



ISSN 2822-1311 (Online)
Vol.1 No.3 (September-December) 2023

BRU ELT JOURNAL

Doctor of Philosophy Program in English Language Teaching (ELT)
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Buriram Rajabhat University, Thailand

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Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Buriram Rajabhat University

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surachai.py@bru.ac.th

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jasper.roe@jcu.edu.au

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Sippanon Tangchukul

sippanon.tc@bru.ac.th

Tatiya Tanuanram

tatiya.tn@bru.ac.th

- **Public Relations**

Surapong Kuntud

surapong.kt@bru.ac.th

- **Periodicity**

Three issues per year (January-April, May-August, September-December)

Journal Policy

Found in 2023, BRU ELT Journal is a peer-reviewed and open-access electronic journal with the main aim to publish fully refereed high-quality original research articles in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) around the world for the benefit of English language teachers and researchers. The journal welcomes articles from local and foreign academics, researchers, graduate students, and policymakers. All articles are required to be in English.

The Thai Journal Citation Index Center (TCI) requested cooperation from journal editors in the selection of a specific journal's sub-areas stored in the TCI database. As a result, each journal is permitted to select 1-5 sub-areas for the papers published in the journal. In this regard, the "BRU ELT JOURNAL" would like to declare that beginning with the 1st Volume, 1st Issue (January-April 2023), articles covering the main subject area, Social Sciences, will be accepted for publication. Furthermore, these articles must be pertinent to the subject areas of Arts and Humanities, and they must cover these two sub-subject areas: 1) Language and Linguistics, and 2) Literature and Literary Theory.

BRU ELT Journal accepts articles relevant to the following themes: English as an International Language, World Englishes (WE), Teaching and Learning English as a Second Language (ESL), as an Additional Language (EAL) or as a Foreign Language (TEFL), ESP and EAP, Applied Linguistics and Corpus Linguistics, Approaches and Methods in English Education, Culture and Literature in English Education, English Language Curriculum and Teaching Materials, Language Learning and Acquisition, Language Testing and Evaluation, Life-long Language Learning, Multimedia and ICT in ELT, Teacher Training and Education, Interpretation and Translation Studies, and Discourse and Interlanguage Pragmatics.

The journal is published three times a year: January-April, May-August, and September-December. However, BRU ELT JOURNAL, with no more than two (2) issues per year, might be published as a special issue upon joining in the special academic events of national and international conferences held both in Thailand and other countries.

All articles in this journal must be reviewed by at least three (3) external peer reviewers in the relevant fields from different institutes. More importantly, the authors' and reviewers' identities are concealed from each other (Double-blind peer review) in order to have the articles with high quality and academic standards. The articles submitted for publication in this journal have not already been published *elsewhere* or are not under consideration by peer reviewers for publication in other journals. The authors must strictly comply with the reference system and the criteria for the publication of academic or research articles set by the journal.

Turnitin is used to check all submitted manuscripts for plagiarism, and the similarity score for plagiarism check is not more than 20%. We use the American Psychological Association (APA) style citation system, 7th edition, and you can discover more information at: www.apa.org.

Editor's Note

Volume 1 of BRU ELT JOURNAL has been published in three consecutive issues due to the tremendous support of all contributors-including the editorial board, peer reviewers, authors, and readers. Their immense academic assistance is greatly valued. Furthermore, their ongoing contribution and support are highly appreciated until this journal attains national and internal indexing.

This issue comprises seven articles originating from six different countries: two from Thailand, one from Myanmar, one from the Philippines, one from Yemen, one from Indonesia, and one from the United States. Each of these articles has already undergone blind evaluation by three qualified peer reviewers from various institutes. In accordance with the double-blind review procedure, it is impermissible to reveal the identities of the evaluators. Turnitin was employed to verify that the plagiarism or similarity index of each article was below 20%. Furthermore, the articles published in BRU ELT JOURNAL are equipped with DOIs to facilitate the reader in accessing the cited work.

As this third issue is being released on the eve of New Year 2024, I would like to extend my wishes for good health, prosperity, and abundant blessings to all those who play crucial roles in supporting the BRU ELT JOURNAL, both in the coming year and beyond.

Blessings and goodwill are bestowed;
Good fortune befalls you throughout the day and at night;
Sacred objects safeguard you;
Wishing you genuine happiness in the coming year.



Assoc. Prof. Dr. Akkarapon Nuemaihom
Editor-in-Chief

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Influence of Cultural and Linguistic Distance on Specific Terminology Equivalent Translation

Panornuang Sudasna Na Ayudhya¹

¹English Department, Faculty of Humanity and Social Sciences,

Bansomdejchaopraya Rajbhat University, Bangkok, Thailand

E-mail: panor.sudas@gmail.com

Received: November 22, 2023

Revised: December 14, 2023

Accepted: December 26, 2023

Abstract

The present study investigated the cultural and linguistic distance influences on specific terminology equivalent translation. Specific terminology in this research is food terminology. This is because food tradition is an important aspect of human and closed relates to human culture. The languages included in this study are Thai, Lao, and English, and Chinese Languages. The research procedure consists of conducting focus group in order to identify specific food terms of four ethnic community in a province in Thailand, named Ratchaburi Province, equivalent translation procedure, and questionnaire evaluation methods. The focus group method consisted of two groups of participants as ten representatives of ethnic community in the research area and the nine translators, who are native speakers of Lao, English, and Chinese Languages. Then, translation from Thai food terms to Lao, and English, and Chinese Languages by translators, who are native speakers of Lao, English, and Chinese Languages was conducted. Questionnaire evaluation was employed in two groups of subjects: nine translators and thirty bachelor's degree students in translation course to study translation difficulties and 20 native speakers of each Lao, English, either Chinese language who read translation words obtained from translation procedure. The results revealed that translation and understanding difficulties from Thai to Lao was rated at being extremely easy, followed by from Thai to Chinese, and finally, from Thai to English was rated at being difficult. The causes of difficulties were explained in terms of specific cultural and linguistic distance influence. The paper also illustrates the examples of translation items to reveal the influence of cultural and linguistic distance on translation of specific terminology.

Keywords: cultural Influence, linguistic distance, food terminology, Thai, Lao, English, Chinese

Introduction

In the contemporary world, people from different countries can be connected easily and worldwide. Social and economic activities can be interchanged with different pathways. Languages are important tool in human communication across the world. However, in order to use language as communicative tool effectively, the communicators must understand the nature of language, especially the interconnection between language and culture. Sapir (1921, 1949) proposed that “the real world is, to a large extent, unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group.” Translation

is a language activity, which allow people to understand each other without having to learn a second language. However, in order to comprehend the meaning in a language and translate text from one language to another language, the cultural factors inherent in the culture of that language must be considered, such as its traditions and beliefs. Thus, the task of the translator is to translate all these linguistic and cultural peculiarities into the language and culture of the target. Language and culture are two things, which closely relate and can reflect each other. Therefore, translation must consider both linguistic and cultural meanings of source texts and target texts.

The relationship between language and culture has been studied. The classic book “Language” of Sapir (1921, 1949) stated that relationship between language and culture is homologous. On the other words, a particular language is a reflection of a particular culture and learning a language is learning the behavior of the society and its cultural customs. Another linguist theorist, Wardhaugh (2002, pp. 219-220) also proposed that the culture of any people will be reflected in the language, which they use. Their language is a reflection of their culture. Even in the contemporary study, Vesna Mikolic in the book “Language and Culture in the Intercultural World” (2020) stated the importance of the study of language and culture relation in the intercultural world is to answer significant issues in a modern society.

In the current study of language and culture, the relation between language and culture has been catching the interest of scholars in linguistic disciplinary and in the other fields related to human communication. Therefore, the present study is interested to investigate the influence of language and culture on equivalent translation.

Regarding to concept of equivalent translation, Jacobson (2000) proposed there are three kinds of translation as (1) intralingual (dealing with one language); (2) interlingual (dealing with two languages); and (3) intersemiotic (dealing with sign systems). According to the intralingual translation, translator searches for synonyms and full equivalence between language units does not be implied. Jakobson (2000, p. 233) proposed that “translation involves two equivalent messages in two different codes”. The implication is that the task of translator is to find equivalence in messages despite difference in grammatical, lexical and semantic structures of source text and target text. However, if it is not possible to find translation equivalence to the source text, the most suitable way is to translate the text to the most possible equivalence. The example, which Jacobson (2000) proposed to support the concept of “equivalence in difference” is the example of ‘cheese’ which does not have the same equivalent of the Russian term ‘syr.’ This is because Russian language does not have the concept of cottage cheese in its dictionary and suggested translating it by ‘tvarok’ instead.

Nord (2005) revealed that there are four types of translation difficulties: 1) text-specific translation problems, such as words, 2) pragmatic translation problems, such as the recipient orientation of a text, 3) cultural translation problems, such as text-type conventions, and 4) linguistic translation problems, such as the translation of a language gerund into another language gerund. In addition, difficulties of translation are specific studied into a concept of equivalence (Kenny, 2009). Pym (2010, p.7) stated the definition of translation equivalence as a relation of equal value between a source text and a target text, and can be occurred on any linguistic level, from form to function. In the classic translation textbook “In Other Words” (Baker, 1992, 2011) divides equivalence at word level and above-word level. For the present study, the translation difficulties will be focused on the level of word.

According to the relationship between languages and equivalent translation, the recent study particularly focused on the concept of linguistic distance and translation. Linguistic distance is referred to the dissimilarity of languages in a multitude of dimensions, such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, scripture, and phonetic inventories (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1993, 2003; Hutchinson, 2002). The current researches (e.g. Cagnelutti, Tomasino, & Fabbro, 2021) revealed that the magnitude of difficulties in item translation and cross language comprehension was greatest when both languages differed, and smallest when the languages were similar.

Cultural difference included in the present study is specified to food culture. This is because food is an important culture in human life. This is supported from the statistics of in the modern communication channels. The statistics of popular issues on Instagram surveyed by Instagram from Accenture revealed that food is the most interesting topic for users (Hutchinson, 2019). Chiaro and Rossato (2015) mentioned that food is closely linked to culture. Food terms are a dominant reflection of culture.

Food terms included in the recent investigation are obtained from the study of food culture of Thai local community in a distinct named Ban Pong in a province named Ratchaburi, which is located in the central part of Thailand (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2022). For the major ethnicity of local people, there are Thai, Mon, Chinese, and Lao Wiang. Mon and Lao Wiang ethnics have settled in the Ban Pong area about four centuries ago. The ethnic Mon citizens in Ban Pong area, Ratchaburi Province are the descendants of groups who migrated from Myanmar to Thailand during the Ayutthaya, Thonburi and Rattanakosin periods. Whereas, the Lao Wiang citizens in Ban Pong area are the descendants of groups who migrated from Vientiane, Laos to Thailand during the Ayutthaya, Thonburi, and Rattanakosin periods. In addition, the town attracted numerous Chinese immigrants. Currently, these ethnicities still continue their culture identity such as kinds of food and dessert, religious places, and cultural activities. Thus, the food culture reflected from the terms is obviously related to a particular culture.

Research Objectives

The present study examines the cultural and language distance influences on specific terminology translation from Thai to Lao, English, and Chinese languages. Specific terminology in this research is food terminology, which will be obtained from research procedure. The translation difficulties in the recent study obtained from translators, who are native speakers of Lao, English, and Chinese and were asked to translate Thai food terms. In conclusion, research purposes are.

1. To identify specific food terms of ethnic community in local Thai community
2. To investigate translation difficulties obtained from Thai-Lao-Chinese-English translation process in translators, who are native speakers of Lao, English, and Chinese languages
3. To evaluate difficulties to understand Thai as source and target language translation pairs in native speakers of Lao, English, and Chinese languages

Related Literature

Translation Equivalence

The study of translation equivalence gets more interest with the birth of a research in machine translation. Leuven-Zwart (1990, p. 227) stated that "It [equivalence] was used then in its strict scientific sense, to refer to an absolute symmetrical relationship between words of different languages."

The structuralist Jacobson (2000, p. 114) is one of the earliest theorists who concentrated on the study of translation equivalence. The concept of "equivalence in difference" is introduced by Jacobson as "there is ordinarily no full equivalence between code units" (Munday, 2001). Regarding to Jacobson (2000), there are three kinds of translation as (1) intralingual (dealing with one language); (2) interlingual (dealing with two languages); and (3) intersemiotic (dealing with sign systems). According to the intralingual translation, translator searches for synonyms and full equivalence between language units does not be implied.

Jakobson (2000, p. 233) proposed that "translation involves two equivalent messages in two different codes". The implication is that the task of translator is to find equivalence in messages despite difference in grammatical, lexical and semantic structures of source text and target text. However, if it is not possible to find translation equivalence to the source text, the most suitable way is to translate the text to the most possible equivalence. Jakobson (2000) proposed that the problem of translation equivalence is related to the differences between structures, terminology, grammar and lexical forms of languages (Munday, 2001). The example, which Jacobson (2000) proposed to support the concept of "equivalence in difference" is the example of 'cheese' which does not have the same equivalent of the Russian term 'syr.' This is because Russian language does not have the concept of cottage cheese in its dictionary and suggested translating it by 'tvarok' instead.

Nida and Taber (1982) distinguished two types of equivalence as formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence. Formal equivalent translation focuses on a close similarity between the source text and the target text message (Nida, 1964). Formal equivalent translation is described by Kelly (1979, p. 131) as an approach, which "depends on one-to-one matching of small segments, on the assumption that the center of gravity of text and translation lies in the significance for terminological and artistic reasons." On the other hands, dynamic equivalence is based on "the principle of equivalent effect." Nida (1964, p. 159) explained this type of equivalent translation as an approach in which "the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptor and the message." In conclusion, dynamic equivalence is focused on the equivalent effect; whereas, formal equivalence is focused on the message. In Nida's book "Towards A Science of Translation", there is an argument that formal translation are possible to misinterpret the "intention of the author" and more apt to "distort the meaning" (Nida, 1964). Nida gives preference to the dynamic equivalence because the purpose of 'equivalent effect' is to reach "the closest natural equivalent to the source language" (Nida, 1964). Natural equivalence is a fundamental notion in Nida's theory relies on the adaptation of grammar, cultural references and lexicon of the source text. Regarding to Nida (1964), the dynamic translator is more faithful than the formal one because Nida's notion of 'equivalent response' is important for translators to achieve a successful translation (Munday, 2001).

Nida's distinction between formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence is similar to Newmark's distinction between 'communicative translation' and 'semantic translation' in his book *Approaches to Translation* (1981). Newmark proposed the distinction between communicative and semantic translation in contrast to literal translation. According to Newmark (1981, p. 5), translation is "rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text." Communicative translation tends to create the same effects on the readers of the target text as those obtained by readers of the source text. Communicative translation is similar to Nida's notion of dynamic equivalence; whereas, semantic translation focuses on rendering the contextual meaning of the source text according to the syntactic and the semantic characteristics of the target text. Semantic translation is similar to Nida's formal equivalence. Not leaving ideas of equivalence and literal translation, Newmark gives preference to semantic and communicative translation.

The notion of equivalence was changed and developed. Baker (1997) distinguishes equivalence at the level of the word, at the grammatical level, and at the level of the text. According to Baker (1997), these levels are important for the translation and should be considered during the translation process.

