2.586	2.886	122	

The differences between groups of the writing error means per category in Essay 1 and in Essay 2 and of the combined writing error means in both essays were easily determined by referring to Graph 1. The lower group has higher combined writing error means as compared to the upper group with respect to Spelling Correction, Punctuation, Enhancement Suggestion and Style Check categories. However, the upper group committed higher writing error means with respect to Grammar and Sentence Structure categories. Specifically, this observations were also true in their writing errors in Essay 1 and in Essay 2, except for the means with respect to Enhancement Suggestion and with Style Check categories in Essay 2 wherein the upper group displayed higher writing error means than the lower group.



Furthermore, the differences between sexes of the writing error means per category in Essay 1 and in Essay 2 and of the combined writing error means can be determined by referring to Graph 2. The female group has higher combined writing error means as compared to the male group with respect to Grammar, Punctuation, Enhancement Suggestion and Sentence Structure categories. However, the male group committed higher writing error means with respect to Spelling Correction and Style Check categories. Specifically, this observations were also true in their writing errors per category in Essay 1 and in Essay 2.



The significance of the differences in writing error means between groups and between sexes per category were tested at 0.05 level of significance by using Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA). As shown in Table 8, there are significant differences of the writing error means between groups in Essay 1 with respect to Spelling Correction (p-value = 0.004, F-value = 8.735) and Style Check (p-value = 0.016, F-value = 6.018). Moreover, significant differences between sexes were found with respect to Grammar both in Essay 1 (p-value = 0.045, F-value = 6.394) and in Essay 2 (p-value = 0.013, F-value = 6.394).

However, the other differences of the writing error means per specific issue were found to be not significant as observed on their respective p-values which are greater than 0.05.

Therefore, it can be concluded with 95% confidence level that the lower group significantly commits higher writing errors than the upper group with respect to Spelling Correction both in Essay 1 and in Essay 2, and also with respect to Style Check in Essay 1. However, the upper group significantly commits higher writing error than the lower group with respect to Style Check in Essay 2. Moreover, females significantly commit higher writing error than males with respect to Grammar both in Essay 1 and in Essay 2. Furthermore, the other differences of the writing error means per category were found to be not significant.

Table 8

*Significant Difference of the Writing Error Means Per Category*

Specific Issue	Group						Sex					
	Essay 1			Essay 2			Essay 1			Essay 2		
	F	df	p-val.									
Spelling Correction	8.735	1	0.004	0.527	1	0.469	0.246	1	0.621	1.278	1	0.261
Grammar	0.926	1	0.338	2.961	1	0.088	4.114	1	0.045	6.394	1	0.013
Punctuation	0.217	1	0.642	1.178	1	0.28	0.37	1	0.544	3.133	1	0.079
Enhancement Suggestion	0.469	1	0.495	0.093	1	0.761	3.165	1	0.078	0.528	1	0.469
Sentence Structure	0.135	1	0.714	1.797	1	0.183	3.43	1	0.067	0.305	1	0.582
Style Check	6.018	1	0.016	0.285	1	0.595	0.42	1	0.518	0.387	1	0.535

Note. Means are significantly different at  $p \leq 0.05$  based on MANOVA.

The writing error of a respondent was quantified by getting the sum of the writing errors committed under the six categories, namely, Spelling Correction, Grammar, Punctuation, Enhancement Suggestion, Sentence Structure, and Style Check. Table 9 shows the descriptive statistics of the general writing errors, which includes mean, standard deviation and sample size (N) in Essay 1, in Essay 2 and in both essays. For example, the writing error in Essay 1 of the 36 females in the upper group has a mean of 24.22 and standard deviation of 9.601, while in Essay 2, the mean and standard deviation were 35.28 and 10.846, respectively. Moreover, the combined (Essay 1 and 2) writing error mean of the females in the upper group was 29.75 and the standard deviation was 10.2235.

Answers for the sixth and the eighth problem of the study were also reflected in Table 9. The writing error mean of the upper group in Essay 1 and in Essay 2 were 24.52 and 3.07, respectively. While that of the lower group were 29.4 and 34.87,

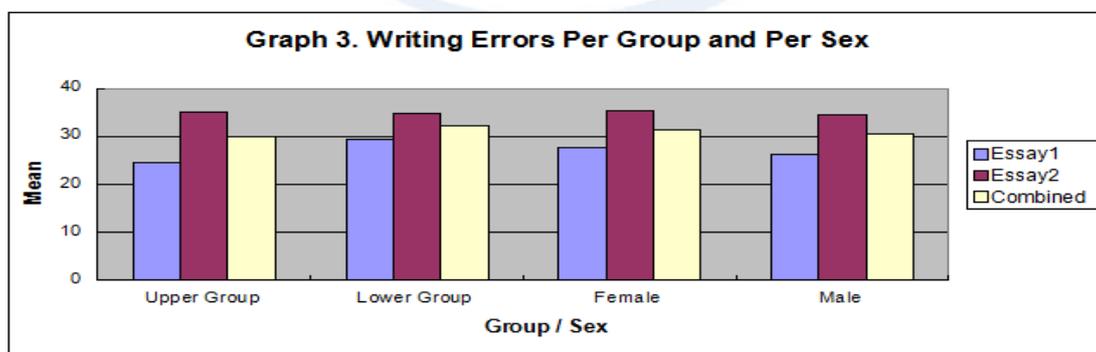
respectively. Moreover, the writing error mean of the female group in Essay 1 was 27.66,m and in Essay 2 was 35.3. On the other hand, the male group has writing error means of 26.28 and 34.6 in Essay 1 and in Essay 2, respectively.

Table 9

*Descriptive Statistics of the Writing Errors (Overall Issue)*

Group	Sex	Mean			Std. Deviation			N
		Essay1	Essay2	Combined	Essay1	Essay2	Combined	
Upper Group	Female	24.22	35.28	29.75	9.601	10.846	10.2235	36
	Male	24.96	34.75	29.855	8.472	11.848	10.16	24
	Total	24.52	35.07	29.795	9.099	11.161	10.13	60
Lower Group	Female	32.07	35.32	33.695	13.01	12.428	12.719	28
	Male	27.21	34.5	30.855	10.534	15.443	12.9885	34
	Total	29.4	34.87	32.135	11.87	14.055	12.9625	62
Total	Female	27.66	35.3	31.48	11.796	11.469	11.6325	64
	Male	26.28	34.6	30.44	9.718	13.955	11.8365	58
	Total	27	34.97	30.985	10.836	12.663	11.7495	122

The differences between groups and between sexes of the writing error means in Essay 1 and in Essay 2 and of the combined writing error means were easily determined by referring to Graph 3. The lower group has a higher combined (Essay 1 and 2) writing error mean as compared to the upper group. Specifically, this is also true in their writing errors in Essay 1. However, the writing error means between groups in Essay 2 were almost equal. On the other hand, the females has a bit higher writing error means than the males in Essay 1 and in Essay 2. Thus, the combined (Essay 1 and 2) writing error means of the females was a bit higher than the males.



The significance of the differences in writing error means were tested at 0.05 level of significance by using Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA). As shown in Table 10, there is a significant difference on the writing errors between groups (p-value = 0.016, Wilks' lambda = 0.931). This is specifically brought by the significant difference between groups of the writing errors in Essay 1 (p-value = 0.01, F-value =

6.819). On the other hand, there is no significant difference on the writing errors in Essay 2 between groups with p-value of 0.965, which is greater than 0.05. Moreover, there are no significant differences between sexes both in Essay 1 and in Essay 2 with p-values equal to 0.288 and 0.775, respectively. Thus, we also say that in general, there is no significant difference on the writing errors between sexes (p-value = 0.557, Wilks' lambda = 0.99).

Thus, it can be concluded at 95% confidence level that the lower group commits higher writing errors than the upper group. This significant difference was contributed by the results in Essay 1. Specifically, the lower group commits higher writing errors in Essay 1 than the upper group. Moreover, no significant differences of the writing errors were found between sexes.

Table 10

*Significant Difference of the Writing Error Means*

	F-value		df	p-value			Wilks' Lambda
	Essay 1	Essay 2		Essay 1	Essay 2	Combined	
Group	6.819	0.002	1	0.01	0.965	0.016	0.931
Sex	1.141	0.082	1	0.288	0.775	0.557	0.99

Note. Means are significantly different at  $p \leq 0.05$  based on MANOVA.

## Conclusion

The study discovered that according to the six categories, students' errors are ranked as follows: Enhancement Suggestion, Spelling Correction, Style Check, Punctuation, Grammar, and Sentence Structure. Students' number one specific error per category is Spelling, Word Choice, Improper Formatting, Punctuation within a Clause, Subject and Verb Agreement, and Sentence Fragment. The top ten specific errors across categories are Spelling, Word Choice, Accidentally Confused Words, Improper Formatting, Punctuation within a Clause, Subject and Verb Agreement, Verb Form Use, Sentence Fragment, Punctuation between Clauses, and Wordiness.

In general, there is a significant difference between groups of the writing errors in Essay 1. However, there is no significant difference in the writing errors in Essay 2 between groups. Moreover, there is no significant difference in the writing errors between sexes. In addition, the lower group commits higher writing errors than the upper group.

The study helps in raising awareness for the students about the writing errors that they need to correct. It also helped provide teachers a target on what should be given emphasis in teaching students to write excellent essays. This study also suggests that the institution must provide intensive remedial classes focusing on the common errors of the students.

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