Furthermore, Leuven-Zwart (1990, p. 228) proposed that the concept of equivalence "not only distorts the basic problem of translation, but also obstructs the development of a descriptive theory of translation". Similarly, Mehrach (1997) claims that no two languages share the same linguistic structures and social or cultural aspect. He proposes the use of the term 'adequacy' referring to "a translation that has achieved the required optimal level of interlanguage communication under certain given conditions."

In conclusion, the above theories concerning translation equivalence reveal that the notion of equivalence is controversial and relative in nature. Most translation theorists and researchers pay attention to the importance of equivalence in translation, eventually their opinions on translation equivalence are different as the agreement that the equivalence is as a synonym of the translation process and the agreement that the equivalence should not cause the loss of main message of the text. Despite, there are different approaches, the equivalence has been concerned as an important notion in the translation process.

For the present research, the translation equivalence across languages is based on communicative translation type of Newmark, which will be examined using bidirectional translation method.

Linguistic Distance

In this section, the definition of linguistic distance, which is a main effect investigated in the present study will be revealed. Then, the ways to measure linguistic distance are presented and leads to the way of linguistic distance used in the present research will be summarized.

Definitions of Linguistic Distance

The term "Linguistic Distance" is defined by Crystal (1987, p. 371) in *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language* as.

"The structural closeness of languages to each other has often been thought to be an important factor in FLL (foreign language learning). If the L2 is structurally similar to the L1, it is claimed, learning should be easier than in cases where the L2 is very different. However, it is not possible to correlate linguistic difference and learning

difficulty in any straightforward way, and even the basic task of quantifying linguistic difference proves to be highly complex, because of the many variables involved.” (Crystal, 1987, p. 371).

Linguistic distance is referred to the dissimilarity of languages in a multitude of dimensions, such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, scripture, and phonetic inventories (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1993, 2003; Hutchinson, 2002).

In psycholinguistics, language distance is supposed to be a strong predictor of the development of second language and additional language proficiency. In the study of psycholinguistics, the study of linguistic distance is well known issue. The influence of language distance is initially introduced because of the studies of immigrants’ host or destination language development. Studies of immigrant adjustment (e.g. Corder, 1981) revealed that immigrants from some countries of origin have low proficiency in the language of the destination country or host or destination language comparing to other immigrants. Eventually, the other variables affecting host or destination language development are constant.

The hypothesis is that language immigrant groups can develop different proficiency of host or destination is influenced from the “distance” between the immigrant languages and the destination language. For example, English language is linguistic closer to Western European languages such as French and German rather than to East Asian languages such as Korean and Japanese.

Measuring Linguistic Distance

The dissimilarity of languages is complex because the languages can be differed in vocabulary, grammar, written form, syntax and myriad other characteristics. Thus, there is a difficulty to construct measures of linguistic distance. McCloskey (1998, pp. 104-106) illustrated the examples such as eventually, if a person intuitively knows that English language is linguistic closer to Western European languages such as French and German rather than to East Asian languages such as Korean and Japanese. The question is how to measure the closeness between two languages. In addition, it is easy to rank French as closer to English than Chinese is to English; however, a quantitative scalar measure of linguistic distance among the languages may be more difficult. In addition, the distance between two languages also depends on whether the difference is based the written or spoken form. Alternatively, two languages are closed in the spoken form but may differ in the written form.

According to models of the origins of languages, the concept of Language tree is used to explain the historical relationship of the language *family* or *family tree*.” (Crystal 1987, p. 292 *italics in original*). In principle, a language tree explains the evolution of languages. Thus, through a language tree, it is possible to “trace” modern English back to its origins; however, a language tree does not provide how to measure of how different modern English is from its predecessor languages, or other languages on the same or different trees. Therefore, the concept of language tree does not provide a quantitative measure (Chiswick & Miller, 2004).

A widely used approach for quantitative measure of linguistic distance has been introduced by Chiswick and Miller (1998, 2001), who implied data on the average test score of U.S. American language students after a given time of a certain foreign language instruction. The assumption is that if the average score is low, the linguistic distance between English and another language is high. Even though, this data is

obtained from the measure of the distance to English, this measure can be used for a comprehensive comparison of languages across different dimensions.

In this present research, the quantitative measure of linguistic distance of Chiswick and Miller (1998, 2001) will be used to represent the linguistic distance among the stimulus languages used in this study. This quantitative measure of linguistic distance is obtained from the data from the 1990 U.S. Census, which includes a measure of linguistic distance based on test score of languages. This measure has been used in the following analysis as in the 1991 Census of Canada (Chiswick & Miller, 2001), the 2000 U.S. Census (Chiswick & Miller, 2001), and a report entitled "Linguistic Distance: A Quantitative Measurement of the Distance between English and Other Languages" (Chiswick & Miller, 2004). Using this ordinary data, the paper by Hart-Gonzalez and Lindemann (1993) reports language scores for 43 languages with their matching Census of Population Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) language codes for the 1990 and 2000 Censuses using the Ethnologue Language Family Index published by Grimes and Grimes (1993). The linguistic scores for 43 languages are ranged from a lowest score (1.00) to a highest score (3.00). These scores are used to rank linguistic distance from English among these languages and from one language to another language, not only focused on the distance from English. The data on language scores of 43 languages is also extended to a much longer list of languages using "direct code" of the Ethnologue Language Family Index published by Grimes and Grimes (1993).

Based on Chiswick and Miller (2004), the linguistic distance from one language to another language rather than English language is measured as the inverse of the linguistic score (LS) using ordinary least squares regression analysis (OLS).

Research Methodology

The recent investigation is a mixed method research. There are three research methods as focus group, bi-directional translation, and questionnaire evaluation methods.

The Focus Group Method

The focus group was organized with ten representatives of ethnic community in the research area. The purpose of the focus group is to identify local food terms in the source text, which is Thai language.

Participants

Participants are ten representatives of four ethnic community in Ban Pong Subdistrict, Ratchaburi Province, Thailand. The participants are descended from Thai, Lao, Mon, and Chinese ethnics. There are two criteria for selecting participants of the focus group.

The first criteria include those who are recognized by the community and well-known, having a good knowledge of the culture and language of their ethnicity, and were pleasure to attend the focus group.

The second criteria are using a snowball technique to select a group of people recommended by participants selected from the first criteria that they have a good knowledge of the culture and language of their ethnicity, and were pleasure to attend the focus group.

Research Instrument

Open ended questions concerning types of food in their culture

Research Procedure

The focus group was interviewed with open ended questions concerning types of food in their food culture. Then the food terms obtained from the focus group will be translated to the target language using bi-directional translation method.

Bi-directional Translation Method

In the present study, Thai is a source language and Lao, English, and Chinese languages are target languages. The procedure of bi-directional translation from Thai to Lao, English, and Chinese languages are presented below.

1. Three native speakers of target language translated Thai food terms to the target languages by bringing images of food to the translators and asked them to tell the words referring to these foods in their native language.

2. Translated words in the target language will be translated into the source language.

3. Verification of translation from target language to source language uses the reverse translation process. Translated words in the target language, which can be translated back to the original word in the source language will be selected as the translated words.

Questionnaire Evaluation

There are two phrases of questionnaire evaluation. First, the questionnaire concerning translation difficulties obtained from Thai-Lao-Chinese-English translation process was used. The data was collected in nine translators who are native speakers of Lao, English, and Chinese languages and involved in the present research translation procedure and thirty bachelor's degree students in translation course. Second, the questionnaire concerning difficulties to understand Thai as source and target language translation pairs in native speakers of Lao, English, and Chinese languages was used. The data was collected in native speakers of Lao, English, and Chinese languages who read translation words obtained from translation procedure. The details of each phrase are as follow

Phrase I

Participants

Nine translators, who are native speakers of Lao, English, and Chinese Languages. There are three translators of each language. Thirty bachelor's degree students in translation course

Research Instrument

Opened end questions concerning the problems of translation difficulties they obtained

Research Procedure

After they finished translation tasks, they were asked to evaluate the translation difficulties of 47 translation items on a 1–5 Likert scale, with 1 being extremely easy and 5 being extremely difficult. Then they were interviewed with the opened end questions concerning the obtained problems of translation difficulties.

Phrase 2

Participants

Native speakers of Lao, English, and Chinese Languages. There are twenty participants of each language.

Research Instrument

Opened end questions concerning difficulties to understand, which they obtained from reading translation pairs.

Research Procedure

After they were asked to read 47 translation pairs, they were asked to evaluate the understanding difficulties of 47 translation items on a 1–5 Likert scale, with 1 being extremely easy and 5 being extremely difficult. Then they were interviewed with the opened end questions concerning the obtained problems of understanding.

Research Results

To identify specific food terms of ethnic community in local Thai community.

According to focus group of ten representatives of four ethnic community in Ban Pong Subdistrict, Ratchaburi Province, Thailand. The participants are descended from Thai, Lao, Mon, and Chinese ethnics, a list of local food menu in community and its ingredients was developed. The example of a list of local food menu in community and its ingredients is presented below.

Figure 1

Example of a List of Local Food Menu in Community and Its Ingredients

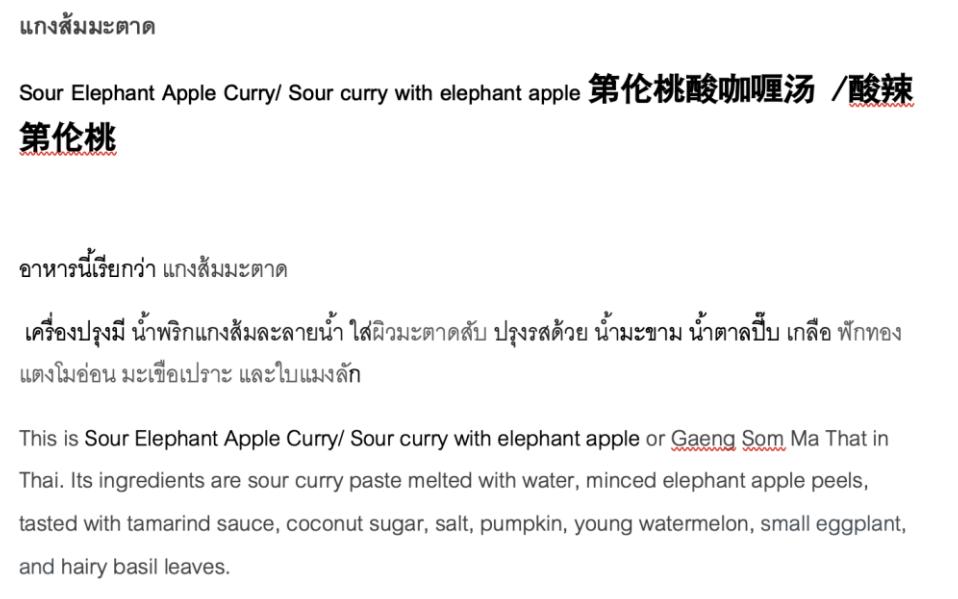


Figure 1 shows terminology example of local food menu in community and its ingredients. This kind of food is a curry menu of Mon ethnic group. Its special ingredient is Elephant Apple, which can be found in some areas. This special ingredient

and the way to cook it make this menu specially and is difficult to find in the general restaurants.

Translation Difficulties of Local Food Terms across Languages used by Native Speakers with Different Cultures

Regarding to the translation difficulties of local food terms among languages used by native speakers with different cultures, the results are presented in Table 1. The mean and S.D. were calculated from translation difficulty rating of 47 translation items in three translators of each language. Thus, the number of raw data for each language is 1,833 items, which is obtained from evaluation of 47 translation items by 39 participants.

Table 1

Mean and S.D. of the Translation Difficulties of 47 Translation Items

Source Language	Target Language	Mean	S.D
Thai	Lao	1	0.38
	English	4	0.42
	Chinese	3	0.46

From Table 1, the mean of translation difficulties from Thai to Lao was rated at 1 or referring to being extremely easy, followed by the mean of translation difficulties from Thai to Chinese was rated at 3 or referring to being moderated, and the mean of translation difficulties from Thai to English was rated at 4 or referring to being difficult.

Difficulties to understand Thai as source and target language translation pairs in native speakers of Lao, English, and Chinese languages

Regarding to the difficulties to understand Thai as source and target language translation pairs in native speakers of Lao, English, and Chinese languages, the results are presented in Table 2. The mean and S.D. were calculated from translation difficulty rating of 47 translation items in 20 native speakers of each language. Thus, the number of raw data for each language is 940 items, which is obtained from evaluation of 47 translation items by 20 native speakers.

Table 2

Mean and S.D. of the Understanding Difficulties of 47 Translation Items Rated by 20 Participants

Source Language	Target Language	Mean	S.D
Thai	Lao	0.25	0.21
	English	4.2	0.56
	Chinese	3.1	0.38

From Table 2, the mean of understanding difficulties from Thai to Lao was rated at 0.25 or referring to being extremely easy, followed by the mean of understanding difficulties from Thai to Chinese was rated at 3.1 or referring to being moderated, and the mean of understanding difficulties from Thai to English was rated at 4.2 or referring to being difficult.

Translation Difficulties Problems based on Cross-Language Translation

The translation and understanding difficulties of local food terms among languages used by native speakers with different cultures and languages was analyzed from the interview of translators presented following.

The problems obtained from word meanings are.

a) Food with specific local ingredients

According to the study, it was found that translation of food terms, which food menus are made of local ingredients, was rated as difficult tasks. The translators have to find words in the other languages, which can exactly refer to the meaning and characteristics of local specific ingredients. The examples of these words and their translated words are below:

Figure 2

Three Flavoured Dried Kaffir Limes



A dessert menu is called in Thai as /ma krut op h ε ŋ sa:m rot/. It was translated to Lao as / sa:m rot kho ŋ ma krut op h ε ŋ/, which is cognate to Thai word. It was translated to English as three flavoured dried kaffir limes and Chinese as /sān wèi qīng níng gàn/. Its specific main local ingredient is /ma krut/, which is closed translated to kaffir limes in English.

Another example of translation difficulty obtained from translating food menus with specific local ingredients is shown in Figure 1. A curry menu is called in Thai as / kε:ŋ sōm ma ta:t/. It was translated to Lao as /ma:k khuŋ/. It was translated to English as sour elephant apple curry/ sour curry with elephant apple and Chinese as /dì lún táo suān kā lí tāng / or /suān là dì lún táo/. Its specific main local ingredient is /ma ta:t/, which is closed translated to elephant apple in English.

b) Food with specific local cooking method

Regarding to the results, it was found that translation of food terms, in which local cooking method is used, obtained the translation difficulties. The examples of this type of words are.

Figure 3

Food with Specific Local Cooking Method: Bamboo Tubes of Sweet Custardy Sticky Rice and Fried Bean Burd



Figure 3 showed a picture of menu named /khao la:m/ or bamboo tubes of sweet custardy sticky rice. This word is pronounced in Thai as /khao la:m/, was translated to Lao as / khao la:m/, which is closed to Thai word. It was translated to English as bamboo tubes of sweet custardy sticky rice and Chinese as /yē nǎi zhú tǒng fàn/. It is sticky rice mixed with sugar, sweet red beans, and coconut cream and baked in cylinders of hollow bamboo. Its distinguished cooking method is baking the mixture of sticky rice in cylinders of hollow bamboo and this leads to the name of this menu.

Figure 3 showed a picture of menu named /taw hu: th ɔ:t/ or fried bean burd. This word is pronounced in Thai as /taw hu: th ɔ:t/, was translated to Lao as /taw hu: thov/ which is cognate to Thai word. It was translated to English as fried bean burd and Chinese as 炸豆腐 /zhà dòu fu/. This menu is fried bean curd or Tau Hu Tod in Thai. Beancurd is cut into slices and fry over medium heat until golden brown. Fried bean curd is served with different sauces such as soy sauce and special sauce for fried bean curd.

c) *The difficulties obtained from food terms related to local tradition*

An example of difficulties is a dessert menu named / kha:w maw/, translated to Lao as / kha:w maw/, translated to English as Pounded Unripe Rice or Khao Mao, translated to Chinese /suì mǐ lì/. This dessert is pounded unripe rice or Khao Mao in Thai. Khao Mao is made from young glutinous rice. Khao Mao is a rice dessert in several Southeast Asian countries such as Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam (Ekasit, and Jiraporn, 2013). Khao Mao is roasted and pounded shredded rice grain.

Another example is Khao Lam. According to the focus group, the representatives of Lao ethnic revealed that this kind of dessert is related to the merit-making tradition of “Bun Khao Lam” of the descendants of Lao in the research area and also, the other groups of Lao descendants in Thailand and Laos. The tradition is in the third month and crops are ready for harvest. Khao Lam will be cooked with the

main ingredient of harvested, fragrant sticky rice. In the tradition of “Bun Khao Lam”, the people would make khao lam and presented it to the monks

According to the local tradition of native speakers who speak Thai, Lao, English, and Chinese languages, the previous studies showed the closed relation between Thai and Lao people in many aspects; for example, Li and Solnit (2007, August 14) in *Encyclopedia Britannica* Thai and Lao, the official languages of Thailand and Lao, respectively, are the best known of the languages in Tai languages.

Draper et al. (2019) revealed that Thai and Lao identity are closely related and this work focused that Lao culture and identity persisted at local, regional, and national levels in Thai. As Keyes (1967) mentioned to “a Northeast Thailand-based ethno-regionalism”, as ‘Thai Lao’. According to these studies, Thai and Lao languages are closer in every aspects rather than Thai and English, and Chinese languages.

As a result, translation of Thai and Lao food terms, which are related to local festival and tradition are easier to find equivalent translation pairs rather than translating from Thai to English and Chinese language.

Whereas, some menus of Thai food obtained from the recent study get influence from Chinese menu and some menu is originally Chinese. For example, Wong Fa Moo Pun, which is originally the ancient luck desserts of Hakkas Chinese and still desserts of people descending from Hakkas Chinese living in the research area. Another example is fried bean burd or/taw hu: th ɔ:t/ in Thai. Its translation into Chinese is /zhà dòu fu/. The main ingredient of this menu is bean burd, which is also cooked as Chinese menu. The names of these menu in Thai language borrow the meaning and pronunciation from Chinese language. Thus, there is no difficulties to translate from Thai terms to Chinese terms.

Discussions

The translation study of food terms is accepted that it is important in both language study and the other social and economic activities. An example of the importance is the study of Al- Rushaidi, and Ali (2017), which proposed that food menu translation is a basic communication tool for restaurants and coffee shops for product marketing and giving food product information to their costumers. However, the success of food term translation requires translators to consider the cultural associations embedded in these terms (González–Vera, 2015).

According to the present study, Thai local food menus used for translation were obtained from the focus group procedure of representatives of four ethnic community as Thai, Lao, Mon, and Chinese ethnics in Ban Pong Subdistrict, Ratchaburi Province, Thailand. Therefore, the menus are distinguished and locally specific. The translation of the names of these menus was from Thai as the source language and to Lao, English, and Chinese as the target languages. The translation difficulties was obtained from the specific food menus related to specific local ethnic food culture. These were supported by the work of Pillsbury (1998), which mentioned that two fundamental elements of food culture are what humans eat they can find from their environment and they eat what their ancestors ate. The results revealed that food menus with local ingredients and cooking methods in Thai local culture, which are different from the culture of people in target language society, produced the translation difficulties. This finding leads to the significance of investigating translation strategies,

which are appreciated and effectively used to translate food menus from a specific culture into the other languages.

In addition, the results also revealed that the influence of interchange between at least two cultures in food menus provides different levels of translation difficulties. For example, the Thai food menus, which is similar or nearly the same as Lao menus, will be very easy to translated and most of the menus have similar food name pronunciation. The closed cultural relation of Thai and Lao is supported from the research in cultural aspects such as Draper et al. (2019), which revealed key cultural components include food and key identity markers of Thai and Lao.

Also, the Thai food menus, which are adapted from Chinese foods, will be easily translated from Thai language to Chinese language. In addition, the local food menus in the present study are rooted from four ethnics as Thai, Mon, Lao, and Chinese in the local community of Ratchaburi province, Thailand. Thus, the menus descended from the menus of Lao and Chinese ethnics Whereas, translating local Thai food terms to English language obtained the higher level of translation difficulties. This can be explained based on the cultural difference.

In addition, the findings also related to the assumption of linguistic distance, which refers to the dissimilarity of languages in a multitude of dimensions, such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, scripture, and phonetic inventories (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1993, 2003; Hutchinson, 2002).

The quantitative measure of linguistic distance by Chiswick and Miller (1998, 2001), who implied data on the average test score of U.S. American language students after a given time of a certain foreign language instruction. The data obtained from the measure of the distance to English can be used for a comprehensive comparison of different languages. The quantitative measure of linguistic distance of Chiswick and Miller (1998, 2001) calculated the linguistic distance as scores. The linguistic scores for 43 language are ranged is from a lowest score (1.00) to a highest score (3.00). Based on the scores of 43 languages, Thai language and Lao language obtain linguistic distance closer than Thai language and English or Chinese language.

These results illustrate that translation across different languages have to consider both language characteristics and cultural differences, which related to meanings of texts.

Recommendations

1. The influence of culture and linguistic distance must be considered as a distinguished factor in multilanguage study; for example, language acquisition, and language teaching.

2. The development of tools for culture and linguistic distance measurement in both quantitative and qualitative is an interesting issue for further study.

Acknowledgments

The present research objectives are a part of a research project named “The Development of E-Book and Thesaurus using Inter-Language Common Based Concept to Develop Thai, Local Dialects, English, and Chinese Languages used for Cultural Tourism in Ban Pong District, Ratchaburi Province for Community People”, which is financial supported from National Research Council of Thailand. In addition, we also thank all participants for their contribution to this study.

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Author

Professor Dr. Panornuang Sudasna Na Ayudhya obtained her Ph.D. (Linguistics) from Chulalongkorn University in 2002, with The Royal Golden Jubilee Ph.D. Programme which is Ph.D. Research Scholarships from Thailand Research Fund and B.A. (English and Psychology) with the first class honor from Chulalongkorn University in 1996. She has been lecturer in English language and linguistics fields for 18 years and her research focuses on psycholinguistics. Her academic contributions are evidenced by government research grants and international publication since 1999 until present.

English Learning Approach in Improving Speaking and Listening Skills at Senior Senior High School in Indonesia

Muh Ibnu Sholeh¹ / W. C. Singh² / Sahri³ / Sokip⁴

¹ Education Management Study Program , STAIMAS Ngunut, Tulungagung, Indonesia

E-mail: indocellular@gmail.com

²Management Faculty, Manipur University, India

E-mail: drwcsingh@gmail.com

³ Technology Institute, Sunan Giri University, Bojonegoro, Indonesia

E-mail: sahriunugiri@gmail.com

⁴ Languange Education Faculty, UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah, Tulungagung, Indonesia

E-mail: irdan6000@gmail.com

Received: October 15, 2023

Revised: November 28, 2023

Accepted: December 26, 2023

Abstract

This research aims to analyze how the English language learning approach can improve speaking and listening skills at Gunungjati Senior Senior High School and Sunan Kalijaga Senior Senior High School. This research method uses qualitative research. The research location was at two schools, namely Senior High School Gunungjati and Senior High School Sunan Kalijaga Tulungagung Indonesia. Data was collected through classroom observations, interviews with teachers, and evaluation of teaching materials. In addition, surveys and exams are conducted to measure students' progress in speaking and listening. The data collected was analyzed using qualitative analysis methods consisting of the process of transcription, coding, grouping the essence of research results that have the same meaning, and presenting the data. The research results show that Senior High School Gunung Jati has succeeded in carefully implementing a project-based approach, creating a learning context that reflects real-world situations. These projects motivate students to speak English and collaborate actively. Sunan Kalijaga Senior High School has successfully used a technology-based approach in learning English. The use of podcasts, mobile applications, and other audio materials has helped students improve their listening skills. The success of both approaches depends on teacher preparation, adaptation of learning content, and selection of relevant technology.

Keywords: learning, English, speaking ability, listening

Introduction

English education has an increasingly important role in facing the challenges of globalization and cross-cultural communication (Khoirunnisa, 2021) . English is no longer just a foreign language, but an international language used in business, academics, diplomacy and entertainment (Mudofir, 2016) . Understanding and mastery of English is not just an asset, but an urgent need for individuals and communities who wish to participate in the global arena. Therefore, it is important to ensure that students have strong speaking and listening skills in English.

In Indonesia, English is an important part of the educational curriculum, and many secondary schools have attempted to improve the quality of English language teaching (Solikhah et al., 2016). However, over time, the approach to teaching English has undergone a significant transformation. Traditional approaches that focus more on grammar and vocabulary memorization are not always able to produce students who are proficient in speaking and listening to English in real-world contexts.

This is where it is important to understand the approach in English education, which places greater emphasis on active communication and in-depth understanding (Khusniyah & Hakim, 2019). The two approaches that will be discussed in this research are a project-based approach and a technology-based approach. Project-based approaches create learning contexts that reflect real-world situations, while technology-based approaches use digital tools to facilitate speaking and listening learning.

The project-based approach is a learning method that emphasizes creating learning contexts that reflect real-world situations. In the context of speaking and listening skills, this approach will involve students in practical projects that require them to communicate, collaborate, and listen with the aim of achieving specific outcomes. For example, students can be asked to make group presentations about current issues or art projects that involve creative dialogue and discussion (Kusuma, 2019). The project-based approach allows students to experience and apply their speaking and listening skills in real contexts, increasing their understanding and engagement in the learning process.

A technology-based approach includes the use of digital tools and modern technology as a means to facilitate speaking and listening learning. In this context, teachers can use video conferencing platforms, voice recording software, or speaking and listening learning applications. The use of technology allows for more dynamic and inclusive interactions, especially if students and learning resources are geographically distributed. For example, students can simulate interviews via video conference or use applications to record and play back their own conversations (Sulistio, 2021). Technology-based approaches can increase accessibility, motivate students through interactive elements, and expand the learning space beyond the traditional classroom.

There are several research gaps that need to be considered in the context of a case study at Gunungjati Senior High School and Sunan Kalijaga Senior High School in Tulungagung, Indonesia, which explores current approaches in English language education to improve students' speaking and listening skills: First, it is important to further explore the comparison of effectiveness between based approaches. project and technology-based (Putri Astawa et al., 2020). Although these two approaches have been proven to be useful in improving students' speaking and listening skills, further research is still needed that can compare in detail the extent to which they are successful in the school environment in Tulungagung. Is one of these approaches superior to the other, or perhaps there is a combination of the two that can provide the best results.

This research chose to focus on two schools, Senior High School Gunungjati and Senior High School Sunan Kalijaga Tulungagung, Indonesia, because both schools offer a unique and valuable framework for understanding the development of speaking and listening skills. First of all, the selection of these two schools was based on the diversity of educational backgrounds and study programs offered, providing a broader picture of the teaching experience in various educational contexts. In addition, these

two schools can represent different secondary education contexts, namely high school and vocational high school, which can provide a rich perspective related to the implementation and successful development of speaking and listening skills.

The selection of these two schools was also driven by the desire to understand the extent to which the application of two different approaches, namely project-based and technology-based approaches, may vary between the schools. This provides an opportunity to analyze differences in learning approaches and explore their impact on teachers' progress in the development of speaking and listening skills in different educational settings.

Gunungjati Senior High School and Sunan Kalijaga Senior High School were chosen because of their commitment to developing students' communication skills. By examining these two schools, it is hoped that in-depth and valuable information will be found to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning, as well as provide guidance that can be applied more widely in improving the quality of education at the local and national level.

In addition, contextual factors that influence the implementation of the approach also need to be considered. The school context, including the availability of resources, culture, and social environment, can influence the effectiveness of an approach (Suhardiana, 2019). Therefore, understanding how these factors influence the implementation of project and technology-based approaches in Tulungagung schools is important. More in-depth research should also focus on long-term evaluation of student progress. Can the positive results obtained over the time period of these approaches be maintained over a longer period of time, and does the impact influence students' academic achievement and future career development?

Gunungjati Senior High School and Sunan Kalijaga Senior High School in Tulungagung, Indonesia, are two examples of schools that have adopted Project and technology-based approaches in an effort to improve their students' speaking and listening skills. SMA Gunungjati develops projects that challenge students to speak in contextual situations, while SMK Sunan Kalijaga focuses on using technology to expand students' access to audio materials in English.

It is important to understand the extent to which these approaches are effective in improving students' speaking and listening skills in these two schools. The results of this research will provide valuable insight into how these innovative approaches can be implemented more widely in the Indonesian education system, and may also provide practical guidance for other schools wishing to improve students' speaking and listening skills in English. With a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced in teaching speaking and listening skills, we can help Indonesian students to be better prepared to face the challenges of globalization and cross-cultural communication.

Through more in-depth research in this area, we can deepen our understanding of the effectiveness of these approaches in improving the speaking and listening skills of students at Gunungjati Senior High School and Sunan Kalijaga Senior High School in Tulungagung. This research will provide clearer guidance on how to promote more effective and relevant English language education in secondary schools in Indonesia and help prepare students to face the demands of globalization and cross-cultural communication in the future.

Research Objectives

Based on the knowledge and experience of researchers regarding English language learning approaches in order to improve listening and speaking skills in Indonesia, such as research conducted by Yulia Nur Ekawati (Ekawati, 2017). shows that the use of the "project-based learning" model can improve listening skills. English language learners. The increase in student achievement is reflected in the average score of the listening test for task 1 and task 2 in both research cycles. The average score of students' listening ability increased from 71.33 in cycle I to 80.04 in cycle II in the listening task 1 test. Likewise, in the Listening Task 2 test which measures overall listening ability, there was an increase from 68.12 in cycle I to 78.33 in cycle II. Thus, it can be concluded that the PBL model is effective in improving students' listening skills. Research conducted by Linda Sari and Zuliana Lestari (Sari, 2019). regarding improving students' English speaking skills in the Revolution 4.0 era identified various effective strategies for improving speaking skills. These strategies include expanding vocabulary, reading aloud, understanding basic English grammar, reading English texts, participating in conversations in English, listening to English songs, watching English films, and developing an interest in English. To improve English language skills, a number of strategies can be implemented in a planned manner. expanding vocabulary is a fundamental first step. One can achieve this by reading bold books, articles or resources that feature new words regularly. Reading aloud can improve comprehension and pronunciation. This activity engages more of the senses, strengthens the connection between writing and sound, and supports the development of the ability to speak more fluently.

Understanding basic English grammar becomes essential. Focusing on basic grammar rules helps prevent common mistakes in speaking and writing. These skills are strengthened by reading texts in English, such as news articles, short stories, or books. This activity not only trains reading comprehension, but also broadens understanding and enriches sentence structure. Participating in conversations in English helps build confidence and speaking skills (Sholeh, 2023). Discussing with friends or mentors, or joining an English conversation group, provides opportunities to apply knowledge in a real way. Likewise, listening to English songs trains hearing and sharpens skills, while watching films or television series in English helps understanding visual context and various speech accents.

Developing an interest in English can increase motivation and learning outcomes. Linking language learning to personal interests, such as reading a favorite book or exploring a particular topic, makes the learning process more enjoyable and sustainable. By integrating these strategies, one can holistically and progressively improve his or her English skills in the aspects of speaking, listening, reading, and writing. The following are several research objectives for the study entitled "English Language Learning Approaches in Improving Speaking and Listening Skills at Gunungjati Senior High School and Sunan Kalijaga Senior High School":

1. Assess the effectiveness of the English learning approach used at Gunungjati Senior High School and Sunan Kalijaga Senior High School in improving students' speaking skills at both schools.

2. Analyze the impact of the English learning approach on improving students' listening skills at Gunungjati Senior High School and Sunan Kalijaga Senior High School.

3. Comparing the effectiveness of various English learning approaches at Gunungjati Senior High School and Sunan Kalijaga Senior High School in improving students' speaking and listening skills.

4. Provide recommendations for improving English language learning approaches to improve students' speaking and listening skills in both schools.

With these objectives, the research will investigate various aspects in efforts to improve students' speaking and listening skills through an English language learning approach at Gunungjati Senior High School and Sunan Kalijaga Senior High School.

English Education in Indonesia

English education in Indonesia is an integral component in the national education system (Sutrisna, 2021). English is not just an additional subject, but has become an urgent need for individuals and society in facing an increasingly globally connected world. English subjects are required to be taught at all levels of schools throughout the country, reflecting awareness of the importance of this language in various aspects of life (Daar & Jemadi, 2020). The history of teaching English in Indonesia can be traced back to the period of colonial rule by the Dutch (Alfarsiyy, 2021). At that time, English was introduced mainly among colonial elites and officials as a means of international communication. After Indonesian independence in 1945, English was still recognized as an important foreign language, especially in diplomacy and trade.

However, as time goes by, the role of English is expanding. English is essential in business, science, technology and cross-cultural communication (Aini & Nohantiya, 2020). This is what drives the development of English language teaching in Indonesia and changes in the educational curriculum. The teaching approach also changed from a focus on grammar and vocabulary memorization to an emphasis on active communication and deep understanding. Despite progress, there are still challenges faced in improving the quality of English education in Indonesia. Teacher qualifications in teaching English are an important issue (Islam et al., 2021). Many English teachers in Indonesia do not have adequate qualifications. Resources such as textbooks and up-to-date teaching materials are also limited, especially in rural areas. In addition, it is important to motivate students to actively participate in English learning.

Understanding of the importance of English and efforts to overcome this challenge continue to grow in Indonesia. The government and educational institutions continue to strive to improve the quality of English language teaching and face the obstacles that arise (Faridatuunnisa, 2020). With a deep understanding of the development of English in Indonesia, we can evaluate the impact and relevance of current approaches to English language learning in facing the demands of globalization and cross-cultural communication.

Approaches to English Language Learning

The approach to learning English is the foundation that forms the basis for the way we teach and learn English (Simbolon, 2014). It is a framework used by teachers and students in the English language education process. This approach involves a variety of teaching methods, strategies and approaches designed to help students understand and master English more effectively. In other words, it is a plan that guides how English is taught in schools and how students learn the language.

The approach to learning English is very important because it is the key to ensuring that students receive an effective English education (Aminatun et al., 2022). This includes selecting teaching methods that suit students' needs, strategies to improve speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills, as well as ways to measure students' progress in English (Susini, 2020). This approach may also vary depending on learning objectives, student level, and available resources.

In the context of English education, approaches to learning English can include various things, such as student-centered teaching methods, the use of technology in learning, the application of project-based approaches, and many more. It is a tool used by educators to create a learning environment that supports the development of students' English language skills, so that they can confidently communicate in the language in a variety of contexts, including business, academic, and cross-cultural communication (Muklas et al., 2023). In other words, the approach to learning English is a guide to ensure that English language education in Indonesia is effective and relevant. In this case we will discuss various approaches that have been used in the context of English language education (Sholeh, 2023). The two approaches that will be the focus of this research are the project-based approach and the technology-based approach.

Project Based Approach

The project-based approach is a learning method that places great emphasis on the use of projects in real contexts as a means of teaching and understanding English (Yuliawati, 2018). This approach has basic principles that guide the teaching and learning process, which include:

1. Student-Centered Learning (Padmadewi et al., 2009): A project-based approach places students at the center of learning. Students are not only recipients of information, but they are also actively involved in planning, designing, and implementing projects. They have more control over their learning process, which helps increase motivation and engagement.

2. Integrating Various Skills (Setyowati, 2019): Projects in this approach often integrate various language skills, such as speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Students not only learn to speak English but also hone their listening skills while interacting with classmates and project materials.

3. Use of Authentic Projects (Suryana et al., 2021): Projects used in a project-based approach often reflect real-world situations. They can involve simulations of business situations, discussions of social issues, field research, and more. In this way, students not only learn English, but also experience its use in contexts that are relevant to real life.

The project-based approach aims to provide a deeper and more meaningful learning experience for students. Through these projects, students not only understand English theoretically, but they are also able to apply it in everyday situations. In the context of this research, the project-based approach will be analyzed further to understand the extent to which this approach has succeeded in improving students' speaking and listening skills at Gunungjati Senior High School and Sunan Kalijaga Senior High School in Tulungagung, Indonesia.

Technology Based Approach

A technology-based approach in learning English is a method that integrates digital tools and modern technology in the learning process (Hatibie, 2019). In this context, how important is technology in English language learning, including the use of various digital tools such as podcasts, mobile applications, and other digital resources that can improve students' listening and speaking abilities.

1. Use of Podcasts (Dewi et al., 2022): Podcasts are a digital tool that is increasingly popular in English language learning. Podcasts are audio or video recordings that students can download and listen to. They often cover a wide range of topics, including stories, interviews, discussions, and educational materials. In the context of learning English, podcasts can help students improve their listening skills and understand various accents, intonations and speaking rates in English.

2. Mobile Applications (Nova Noor Kamala Sari et al., 2019): Mobile applications or smartphone applications also have an important role in learning English. There are many apps specifically designed to help students improve their speaking and listening skills. Some of these apps can provide speaking practice, listening comprehension tests, and even pronunciation correction. This app allows students to learn English independently and move around their schedule.

3. Other Digital Resources (Susanti & Prameswari, 2020): Apart from podcasts and mobile applications, there are various other digital resources that can be used in learning English. This includes online learning videos, online learning platforms, and interactive learning resources. These resources can help students understand the material in an engaging and educational context.

The technology-based approach aims to utilize the advantages of modern technology in enriching students' learning experiences. In this research, the focus will be on how technology can be used to improve the listening and speaking skills of students at Gunungjati Senior High School and Sunan Kalijaga Senior High School in Tulungagung, Indonesia. By understanding the role of technology in English language learning, we can identify the potential of this method in improving the quality of English education in schools in Indonesia and around the world.

Speaking Ability in English Language Learning

The ability to speak English is a key component in oral communication and is an important aspect in learning English (Syafitri et al., 2019). In the context of English learning, speaking ability includes various in-depth components:

1. Pronunciation (Sholeh & Muhaji, 2015): The ability to pronounce words and phrases in English correctly is a key element in speaking skills. Good pronunciation helps students be well understood by native speakers and contributes to effective communication.

2. Vocabulary (Ramdhan, 2017): A good understanding of vocabulary in English is important for building meaningful sentences. Students need to expand their vocabulary to be able to express ideas and thoughts more richly.

3. Grammar (Usvar et al., 2023): Grammar is the rules that govern how words and phrases are arranged in English. Understanding proper grammar allows students to construct sentences correctly and avoid mistakes that can confuse communication.

4. Expressive Skills (Meinawati et al., 2020): The ability to convey thoughts, ideas and opinions clearly and effectively is the ultimate goal in speaking skills. This involves proper use of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar.

In the context of this research, an in-depth understanding of speaking ability will help in evaluating the impact of project-based and technology-based approaches in improving students' speaking ability at SMA Gunungjati and SMK Sunan Kalijaga in Tulungagung, Indonesia. Evaluation of speaking skills is an important step in understanding the extent to which students are able to communicate in English confidently and effectively. By focusing on developing speaking skills, we can help students become better communicators in English.

Listening Skills in English Language Learning

The ability to listen in English is an important skill in oral communication (Ekawati, 2017) . In this case, several important aspects are related to listening skills in learning English:

1. The Role of Listening Activities (Nurmala, 2019): Listening activities, such as listening to interviews, lectures, discussions, or audio materials, are an effective way to improve students' listening skills. Through these various activities, students can become familiar with various accents, intonations, and speaking rates in English. They can also develop their understanding of spoken language used in everyday situations.

2. Deep Understanding of Oral Communication (Rohmani & Ali Putra, 2023): A deep understanding of how oral communication functions in English is very important. This includes an understanding of how ideas and information are conveyed through conversation, including the use of phrases, idioms, and common speaking styles in English. By understanding this, students can become more effective listeners.

3. Exercises to Become an Active Listener (Yastanti, 2015): Being an active listener involves more than just hearing words. Students need to be trained to listen to the context, respond with appropriate questions or comments, and follow the conversation closely. This helps them become more contributing participants in the conversation and understand the information better.

4. The Role of Technology (Astuti & Anjarwati, 2020): In the digital era, technology plays an important role in improving students' listening skills. Technology allows wider access to audio materials in English, such as podcasts, videos and audio recordings. Students can use their own devices to practice listening and understanding a variety of material relevant to everyday life

With a deep understanding of these elements, we can understand how current approaches in English education, such as project-based and technology-based approaches, can contribute to the development of students' speaking and listening skills at Gunungjati Senior High School and Sunan Kalijaga Senior High School in Tulungagung, Indonesia. A deep understanding of these elements is key in evaluating

how current approaches in English education, such as project-based and technology-based approaches, can contribute to the development of students' speaking and listening skills at SMA Gunungjati and SMK Sunan Kalijaga in Tulungagung, Indonesia.

The project-based approach at SMA Gunung Jati creates a learning context that gives students the opportunity to develop speaking skills through contextual projects. By focusing on projects that reflect real-world situations, students can practice using English in communicative contexts. The process of collaboration, debate and presentation in English also enriches their learning experience.

The technology-based approach at Sunan Kalijaga Senior High School utilizes digital tools and modern technological resources to expand students' access to audio materials in English. Through the use of podcasts, mobile apps, and other digital resources, students have more opportunities to practice English listening in a variety of contexts. This helps them become more proficient listeners and can understand the variety of languages and accents used in oral communication.

The results of this research will help us better understand the effectiveness of these two approaches in improving students' speaking and listening skills in these two schools. In this way, we can provide practical guidance for other schools wishing to improve students' speaking and listening skills in English. In addition, this research also provides valuable insights into how to prepare students to face the demands of globalization and cross-cultural communication in the future.

Research Methodology

This research uses qualitative research methods (Kadir, 2022). The research locations were at two secondary education institutions, namely SMA Gunungjati and SMK Sunan Kalijaga Tulungagung Indonesia. Participants in this research were determined using the purposive sampling method (Etikan, 2016). The population of Gunungjati Senior High School is 55 teachers and Sunan Kalijaga Senior High School is 30 teachers. The number of samples taken was 30% of the teachers at Gunungjati Senior High School totaling 17 teachers and 40% of the teachers at Sunan Kalijaga Senior High School totaling 12 teachers (Helaudin & Wijaya, 2019). Data were collected through classroom observations, in-depth interviews with teachers, and evaluation of open-ended materials. Additionally, surveys and exams are conducted to measure students' progress in speaking and listening. The tools used to collect data include the Interview Instrument with Teachers in the Initial Question asking about How long have you been teaching at Gunungjati Senior High School or Sunan Kalijaga Senior High School? Have you been involved in developing speaking and listening skills at this school? Skill Development Question: What approach or method do you use in developing students' speaking skills? How do you advance students' progress in listening skills? Questions Regarding Teaching Materials such as How do you assess the quality of teaching materials used to develop speaking and listening skills? Do you feel that the current open material is sufficient to achieve the goals of developing speaking and listening skills? General questions such as How do you see the teacher's role in developing students' speaking and listening skills? Do you have any particular challenges in developing these skills in your learning environment? Classroom Observation Instruments such as student reactions to speaking and listening activities. Use of teaching methods and teacher-student interaction. Implementation of strategies for developing speaking and listening skills. Teaching Material Evaluation Instruments

such as: Suitability of teaching materials to the curriculum. Integration of material with the development of speaking and listening skills. Creativity and diversity of learning methods in open materials. Stakeholder Survey Instruments such as, How effective do you think the speaking and listening skills development program at this school is? How do you assess the teacher's contribution to the development of these skills? Do you have any suggestions or recommendations to improve this program? After the data collected was analyzed using the qualitative analysis method (Esterberg, 2018), which consists of the process of transcription, coding, grouping the essence of research results that have the same meaning, and presenting the data (Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, 2014).

Results

Gunung Jati Senior High School Case Study Results: Project Based Approach

Implementation of a Project Based Approach

At Gunung Jati High School, a project-based approach has been carefully implemented. The teachers at this school have taken the initiative to design projects that are highly relevant to the students' daily lives. The projects cover a variety of topics that are of interest to students, and this is very important because it motivates them to speak English.

Projects related to topics that students are interested in are a smart approach because they allow students to be actively and enthusiastically involved in learning. Students are more likely to participate when they have a personal interest in the subject they are studying. In addition, the simulation of real situations and roles in these projects creates an authentic communicative context. This helps students apply their English in situations similar to everyday use, which in turn strengthens their speaking skills in English.

The teacher's role in facilitating student group work is key to the success of this project-based approach. Encouraging students to collaborate, debate and share ideas in English is an integral part of the learning process. The teacher acts as a facilitator in directing students towards a presentation or final project that involves speaking English. In this case, teachers can also provide adequate guidance and feedback to help students improve their speaking skills.

Thus, the implementation of a project-based approach at SMA Gunung Jati provides an effective framework for improving students' English speaking skills. It motivates students, provides them with an authentic communicative context, and develops their speaking skills in English in real-world situations. This approach seems to provide positive results in terms of the development of students' English speaking skills.

Improved Speaking Ability

The results of classroom observations at Gunung Jati Senior High School were very positive, indicating that the project-based approach had resulted in significant improvements in students' English speaking abilities. Students at this school have shown marked improvement in a number of aspects of their speaking skills.

An increase in students' self-confidence is one of the most striking results. They have become bolder in speaking English and feel more comfortable in conveying their ideas and thoughts. This is a very important result because high self-confidence is a key factor in effective communication.

In addition, students' ability to express their ideas and thoughts more fluently also indicates an increase in speaking fluency. They become more skilled at choosing appropriate words and constructing sentences better, which in turn makes them easier for listeners to understand.

Project-based projects that allow students to collaborate, debate and share views in English also have a positive impact. This helps students develop their speaking skills in the context of real social interactions. They not only learn to speak, but also learn how to communicate effectively in group or team situations.

As a result, students' learning experiences become richer and more meaningful. They not only understand English as a communication tool, but also as a tool to interact, collaborate and share ideas. Thus, the project-based approach at SMA Gunung Jati has helped students develop their English speaking skills significantly.

Improved Listening Ability

Improving students' listening skills at Gunung Jati Senior High School is a significant achievement. Observation and test results have clearly demonstrated improvements in their understanding of spoken language in a variety of contexts. Firstly, students have been able to understand the various accents used in English, which is a valuable asset in an increasingly connected and global world. This gives them an edge in communicating with individuals from various cultural backgrounds who use various accents.

They have also improved in their ability to understand rapid conversations. This is an important skill in everyday communication, especially in situations that require quick responses. Speaking speed is often a barrier for many English language learners, but with a project-based approach, students at SMA Gunung Jati have successfully overcome this challenge.

Students now have a better understanding of the wide variety of language used in everyday communication, including slang, idiomatic phrases, and terms often used in informal situations. This improves the quality of their communication in real-world situations, where the use of formal language is often limited. All this shows that the project-based approach has been markedly successful in improving students' listening skills, preparing them to communicate in English confidently in a variety of situations.

Sunan Kalijaga Senior High School Case Study Results: Technology-Based Approach**Use of Technology in Learning**

At Sunan Kalijaga High School, a technology-based approach has become an integral part of English language learning. Teachers use a variety of technology tools and resources, including podcasts, mobile apps, and audio recordings in teaching. Students are given greater access to audio materials used in real life, such as interviews, discussions and news.

One key component of this approach is providing students with greater access to audio materials that reflect the use of English in everyday life. Students at Sunan Kalijaga Senior High School can access interviews, discussions and news that are relevant to real world situations. This allows them to become familiar with English used in a variety of contexts, which is more authentic than artificially structured study material.

The use of technology in learning English at Sunan Kalijaga Senior High School creates an environment where students can be more involved, active and deeper in understanding English. With a variety of technological resources available, students have the opportunity to improve their listening and speaking skills, replacing traditional approaches that tend to be more passive. This helps students feel more confident in communicating in English and prepares them for real-world situations where technology is often an integral part of cross-cultural communication.

Improved Listening Ability

The evaluation results show that the use of technology in learning has succeeded in improving students' listening skills. They have become more accustomed to the variety of accents and speaking rates they encounter in audio materials. Students report that the use of podcasts and apps has helped them significantly improve their comprehension of spoken language. Students have experienced significant improvements in understanding the various accents and speaking rates they encounter in the audio material.

The use of podcasts and mobile applications in learning proves their effectiveness. Students report that these resources have helped them significantly improve their understanding of spoken language. They have become more familiar with the variety of languages used in real situations, and this makes a positive contribution in preparing them for cross-cultural communication in an increasingly connected world.

By utilizing technology, students at Sunan Kalijaga Senior High School can access audio material that suits their interests and needs, creating a more personalized and relevant learning experience. This improvement in listening skills is a direct result of the integration of technology in English language teaching and provides clear evidence of the positive benefits of this technology-based approach in English education.

Discussion

The research results show that the project-based approach and technology-based approach are effective in improving speaking and listening skills in English education.

The implementation of a project-based approach at Gunung Jati High School not only creates a learning environment, but also inspires students to use English in everyday life situations. Principles from grand theories of learning, such as constructivism, are embodied in this approach. Students are not only recipients of information, but they are actively involved in challenging projects, where they build their own knowledge of the English language through direct experience and personal reflection. The project-based approach at Gunung Jati High School is in line with Vygotsky's concept of social constructivism (Payong, 2020). Through collaboration, active participation, and debate in English, students not only learn from their personal experiences, but also through social interactions with their classmates. This concept creates a learning environment that not only develops English language skills, but also strengthens students' social skills (Agustyaningrum et al., 2022).

The importance of student involvement in the learning process, in accordance with student involvement theory, is reflected in the positive results obtained. The learning environment is challenging and motivating, encouraging active student participation, which in turn creates significant gains in students' speaking and listening abilities. Furthermore, integrated English learning theory is applied by integrating speaking and listening skills in English simultaneously. This provides a holistic learning experience, reflecting the interconnections between these skills and strengthening students' abilities holistically. Overall, the project-based approach at SMA Gunung Jati creates a learning environment that is based on the grand theory of learning. By motivating students to use English in real situations through projects, the school managed to achieve significant results in improving students' speaking and listening skills.

The technology-based approach at Sunan Kalijaga Senior High School provides wider access to audio materials in English. This improves students' understanding of accent variations and speaking speed. The use of technology has enabled independent and interactive learning, which has had positive results in the development of listening skills. The technology-based approach at Sunan Kalijaga High School, which provides wider access to audio material in English, is closely related to the concepts put forward by several experts in learning theory. Jean Piaget, a pioneer of constructivism, emphasized the active role of students in the learning process. In the context of Sunan Kalijaga High School, wider access to audio materials gives students greater control over their learning process. They not only receive information, but also actively build their own understanding of the variations in accent and speed of speaking in English. Jerome Bruner, a cognitive theorist, highlights the important role of language and symbolic representation in forming students' cognition (Hidayatullah & Arifin, 2018). By increasing students' understanding of accent variations through audio material, Sunan Kalijaga High School integrates cognitive aspects in English language learning. Students are faced with cognitive challenges that help them organize and understand information more effectively. The theory of student engagement by Jean

Lave and Etienne Wenger is also manifested in the implementation of this technology. Wider access through technology gives students the freedom to study independently (Musyafak & Subhi, 2023). The technology-based approach allows for interactive, self-directed learning, where students can tackle audio material according to individual needs and level of understanding.

The technology-based approach at Sunan Kalijaga High School creates a learning environment that is in harmony with the concepts presented by learning experts. Wide access to audio materials provides students with an active learning experience and allows them to develop their understanding of the English language in greater depth. Thus, Sunan Kalijaga High School succeeded in integrating aspects of constructivism, cognitive theory, and student engagement theory in their technology-based approach, providing a positive impact on the development of students' listening skills.

It is important to remember that the success of this approach depends on teacher preparation, adaptation of learning content to student needs, and selection of relevant technology. Careful teacher training in implementing these methods effectively is a key factor. Preparing students to communicate effectively in an increasingly connected world is a critical goal in English education.

Recommendations

Implication

In this research, we have reviewed approaches in English language education, especially project-based approaches and technology-based approaches, and how these two approaches have been implemented at Gunung Jati Senior High School and Sunan Kalijaga Senior High School in Tulungagung, Indonesia. Here are some of the main conclusions that can be drawn from this research:

1. English education has an important role in facing the challenges of globalization and cross-cultural communication. Strong speaking and listening skills in English are key in participating in the global arena.

2. Gunung Jati Senior High School has succeeded in carefully implementing a project-based approach, creating a learning context that reflects real-world situations. These projects motivate students to speak English and collaborate actively.

3. Sunan Kalijaga Senior High School has successfully used a technology-based approach in learning English. The use of podcasts, mobile applications, and other audio materials has helped students improve their listening skills.

4. The success of both approaches depends on teacher preparation, adaptation of learning content, and selection of relevant technology. Careful teacher training in implementing these methods effectively is a key factor. These two approaches do not have to be mutually exclusive, and there are potential benefits in combining them to provide better results.

Recommendations for English Language Education in Secondary Schools
Based on the findings in this study, the following are several recommendations for improving English language education in secondary schools:

1. English teachers need to receive careful training in implementing project-based and technology-based approaches. They must understand how to integrate these approaches into their curriculum and teaching.

2. Schools need to ensure the availability of resources that support the use of technology in English language learning. This includes access to a computer device, a stable internet connection, and quality digital resources.

3. Principals and educational policy makers need to support this innovative approach and create an environment that supports the development of students' speaking and listening skills.

4. Project-based and technology-based approaches do not have to be used separately. There may be benefits in combining the two to provide a richer and more holistic learning experience.

Further Studies

Suggestions for Further studies There are several areas that could be further explored in future research related to English language education in secondary schools in Indonesia:

1. Further studies could compare in detail the effectiveness between project-based and technology-based approaches in different contexts in Indonesia, taking into account the different contextual factors in each school.

2. Further research could measure the long-term impact of using this approach on students' progress in speaking and listening, as well as its impact on students' future academic achievement and career development.

3. Studies could explore more deeply the impact of project-based and technology-based approaches on students' motivation to actively participate in English speaking and listening learning.

4. Research could focus on the role of parents in supporting this approach at home and how their involvement influences student progress.

5. Further exploration can be carried out to identify contextual factors that influence the implementation of this approach in schools in various regions in Indonesia.

6. With further research in this area, we can continue to improve English education in secondary schools in Indonesia and contribute to students' preparation to face the challenges of globalization and cross-cultural communication in the future.

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Authors

Muh. Ibnu Sholeh, born on December 25, 1984, in Trenggalek, Indonesia, is an accomplished expert in Islamic education and business management. He serves as a lecturer in the Islamic Education Management Program at STAI KH Muhammad Ali Shodiq Tulungagung and holds a Bachelor's degree in Muamalah Sharia Law from STAIN Tulungagung (2005), a Master's Degree in Islamic Education Management from IAIN Faculty of Tulungagung (2008), and a Doctoral Degree in Management of Islamic Education from UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung. In addition to his role as a researcher, Muh. Ibnu Sholeh is actively involved in teaching and academic leadership. He has served as a teacher at various educational institutions in Indonesia, including SDN Ngubalan 01 Tulungagung, SDN Salakkembang Tulungagung, SMPI Trenggalek, and Muhammadiyah Tourism Senior High School Tulungagung. His vast experience and contributions have made him a prominent figure in the fields of Islamic education management and business in Indonesia.

Prof. Dr. W. C. Singh currently holds the position of Professor of Management at Manipur University, where he also serves as the Registrar. He completed his Master of Commerce with honors and obtained his PhD from Manipur University. Prof. Singh has a rich academic journey, including attending programs at reputed institutions like IIM Ahmedabad, IIM Bangalore, and IIM Lucknow. He has extensive experience working in various academic institutions across India and has also contributed to institutes in the UAE and the UK. Prof. Singh is actively engaged in teaching and has conducted workshops and programs for executives, faculty members, and entrepreneurs. His research interests encompass Organisational Behaviour, International Business, and Corporate Finance, resulting in numerous research papers, edited books, and research projects. He is involved in various associations, including his role as the founder General Secretary of the North Eastern Management Association (NEMA). Prof. Singh's administrative experience includes roles such as Examination Coordinator, Head of Training & Placement, Programme Coordinator, and Registrar at Manipur University. He is an active member of several university bodies and committees.

Sahri, M.Pd.I, born on December 30, 1990, in Bojonegoro, is an academic with a diverse educational journey. After attending primary and secondary schools in Bojonegoro, the author pursued higher education in Arabic Language Education at Tarbiyah IAIN Walisongo (now UIN) and completed a Master's program in Islamic Religious Education at Wahid Hasyim University (UNWAHAS) in Semarang. Currently, the author is pursuing a Doctoral program in Islamic education management at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah in Tulungagung. As a lecturer at Nahdlatul Ulama Sunan Giri Bojonegoro University, the author specializes in Informatics Engineering and teaches various subjects, including Islamic religious education, Quranic studies, character education, anti-corruption education,

professional ethics, and community development. Additionally, the author has a significant body of work, including book articles.

Prof. Dr. Sokip, S.Ag., M.Pd.I, is a Professor at UIN Tulungagung, was born on April 20 1971, in Tulungagung. With NIP 197104202000031004 and NIDN 2020047103, he serves as Head of the Arabic Language Education Department at IAIN Tulungagung. His scientific field is Educational Psychology. Obtaining a doctoral degree in Educational Psychology from Malang State University in 2013, Prof. Sokip also took part in the Sandwich Program at Ohio State University, USA, in 2007/2008. Apart from formal education, he attended non-formal education at Madrasah Miftahul Huda Kendal and Islamic Boarding School Modern Darul Hikmah Tawangsari Tulungagung. His educational career began as an Extraordinary Lecturer at STAIN Tulungagung in 1997. Active in conference and seminar activities, Prof. Sokip received awards, such as Styalancana Karya Sty 10 Years (2019) and Styalancana Karya Sty 20 Years (2020). During his career, he produced scientific papers and made contributions in the social sector, trying to make a positive contribution to the development of science and improving the quality of education in Indonesia.

Effects of Cooperative Learning Strategy on Enhancing EFL Tertiary Students' Writing Skills

Jauda Jafar Lhmady¹ / Morshed Salim Al-Jaro²

¹College of Arts & Languages, Seiyun University, Yemen

E-mail: jaudalahmdy@seiyunu.edu.ye

²College of Women, Seiyun University, Seiyun, Yemen

E-mail: maljaro@seiyunu.edu.ye

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7755-1156>

Received: October 22, 2023

Revised: December 20, 2023

Accepted: December 26, 2023

Abstract

The study aimed to examine the effect of co-operative learning on developing EFL tertiary students' writing skills. Forty-one EFL students at a public university in Yemen were selected to participate in this study. They were taught writing through the traditional method of teaching adopted by the teachers in the college for a month and a half. Then they were taught writing through using co-operative learning strategy for another month and a half. Three pre-tests and three post-tests as well as attitudinal questionnaire were used to collect the data of the study. The study employed descriptive statistics, inferential analysis as well as the effect size to determine the effect of co-operative learning on developing the students' writing skill. The results of the tests revealed that the students' scores of the post-tests after using the co-operative learning strategy were significantly better than their scores of the pre-tests after using the traditional method. The results of the questionnaire responses showed that the students' attitudes towards co-operative learning were positive. The study has come up with some recommendations for educators and for future researches concerning the issue in question.

Keywords: cooperative learning, EFL, writing skill, EFL tertiary students

Introduction

The direction of the modern methods of English Language Teaching (ELT) has changed language teaching from mainly teacher-centered to more student-centered (Lim, 2002). Learning English in small groups is very useful in achieving many aims of learner-centered teaching (Brown, 2014). Co-operative learning (CL) is one of the most important strategies in this field. In this strategy, the success of the group mainly depends on the contribution of each member in the group (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). In addition to that, co-operative learning improves social interaction skills of students and polishes many of their abilities (*ibid*). Jacobsen, Eggen and Kauchak (1993) also reveal that co-operative learning strategy can take care of individual differences between students who may be heterogeneous in one aspect or more such as culture, age, ethnicity, previous knowledge, motivation, etc. Also, it improves the students' achievement because it provides an active participation in classrooms. Moreover, it helps students to control their learning process (Oludipe & Awokoy, 2010).

Regarding Yemeni schools and universities, the majority of their classrooms are still mainly depending on teacher-centered methods (Naif, 2003). As writing skill is one of the important skills for English students, a lot of English students in Yemeni colleges find it very difficult to write a small composition or even a paragraph. This difficulty is due to the teaching methods used in their schools and universities (Bose, 2002).

From a practical perspective, the traditional method in teaching writing at the university level - in the best case – is giving the students the topic, and the students try to write about it individually. Thus, the students do not find any chance to exchange their ideas and backgrounds about the topic. Therefore, they keep their ideas without enriching them and keep their mistakes in writing without correction, especially when their teacher cannot edit all their writings. Consequently, the class becomes very boring because there is no interaction among students (Zhang, 2010). This traditional way of teaching in Yemeni universities motivates the current study towards examining the effect of using co-operative learning which might encourage students to do their best to improve their writing skills.

Writing is a skill of expressing one's ideas and feelings in the written form. Therefore, it is important to be mastered by students in primary, secondary and tertiary levels (Tierney, 1989). In the ESL (English as a second language) and EFL (English as a foreign language) classes, students need to try their best in order to acquire this skill because it is considered as a complex cognitive skill that requires cognitive strategies, good knowledge and motivation (ibid). Because of the complexity of writing, different approaches are adopted to make teaching writing easier and more effective (Harmer, 2006). The product approach and the process approach are two of the most effective approaches in teaching writing. The product approach focuses on the result of writing and concentrates on the parts of the text, such as words, sentences, paragraphs rather than ideas and meanings (Siti, 2004). On the other hand, the process approach focuses on the act of the writer, how he or she actually composes a text. Writers usually adopt certain strategies in their writing starting by generating ideas arriving in drafting (ibid).

In this approach, the focus in the first instance is on quantity rather than quality, and beginning writers are encouraged to get their ideas on paper in any shape or form without worrying too much about formal correctness. The approach also encourages collaborative group work between learners as a way of enhancing motivation and developing positive attitudes towards writing (Nunan, 1991, p. 87).

At an early time, the product approach was considered as an insufficient approach in enhancing the writing skill (White, 1988). With the emergence of the idea that the writing process is both a cognitive process and a socio-cultural activity, the paradigm shifted from the product approach to the process approach (ibid). The writing skill is not acquired but culturally learned. It does not come naturally but is possessed through much practice and cognitive effort. Even the skillful writers, they do not write the final texts at the first attempt of writing, but their completed and final texts are come out through several exhausting attempts (Nunan, 1991). Here the teacher's role was redefined. The teacher changed from the authority of the class and the evaluator of the students' writing to a facilitator by providing assistance and consultation to the students

in the writing process (White & Arndt, 1991). Teachers also found it more interesting to follow the processes through which learners compose their writing, rather than looking only at their final drafts (Nunan, 1991). Most of the previous researches in this field suggest that cooperative learning is of great effect on developing students' writing skill and also in improving their attitudes towards learning.

In Yemeni context, Naif (2003) states that huge number of EFL students in Yemen are found to have an inadequate competence in writing even at university level. Students graduate from secondary schools as well as in tertiary levels with poor writing skills. This poor level in writing highlights the need for effective classroom techniques to improve the writing skills (Naif, 2003; Bosse, 2002). English teachers of Women's College in Mukalla say that the majority of their students cannot write compositions. Not only do they have difficulty in language proficiency, they are also unable to generate, organize, write and expand the ideas for their compositions. Nevertheless, there is an apparent lack of interest in writing and poor writing habits among them.

Many studies concerning writing have been conducted to investigate the effect of modern teaching methods on developing the writing skill including co-operative learning. Therefore, the current study might be the first attempt to deal with the effect of co-operative learning on developing the writing skills among Yemeni university students.

Theoretical Background

Co-operative Learning

Co-operative learning has been defined in the literature as "the instructional use of small groups so that students work together to maximize their own and each other's learning as well as that of their group members" (Johnson and Johnson, 1999, p. 5). Another definition is provided by Seng (2006, who defines it as "Cooperative learning is described as a large group of instructional strategies in which students collaborate in order to reach a common goal. Cooperative learning has been practiced throughout human history and is a part of educational practice. Its effectiveness has been documented through numerous research studies" (p. 3). Thus, co-operative learning is considered as one of the teaching strategies which provides more student-centered learning activities rather than teacher-centered learning activities by dividing students into small heterogeneous groups with regard to achievement levels. Each group members co-operate and interact with each other in order to achieve the targeted goals of the group.

Basic Elements of Successful Co-operative Learning Group

Johnson, Johnson, and Stane (2000) propose five essential elements of co-operative learning. The first one is positive interdependence. It is the most important element of co-operation among group members is positive interdependence which makes them responsible to each other. This responsibility happens through two roles. The cognitive role that motivates the group members to achieve the goals of the group, and the social role that helps them work as one whole and makes their interaction effective. The second one is face-to-face interaction. It refers to the idea that Interaction among group members becomes more effective when they work together in a given task to achieve shared goals. The third element is individual accountability. It means that the success of the whole group depends on the success of each group member.

Therefore, it cannot be achieved unless each member contributes to the goals shared by the group members. The fourth element is interpersonal and Small Group Skills. It implies that Students need to be taught how to work together in small groups. Social skills will be required here to help them achieve their goals and maintain their relationship effectively. The last element is group processing. It refers to the effectiveness of co-operative learning among group members. It focuses on students' contribution to each other and their feedback on the learning process. It involves the students' reflection on the group working by determining the effective action that should be maintained and the ineffective actions that should be modified or cancelled.

Duplass (as cited in Farzaneh and Nejadansari 2014) adds three basic features of co-operative learning. The first one is teacher supervision. It implies that the role of the instructor in group activity should be as a facilitator, monitor and guider. The instructor also is required to answer students' questions, provide them with help if they need, encourage them and make sure that they do not go far off the assigned task (Al-Yaseen, 2014). The second one is heterogeneous groups. It refers the idea that groups should be assigned of students with different levels of ability and backgrounds. Teachers should use heterogeneous groups in co-operative learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). Huss (2006) suggested that co-operative groups should be composed of one low-level student, two medium-level students, and one high-level student. Finally, evaluation is important with co-operative learning strategy in order to investigate the effectiveness of it. Johnson and Johnson (1999, p. 2) define assessment as "to judge the quality and quantity of learning and award grades". Both the individual and group assessment is necessary in evaluation of co-operative learning by determining students' level before using it, their progress through it and finally their level after it.

Literature Review

Many studies have carried out on the benefits and the positive effects of co-operative learning in developing the writing skill. For instance, Stevens and Salvin (1995) studied the effectiveness of the Co-operative Integrated Reading and Composition (CIRC) programme. The participants were 1,299 students studying at the sixth grade in a suburban, working-class school district in Maryland. All teachers in the study were volunteers (control as well as experimental groups). The control group teachers were offered the option of receiving training in the CIRC programme. Thirty-one experimental classes in three schools were compared to thirty-two non-experimental classes in four schools. In the control group, teachers continued using their traditional methods and curriculum materials while the experimental group teachers used the CIRC programme. During the first 6 weeks of implementation, teachers were observed frequently by the project staff and coached to improve their implementation. The results of this study supported the effectiveness of the CIRC programme as a multifaceted, co-operative learning approach to elementary reading and language arts instruction. These results also showed that significant and positive effects on standardized measures of reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, and language expression can be obtained from an elementary literacy programme.

Another study conducted by Lim (2002) to examine the effectiveness of co-operative learning among sixty- two thirteen-year-old heterogeneous students in a selected secondary school, that is, Sekolah Meneengah Kebangsaan Georgetown, in Penang. It was an experimental study in which the participants were divided into two groups, control and experimental groups. A pre-test and a post-test, an observation and questionnaires were used as instruments. The results showed that there is a relationship between the students' perception and their ability to write their compositions. The difference between the mean of the post-test scores and the pre-test scores in the experimental group shows that the mean of the post-test score was higher than the mean of the pre-test score. Generally, the study found out a significant increase in the achievement levels for the students participating in co-operative learning groups.

Farrah (2011) conducted a study at Hebron University to investigate the students' attitudes towards using collaborative learning in enhancing students' writing skill and their communication and critical thinking skills. Moreover, it aimed to explore if there are differences in students' attitudes due to gender, level of proficiency, and learning styles. 95 male and female students (72 females and 23 males) were involved in the study. They were from four sections of undergraduate Writing and Integrated Language Skills Courses taught by the same teacher. The data was collected using a questionnaire with 32-items which was distributed to the students at the end of the study. The students were divided into groups consisting of five to six students per group and were asked to write essays about several topics throughout the spring semester and the summer semester of the academic year 2010/2011. The results showed that the students had positive attitudes towards collaborative learning. Moreover, the results revealed that female students favored collaborative learning activities more than male students, less advanced learners favored the collaborative activities more than high advanced learners and extrovert students favored collaborative activities more than anxious students.

Furthermore, Baliya (2013) studied the use of co-operative learning approach affected the writing abilities of primary class students. The sample was 42 students of grade fifth of K.V. No1 Jammu (J&K-India). The study employed one-group pre-test and post-test design. Comparison between the scores of the pre-test and post-test was measured using a dependent samples t-test. The study revealed that the post-test score was higher than the pre-test score at the .01 level of significance. This gave evidence that using the co-operative learning approach helped students of grade fifth to improve their writing abilities. Also the study concluded that co-operative learning provides students with more comfortable and less anxiety-producing context.

In the same vein, Mahmoud (2014) utilized co-operative language learning to teach writing to second level students at the college of language and translation at Al-Imam University in Saudi Arabia. He studies the effectiveness of co-operative learning in developing EFL writing skills and students' attitudes towards writing. The sample was only twenty students who participated in this study as one group and were exposed to pre-test and post-test. The data were collected through two instruments; a pre-posttest, and an attitude questionnaire. The findings revealed that there were improvement in students' writing ability to some extent and positive attitudes towards using co-operative learning in developing the writing skills.

Writing is a fundamental skill for all students. It is an important learning tool because it helps students to understand ideas and concepts better (Voon Foo, 2007). Previous studies have identified that Arab university students lack the required English language proficiency that hinder their academic progress (Javid, Farooq & Gulzar, 2012; Javid & Khairi, 2011; Raymond, 2008; Rababah, 2003). Several research studies have indicated that international students studying in the Asian universities encounter challenges in coping with the writing demands in their disciplines (Jackson, 2006). This problem seems to exist in a much intensive form in the Arab world. Besides, a lot of studies conducted in the different parts of the Arab world reported the difficulties of Arab learners of English in this regard (Rababah, 2003).

In Yemeni context, the huge numbers of EFL students in Yemen are found to have an inadequate competence in writing even at university level. Students graduate from secondary schools as well as in tertiary levels with poor writing skills. This poor level in writing highlights the need for effective classroom techniques to improve the writing skills (Al-Jaro, 2016; Naif, 2003; Bose, 2002).

From a practical perspective, English teachers of College of Women, at a Public University (henceforth, PU) in Yemen say that the majority of their students cannot write compositions. Not only do they have difficulty in language proficiency, they are also unable to generate, organize, write and expand the ideas for their compositions. Nevertheless, there is an apparent lack of interest in writing and poor writing habits among them.

Many studies concerning writing have been conducted to investigate the effect of modern teaching methods on developing the writing skill including co-operative learning. Therefore, the current study might be the first attempt to deal with the effect of co-operative learning on developing the writing skills among Yemeni university students. Therefore, there is an urgent need for an instructional approach to help students to be able to write their composition well. With these research problems in mind, the researcher presents the following research objectives and questions.

Research Objectives

This study is intended to achieve the following objectives:

1. To find out the effect of co-operative learning on developing 2nd level EFL students' writing skill at College of Women, PU.
2. To identify the attitudes of 2nd level EFL students at College of Women, PU towards using co-operative learning strategy in teaching writing.

Research Questions

The study addresses the following research questions:

1. To what extent is co-operative learning effective in developing the writing skill among 2nd level EFL students in College of Women, PU?
2. What are the attitudes of 2nd level EFL students in College of Women, PU towards using co-operative learning strategy in teaching writing?

Methodology

1. Study design

The study adopted an experimental design with a single group interrupted time-series. The independent variable is the effect of co-operative learning versus the traditional method used for teaching writing. The dependent variables are the students' achievement in writing composition and the students' attitudes towards using co-operative learning. The students' achievement is measured by comparing their achievement in the pre-tests with their achievement in the post-tests, and their attitudes were found out through an attitudinal questionnaire.

2. The participants of the study

All the participants of this study are the 2nd level EFL students at College of Women, PU. They were 41 females of similar age ranging from 22 to 24 years. They all are Yemeni students studying English as a foreign language. They are all homogeneous with regard to age, sex, ethnicity, mother tongue and educational and cultural background.

The researcher uses an experimental research. It studies the cause and effect between the independent variable (co-operative learning) and the dependent variables (the development of students' writing composition and their attitudes toward cooperative learning). "Because experiments are controlled, they are the best of the quantitative designs to use to establish probable cause and effect (Creswell, 2012, p. 295)."

The researcher also employs a single group interrupted time-series design because random assignment of the participants to experimental and control groups is difficult. Moreover, in the circumstances of this study, a control or a comparison group is unavailable, that is, there is only one class of the second level in the Women's college in Al-Mukalla where the study is conducted. According to Gottman, Mcfall and Barnett (1969, p. 300), "the time series can function as a quasi-experimental design for planned interventions imbedded in the total program when a control group is implausible."

In addition, this setting helps the researcher to control all other variables (extraneous variables) which might have, by a way or another, an influence on the outcome of the study except for the independent variable (co-operative learning) (*ibid*). Similarly, Creswell (2012, p. 315) states that "the time series design permits significant control over threats to internal validity. The effects of history are not always clear cut. History effects are minimized by the short time intervals between measures and observations".

3. Study Instruments

The study mainly employed two research instruments. The first one is pre-tests and post-tests, in which the participants were required to write a short composition. These tests are prepared by more than one teacher and they matched the requirements of the English language syllabus. The total score for each test was 20 points and the time allotted was one hour. At the beginning of the study, the pre-test is offered to the participants. Then it is followed by two other pre-tests as a kind of continuous evaluation before introducing the treatment (co-operative learning) in the middle of the study which occupies about three months. Then three post- tests are offered to the participants at the last three sessions of the study. The second instrument is the attitudinal questionnaire that was administered at the end of the study. The aim of it is

to find out the students' attitudes towards the use of co-operative learning in enhancing EFL writing skill.

The items of the questionnaire were adopted from Farrah's study (2011). They were adapted to suit the current study. The main part of the questionnaire consisted of 32 statements with a 5 point Likert's scale (1932), (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree).

Subjective marking is usually used for tests of writing. Scorers need to judge the students' writing skill more than giving the right or wrong decisions (Hughes, 1989). According to the nature of writing, the researcher found it reasonable to employ subjective scoring tests which require students to write compositions. These compositions need certain criteria to be scored in their lights. As this study concentrates on the development of the various main aspects of the students' writing abilities, analytic methods of scoring was more appropriate than holistic methods in the situation of this study.

Holistic scoring is a type of rating where examiners are asked not to pay too much attention to any one aspect of a candidate's performance, but rather to judge general writing ability rather than to make separate judgement about a candidate's organization, grammar, spelling, etc. Analytic scoring is a type of rating scale where a candidate's performance (for example in writing) is analyzed in terms of various components (for example organization, grammar, spelling, etc.) and descriptions are given at different levels for each component (Wang, 2009, p. 39).

Therefore, the scale of analytic method of Hughes (1989) was adapted to be used for pre-tests and post-tests scoring in this study. This scale contains five aspects of writing compositions, grammar, vocabulary, spelling and punctuation, relevance, coherence and cohesion and organization (see appendix G). To obtain high inter-rater reliability, the teacher and the researcher took the same set scripts (test papers) and corrected them according to the adapted scale. Without influencing one another, the degree of similarity between the two scorings was very high; 15.3 and 14.5 were the means of the two scorings of the teacher and the researcher respectively.

The study included a questionnaire that was administered at the end of the study. The aim of it is to find out the students' attitudes towards the use of cooperative learning in enhancing EFL writing skill. The items of the questionnaire were adopted from Farrah's study (2011). They were adapted to suit the current study. The main part of the questionnaire consisted of 32 statements with a 5 point Likert's scale (1932), (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree) (see appendix H).

4. Experimental Procedures

The participants were taught through the traditional method during the first half of the course period, a month and a half. In this period, two pre-tests were conducted for them before the final one which was conducted for them at the end of using traditional method of teaching writing. Then the teaching method was changed to co-operative learning. The participants were taught by it through the other half of the period, a month and a half. Then they were given two post-tests before administering the last one and the questionnaire at the end of the study. At the beginning of using co-operative learning method, the teacher had randomly put the participants in groups consisting of five or six girls with different achievement levels. This division was fixed during the alternate weeks of the study. Then the participants were given a briefing on the elements of co-operative learning to help create a feeling of co-operation among the

group members. The participants were taught in groups through eight sessions. During the group work, each group would have to write a composition and submit it at the end of the session. The topics of these compositions were carefully selected by the researcher and the teacher to match the students' materials. The final writer's paper is signed by each member and submitted to the teacher by the end of the session. They also were encouraged to read aloud their composition to the whole class so that the other groups could benefit from it. The compositions were evaluated by the teacher, and a point system was used to determine the best composition: 5 points (36-40 marks); 4 points (30- 35 marks); 3 points (25- 29 marks); 2 points (20-24 marks) and 1 point (below 20 marks). The group which obtained the highest score rewarded at the end of the study.

Creswell (2012, p. 159) defines the validity as "the development of sound evidence to demonstrate that the test interpretation of scores about the concept or construct that the test is assumed to measure matches its proposed use". It is necessary to validate the instruments of the study. Therefore, the expert-validation was applied. According to Assamawi (2000), expert-validation is one of the best ways through which research instruments can be validated. The experts or the validation-jury judge the items of the research instruments and change them in order to match the objectives and variables of the research.

The study contains six developed tests. Three of them were put as pre-tests and the other three as post-tests. To establish the content validity and face validity of these tests, they were given to a group of experts at Hadhramout University and Najran University. The experts state that the tests were clear and relevant to the objectives and variables. Also, the scoring scheme was suitable to get reliable scores. They also gave some suggestions which were taken into consideration. For example, they suggested that the best three tests of the six should be chosen to be the pre-tests at the first period of the study as well as the post-tests at the other period of the study. This, according to their views, would be better in comparing the students' achievements before and after the treatment of co-operative learning if the paper of tests were kept until the end of the study. In addition, they asked to make the instructions of the tests clearer by exactly determining the number of words that was required to be written in the tests. With regard to reliability, Creswell (2012, p. 159) states that "Reliability means that scores from an instrument are stable and consistent. Scores should be nearly the same when researchers administer the instrument multiple times at different times."

Since the questionnaire was adopted from the study of Farrah (2011), its validity and reliability have been established before. However, further validation was required to ensure that the items of the translated questionnaire were clear and relevant to the objectives and variables of the study. This was done by submitting the questionnaire to seven experts in the field of writing and ELT. All the remarks received from the experts were taken into consideration.

5. Statistical Methods

Three approaches were used in order to analyze the data of the study. Descriptive statistics were used to get the mean score and standard deviations of the pre-tests and the post-tests. Also, descriptive statistics were used to get the frequencies, percentages, mean scores and standard deviations of the items of the main part of the questionnaire. Inferential statistics were used in order to find out the significant differences between the pre-tests and post-tests. Significant differences mean any value

which equals to or exceeds the minimum value necessary at 0.05 level. This level means that the probability of error will happen five times out of 100. If the probability of the statistical value is greater than 0.05, the hypothesis of no difference will be accepted. Vice versa, if the probability of the statistical value is 0.05 or less, the hypothesis of no difference will be rejected. Finally, effect size approach gives the size of the effect of the experiment. Therefore, this study used the 'd' effect size by Cohen (1992). Cohen interprets the effect size through certain criteria: 0.20 is a small effect size, 0.50 is a medium effect size and 0.80 is a large effect size.

This section presents the analysis of data based on the scores of the pre-tests of the students' writing compositions before conducting the experiment (writing cooperatively) and the post-tests after conducting the experiment. To answer the first research question, To what extent is co-operative learning effective in developing the writing skill among EFL students of the second level in Women's College at Hadhramout University in Mukalla?, the results of the pre-tests and the post-tests of writing compositions are presented and analyzed. Descriptive statistics, inferential statistics and effect size are used to compare between the scores of the pretests which were conducted before the experiment and the post-tests which were conducted after the experiment. The first pre-test was compared with the first post-test, the second pre-test was compared with the second post-test, and the third pre-test was compared with the third post-test. The overall mark of each test is 20.

Results

The two research instruments (pre-test and post-test, and the attitudinal questionnaire) were used to analyze the data collected. Thus, the results of this study were presented according to the research questions. Descriptive statistics, inferential analyses and effect size were used to analyze the results of this study.

1. Descriptive Statistics of the Pre-tests and the Post-tests

Mean scores and standard deviations of the first pre-test and the first post-test were presented in order to report the statistical findings. Table 1 shows the mean scores and the standard deviations of the two tests.

Table 1

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of the First Pre-test and the First Post-test in Writing Composition

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
pre-test 1	41	9.4146	4.67961
post-test 1	41	13.0488	2.96607

As shown in Table 1, the overall mean scores of the students' scores in the pre-test and the post-test were 9.4146 and 13.0488 with standard deviations of 4.67961 and 2.96607 respectively. The mean score difference between the two tests is 3.6342, which indicates an increase in the post-test mean score.

Consequently, mean scores and standard deviations of the second and third pre-tests and the second and third post-tests were compared. Tables 2 and 3 show the mean scores and the standard deviations of the second pre-test with the second post-test and the third pre-test with the third post-test, respectively.

Table 2

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of the second Pre-test and the second Post-test in Writing Composition

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
pre-test 2	41	10.3659	4.06667
post-test 2	41	11.4146	3.44221

Table 2 shows that the overall mean scores of the students' scores in the pre-test and the post-test were 10.3659 and 11.4146 with standard deviations of 4.06667 and 3.44221 respectively. The mean score difference between the two tests is 1.0487, which indicates also an increase in the post-test mean score.

Table 3

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations of the third Pre-test and the third Post-test in Writing Composition

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
pre-test 3	41	10.1220	4.66474
post-test 3	41	13.6585	3.79216

This table 3 shows that the overall mean scores of the students' scores in the third pre-test and the third post-test are 10.1220 and 13.6585 with standard deviations of 4.66474 and 3.79216 respectively. The mean score difference between the two tests is 3.5365, which indicates also an increase in the post-test mean score.

2. Inferential Analyses of the Pre-tests and the Post-tests

In this inferential analysis, a paired sample t-test was conducted to find out the significance of data. Statistical significant difference was found at (t- value -7.656) with Sig. $.000 < 0.05$. The results indicate that t-value has a statistical significant result between the pre-test and the post-test.

Table 4

Paired Samples t- Test of the First Pre-test and the First Post-test in Writing Composition

Paired Differences				t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
			Mean	Lower	Upper			
-3.63415	3.03938	.47467	.47467	-4.59349	-2.67480	-7.656	40	.000

Table 4 shows that the students performed better in the post test than the pretest on the writing composition after they were exposed to cooperative learning. Moreover, the following two tables 4.5 and 4.6 show that the performances of the students in the second and third post-tests are better than their performances in the pre-tests before they were exposed to co-operative learning.

Table 5

Paired Samples t- Test of the Second Pre-test and the Second Post-test in Writing Compositions

Paired Differences				t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
			Mean	Lower	Upper			
-1.04878	2.17889	.34029	.34029	-1.73652	-.36104	-3.082	40	.004

Table 6

Paired Samples t- Test of the Third Pre-test and the Third Post-test in Writing Compositions

Paired Differences				t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference					
			Mean	Lower	Upper			
-3.53659	2.65610	.41481	.41481	-4.37495	-2.69822	-8.526	40	.000

3. Effect Size

For this study, the effect size of cooperative learning on writing skill improvement was calculated as the post-test mean score minus the pre-test mean score divided by the pooled standard deviations. The results indicate that the effect size (Cohen's d) of the first pre-test with the first post-test is .94 which is interpreted as a large effect. The effect size of the second pre-test with the second post-test is .28 which is interpreted as a small effect and the effect size of the third pre-test with the third post-test is .84 which is interpreted as a large effect.

The result indicated that the post-tests mean scores of the students after the experiment was higher than the mean scores of the pre-tests before the experiment. Additionally, using the paired sample t-test on the scores of the pre-tests and post-tests of the students revealed a statistically significant difference between them in the favor of the post-tests. Finally, the effect sizes (Cohen's d) of the three pre-tests with the three post-tests are large, small and large respectively.

4. The Analysis of the Attitudinal Questionnaire**Table 7***The Frequencies and Percentages of the Participants according to Their Agreement*

NO.	Statements	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
1	Working in groups fostered exchange of knowledge, information and experience.	1 2.4%	4 9.8%	36 87.8%
2	Working in groups enabled us to help weaker learners in the group.	7 17.1%	3 7.3%	31 75.6%
3	Working in groups made problem-solving easier.	6 14.6%	5 12.2%	30 73.2%
4	Working in groups helped me to work in a more relaxed atmosphere.	10 24.4%	8 19.5%	23 55.1%
5	Working in groups helped me to receive useful feedback.	5 12.2%	9 22.0%	27 65.8%
6	Working in groups helped me to focus on collective efforts rather than individual effort.	6 14.6%	6 14.6%	29 70.8%
7	Working in groups helped me to have a greater responsibility – for myself and the group.	5 12.2%	2 4.9%	34 82.9%

Table 7 (Continued)

NO.	Statements	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
8	While working in groups, all group members contributed equally to the project.	18 43.9%	8 19.5%	15 36.6%
9	We sometimes disagreed about what to say or how to express our ideas.	4 9.8%	4 9.8%	33 80.4%
10	Despite disagreement, the group was able to reach consensus.	4 9.8%	2 4.9%	35 85.3%
11	I had the chance to express my ideas in the group.	3 7.3%	4 9.8%	34 82.9%
12	I get more work done when I work with others.	5 12.2%	8 19.5%	28 68.3%
13	Working in groups is a waste of time as we keep explaining things to others.	27 65.8%	6 14.6%	8 19.6%
14	Working in groups makes it difficult getting members to actively participate in tasks.	25 61.0%	4 9.8%	12 29.2%
15	While working in groups, we spent more time planning than I do when I write alone.	13 31.7%	5 12.2%	23 56.1%
16	While working in groups, we spent more time generating ideas than I do when I write alone.	14 34.1%	5 12.2%	22 54.6%
17	While working in groups, we spent more time checking spelling, punctuation and grammar than I do when I write alone.	13 31.7%	11 26.8%	17 41.5%
18	While working in groups, we spent more time revising than I do when I write alone.	12 29.3%	13 31.7%	16 39.0%
19	The group produced a better description and a story as compared to individual writing.	4 9.8%	7 17.1%	30 73.1%

Table 7 (Continued)

NO.	Statements	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
20	Having completed group projects, I feel I am more cooperative in my writing.	1 2.4%	9 22.0%	31 75.6%
21	Having completed group projects, I feel I have more confident working with other students.	1 2.4%	8 19.5%	32 78.1%
22	Working in groups increased my comprehension.	4 9.8%	7 17.1%	30 73.1%
23	Working in groups stimulated my critical thinking skills.	3 7.3%	7 17.1%	31 75.6%
24	Working in groups improved our performance.	2 4.9%	5 12.2%	34 82.9%
25	Working in groups enhanced our communication skills.	4 9.8%	6 14.6%	31 75.6%
26	Working in groups enabled us to use skills which individual assessments do not.	3 7.3%	8 19.5%	34 73.2%
27	Working in groups helped us to participate actively in the teaching/learning process.	2 4.9%	5 12.2%	34 82.9%
28	I learned new ways to support my points of view.	6 14.6%	7 17.1%	28 68.3%
29	I learned new ways to plan my paragraph from the group.	7 17.1%	3 7.3%	31 75.6%
30	I enjoy writing more than I did before due to collaborative writing.	7 17.1%	13 31.7%	21 51.2%

Table 7 (Continued)

NO.	Statements	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
31	Working in groups should be encouraged/continued.	1 2.4%	9 22.0%	31 75.2%
32	Overall, this (cooperative learning) was a worthwhile experience.	0 14.6%	6 85.4%	35

The second part of the questionnaire has two open-ended questions through which the participants qualitatively evaluate the cooperative learning strategy by giving the advantages and disadvantages of group work. After reading all the answers of the participants, the researcher summarized them in the following points:

The advantages.

1. CL provides students with useful ideas and correct structure and enriches their vocabulary, understanding and writing style.
2. It encourages students to improve their writing skills and benefit from others' knowledge.
3. It helps students to know their weaknesses in writing.
4. It helps group members to feel responsible towards each other.
5. It teaches them how to respect others' points of view and support their self-confidence at the same time.
6. It helps the weak students to improve their level.

The disadvantages.

1. CL is time consumed. Group members find it difficult to manage time for their sessions.
2. Some group members do not share at all or very little because of shyness, fear or any other reasons. They depend on one or two students, usually the most efficient students in the group.
3. Sometimes one student or two dominate the group and force the other to follow their opinions ignoring most of others' opinions.

The findings indicated that the participants have positive attitudes towards cooperative learning. The first part of the questionnaire reveals that the total mean of all the items is high with high percentages which mean that the majority of the students agree that CL has positive effects on their writing skill. The second part summarized the advantages and disadvantages of CL which have been given by the students. This part reveals that the students agree that CL has many advantages while they focused on wasting time and unequaled participations as disadvantages of CL.

Discussion

The findings of the study are discussed according to the main questions of the study; the effect of co-operative learning on developing students' writing composition and attitudes towards writing.

1. Writing performance of the students after being exposed to co-operative learning

The first research question sought to find out whether co-operative learning has any effect on improving writing composition of university EFL students in Women's College. The performance of the students in the writing composition after being exposed to co-operative learning strategy showed a significant difference in their results. While the performance of the same students of writing composition remained the same while they were exposing to traditional method in learning writing. The mean scores for pre-tests among the treated sample were 9.4146, 10.3659 and 10.1220 respectively compared to the mean scores of 13.0488, 11.4146 and 13.6585 respectively in the post-tests. The post-tests showed an increase of 3.6342, 1.0487 and 3.5465 respectively in the mean scores among the sample after the experiment. This finding was consistent with the findings of many previous studies such as the study of Lim (2002), Balya (2013), and Mahmoud (2014) that showed significant difference scores between the pre and posttests. These studies showed that co-operative learning resulted in higher achievement and greater productivity. On contrast, these findings were not consistent with the findings of the study of Alhaidari (2006) that showed no progressing in the participants' reading comprehension after using co-operative learning strategy. This contradiction can be justified that the findings of that study might be influenced by some extraneous variables, such as these variables which appear through selection, treatment, instrumentation, testing, etc.

The output of the paired samples t-test indicated that there was a significant difference in the scores and achievement between the students' performances in the pre and posttests. The result had proven that co-operative learning was essential for maximizing writing proficiency and ensuring healthy cognitive development. This was in line with the finding of Johnson and Johnson (1999) who stated that cooperative learning resulted in higher individual achievement.

The findings of this study supported the study conducted by Stevens (1995), who stated that cooperative learning strategy can increase students' achievement. This is also consistent with the findings of Zamanian and Bagheri (2013) who mentioned that co-operative learning can bring positive effects on academic achievement as well as positive aspects on social relationship among all students. They added that when compared with traditional method, co-operative learning also promotes higher achievement and greater motivation than individual learning.

Similarly, the finding was consistent with the finding of Wu (2010) and Altamimi & attamimi (2014) that showed significant difference between experimental and control groups. The results were also consistent with those studies which compared co-operative learning strategy against lecture or independent styles of instruction. The respondents in the experimental group conducted by Bolukbas, et al (2011) gained greater achievement than that of the control group. The justification of these findings is that co-operative learning activities used during the experiment allowed the students to get more practice and provide them with useful feedback. Also, these activities increase individual students' participation in terms of conversational turns. They contributed to

a learner-focused classroom that allow for both student-student and student-teacher interaction. These characteristics of co-operative learning lead to better achievement and performance in the post-tests.

2. Attitudes of the Students towards Using Co-operative Learning in Teaching Writing

This study examines the students' attitudes towards using co-operative learning strategy and whether it could improve writing better than the traditional method. The results in this study supported previous studies that show significant difference in students' performance between students being taught through co-operative learning strategy and the students being taught through the traditional method (Wu, 2010; Johnson and Johnson 1999).

The results in this study revealed that the participants have a more positive attitude towards using co-operative learning and also towards the writing skill after being exposed to the co-operative learning strategy. They enjoyed the co-operative learning approach since their academic accomplishments were valued and rewarded better than their achievements when they were exposed to the traditional method. This is also because working in groups means that they work with others and benefit from their experiences. For example, with reference to table 4.18, most of the students agree that co-operative learning is a worthwhile strategy with ($m = 4.2927$). They also agree that it helped them in exchanging knowledge, information and experience with ($m = 4.2683$). Moreover, they agree with ($m = 4.0244$) that CL helps students feel responsible towards themselves and others in the learning process.

The results in this study support the findings of Farzaneh and Nejadansari (2014) and Farrah (2011), who found that students have more positive attitudes towards their course when relying on co-operative learning approach. Likewise, the results in this study support the findings of Al-tamimi & attamimi (2014) who found significant differences between the students' attitudes in the experimental group who were exposed to CL and the students' attitudes in the control group who were exposed to the traditional method.

With reference to table 4.15, the findings show that the academic benefits during group work and after group work have high percentages of agreement (67.6% and 74.4%, respectively). This is in line with a number of studies such as Lim, (2002), Farzaneh and Nejadansari (2014), Mahmoud (2014), Schniedewind (2004) and Farrah, (2011). For example, Farzaneh and Nejadansari (2014) stated that more than 88.4% students willingly learn through co-operative learning. For example, Farrah (2011), regarding these issues, reported that his respondents agreed with a high rating 77.4% that co-operative writing is a very useful and important experience and more than 76% agreed that it helped them in exchanging knowledge, information and experience. Moreover, about 79.2% of the participants agree that they achieve more, in group working, than when they work alone. These findings might probably be due to the fact that the use of co-operative learning helped the students to achieve high scores that they could not achieve during the use of the traditional method. This positive gain in the students' scores created positive attitudes inside them towards CL.

Similarly, (with reference to table 4.15), the social benefits got high percentage of agreement. (78.1%) of the students agree that they gained social benefits through the use of CL. This category of the questionnaire tries to show how much the students feel interested when they write among their group members and how the use of the CL strengthened their relationships. This is in line with several studies in the literature. One of them is the study of Farzaneh and Nejadansari (2014) where about 87.8% of the participants agree that cooperative learning enhances socialization. Also, in the study of Mahmoud (2014), more than 70% of the participants agreed that CL makes composition activities more enjoyable. Moreover, this study found that the students felt more relaxed during the use of CL while the study of Duxbury & Tsai (2010) showed a great deal of contradict with it. It found that the significance for the correlation between foreign language anxiety and CL was greater than .05 and they suggested that there was no effect for CL on students' anxiety. These results indicate that there is no relationship between students' foreign language classroom anxiety and the use of co-operative learning strategy. These results might be justified that student's anxiety increases in co-operative learning atmosphere when a student feels that his or her level is lower than that of other group members.

Finally, (with reference to table 4.15), The least percentage of agreement among the three categories (45.7%) was for the negative aspects of CL. These aspects mainly focus on time and participation to show how much the students think that CL is a waste of time and how much they think it does not allow equal chances of participation for students. According to the above-mentioned percentage, less than half of the participants agree that CL is a waste of time and that they did not have equal chances of participation during the group work. In the study of Farrah (2011), about 64.4% agree that it is difficult in CL to participate and about 77.8% agree that CL is a waste of time. These points also were supported with what the participants themselves mentioned about the disadvantages of CL in the second part of the questionnaire (see the previous chapter, 4.3.2). This might be probably due to the nature of co-operative learning strategy that it needs much time in discussion and exchanging ideas, especially with the writing skill, as in the case of this study, which needs much time in drafting and revising (Lim, 2002). Similarly, as co-operative learning depends on students rather than the teacher in the classroom, it may give some students the chance to dominate the others (*ibid*). To overcome these negative sides of CL, teachers should be aware of how to apply it in their classrooms. "In order for the instructors and their students not to have negative experiences, they need to know how to implement collaborative learning from picking the task until the final assessment." (Farrah, 2011, p. 155). With regard to time, for example, teachers should inform their students with the allowed time for the discussion at the beginning of each session and within it. Unequal chances of participation, on the other hand, can be solved by making the roles of the group members rotated from one session to another. Moreover, it is suggested for teachers to make the evaluation and rewarding of groups according to the total marks of the students of each group after a test which they should do individually. Therefore, they might do their best to rise the levels of each other.

In summary, the findings in this study provide valuable insights on the benefits of co-operative learning strategy in teaching the writing skill to university students. The key finding in this study is that co-operative learning strategy could be a potential tool to prepare the students to the real world. This is done by providing them with essential skills of writing to become more skilled writers in order to succeed in their workplace in future.

Recommendations

This study has shed some light on the use of co-operative learning strategy and how educators can help in enhancing learners writing skill. It has opened the pathway for new research in the field of CL and foreign language acquisition at the university level in Yemen. According to the results discussed in this study, it is concluded that not only does co-operative learning improve the writing skill, but it can also strongly and indirectly enhance students' attitudes towards a totally different skill (for-example, the listening skill). Previous research (e.g. Lim, 2002) has often stressed that co-operative learning can improve the writing skill and the attitudes towards learning.

It should be noted that no data was collected in this study on the learner prior knowledge of the writing skill, because the students involved in the study were predicted to be fairly homogeneous in their English competency levels. As the pre-tests of the experiment in writing were completed, no statistically significant results occurred, suggesting that prior knowledge was not a confounding variable in this study under the specific design conditions.

The main skill that has been investigated in this study was writing. Future researches should also focus on whether the same results will be yielded by examining other skills such as listening, speaking and reading. Moreover, the researcher suggests that further researches on the effect of co-operative learning on students' attitudes would be beneficial in various fields. They could possibly evaluate students' attitudes towards learning, work, and life in general.

As mentioned earlier, this study is limited to a small size of purposeful sample (41 participants). Additional research should be conducted to examine whether these results are positive in a large sample in all forms, all disciplines, in urban, in rural, in suburban schools, and for high, average, and low achievers.

Besides this, it may be interesting to do further research into whether co-operative learning promotes better retention of knowledge gained after teaching. For better results, the teacher could give a posttest one month after the implementation of co-operative learning strategy. Based on the study findings, it is hereby recommended that: English teachers should adopt co-operative learning strategy as an effective learning strategy in order to improve student's writing performance. Therefore, co-operative learning strategy should be introduced in teaching university students' writing compositions. Since this study was conducted in a women's college, therefore, prospective researches might include the other gender to find out any difference of the effect of co-operative learning that might appear due to gender differences.

Finally, the other empirical findings suggest that the co-operative learning should be part of the daily instructional methods used in all teacher training programs. This decision could affect whether students perform to the best of their abilities. It is the responsibility of teachers to be aware of various learning preferences that students bring to classroom and try to take full advantage of them during the daily teaching and learning process.

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Authors

Jauda Jafer Luhmady is a teacher at the Department of English, College of Arts and Languages, Seiyun University, Yemen. She is currently doing her PhD at the Faculty of Arts, Hadhramout University, Yemen. Her research interests include Writing Skills, Teaching English as a Foreign Language and Teacher Training.

Morshed Salim AL-Jaro obtained his PhD in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) from the Department of Language and Literacy Education, Faculty of Education, Universiti Malaya (UM), Malaysia in 2019. He currently works as an Assistant Professor at the Department of English Language, College of Women, Seiyun University, Hadhramout, Yemen. He is also the Dean of College of Women, Seiyun University. Furthermore, he is the Head of the Department of Quality Assurance and Academic Accreditation at the Academic Development and Quality Assurance Center. His research interests include TEFL/TESL, Teacher Training, Professional Development, Reflective Practice, Curriculum Design and Teaching Methods.

Language, Culture and Society in ELT: Perspectives of University Students and Teachers in Myanmar and India

Mary* 

*Associate Professor, English Department, Maubin University, Ministry of Education, Myanmar

E-mail: dawmary4@gmail.com

Orcid ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6126-8030>

Received: October 23, 2023

Revised: December 4, 2023

Accepted: December 26, 2023

Abstract

In English language classrooms, exploring the interplay of language, culture, and society highlights the vital role of cultural fluency in enabling accurate interpretation of spoken expressions, crafting culturally and socially appropriate statements, and minimizing communication breakdowns for university-level students. The objectives of this research are to investigate how university students in Myanmar and India perceive English language learning and to gauge the perspectives of English language teachers regarding the importance of cultural background knowledge in language teaching. The questionnaire, distributed to language classes in selected universities in Myanmar and India, yielded responses from 124 students in Myanmar and 151 students in India out of the 300 questionnaires sent out, while the interview survey, conducted through convenience sampling, involved 44 teachers from Myanmar and 51 teachers from India. Quantitative data analysis is conducted using statistics such as percentages, means, and standard deviations. The findings reveal that cultural fluency, signifying a deep understanding of culture and society, plays a pivotal role in enhancing language learners' comprehension and proficiency in the target language. This study implies that its findings contribute to boosting language learners' communication skills and self-confidence, essential attributes for navigating various societal, travel, and occupational situations with practical relevance.

Keywords: language, culture, society, English language teaching

Introduction

Familiarity with the culture of the native speakers of the target language is essential for language learners. Emphasizing "cultural fluency" is pivotal in this context, as it aids students in developing the communication skills and self-assurance needed for various social, travel, and business scenarios. The interplay between language, culture, and society lies at the heart of sociolinguistics. Holmes (2013) and Fasold (1990) say: 'Sociolinguists study the relationship between language and society. They are interested in explaining why we speak differently in different social contexts, and they are concerned with identifying the social functions of language and the ways it is used to convey social meaning.' People live in societies that have a strong influence on their lives, opinions, and beliefs.

Lee (2016) and Wardaugh (2021) define a ‘society’ as ‘any group of people who are drawn together for a certain purpose or purposes. He stresses that, in this definition ‘society’ is necessarily brief in order to be comprehensive, as ‘society’ is a broad concept, given the many different societies that exist. Wardaugh says on definition of ‘language’ as ‘is what the members of a particular society speak,’ but notes that ‘speech in almost any society can take many very different forms’ and hence ‘... our definitions of language and society are not independent: the definition of language includes in it a reference to society’. Culture is also linked to society and language, and can have different meanings depending on how it is viewed, for example, aesthetically, sociologically, semantically, and pragmatically (Adaskou, Britten and Fahsi, 1990).

A well-known definition by Goodenough (1957, 167, cited by Wardaugh, 1998, p. 217) views culture as: “whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members, and to do so in any role that they accept for any one of themselves”. Culture emphasizes its group characteristic that unites itself as a distinct entity against other groups, as Roebel and Bragg (2016) notes: ‘Culture is those tools, practices, assumptions, and behavioural patterns that members of a group use to communicate with one another and to demarcate themselves from other groups.’

Cultural Fluency

Cultural fluency means familiarity with cultures: their natures, how they work, and ways they intertwine with our relationships in times of conflict and harmony. It also means awareness of several dimensions of culture, including communication.

Importance of Culture in EFL

In more traditional societies, English as a Foreign language (EFL) teachers are hardly aware of the importance of cultural orientation. They consider communication as merely the application of grammatical rules in oral and written practice. In some cases, learning about the target culture is seen as a threat to the native values, and the importance of linguistically relevant information is neglected. Since having a close contact with the target culture and its speakers is a rare opportunity for all language learners in countries from outer and expanding circles (Kachru, 1992), learners cannot appreciate the importance of learning the cultural aspects of communication unless they visit a foreign country and experience the difficulties. Nonverbal aspects of target culture are sometimes acquired from movies and TV serials, which are far from being helpful for communicative purposes or may sometimes develop misconceptions or stereotypes. McKay (2003) claims that culture influences language teaching in two important ways: linguistically and pedagogically. Linguistically, culture is significant in the linguistic dimension of the language itself, affecting the semantic, pragmatic, and discourse levels of the language. Pedagogically, it influences the choice of language materials because cultural content of the language materials and the cultural basis of the teaching methodology are to be taken into consideration while deciding upon the language materials. He argues that in order to master a language, students have to learn both, its linguistic and cultural norms.

Importance of Cultural Background Knowledge in Language Teaching

Hoebel and Frost (1976) perceived culture as an “integrated system of learned behavior patterns which are characteristic of the members of a society and which are not the result of biological inheritance”. Cole and Scribner (1974) took a similar stand when they defined culture. In English teaching, teachers should not only pass on knowledge and train learners’ competence of utilizing language, but also enhance teaching relative cultural background knowledge. McGroarty (1993) stated that social environment in which students learn a language is one of the most important factors in the language learning experience. Theory concerning second language acquisition stressed the importance of teacher’s cultural awareness in establishing and maintaining desired social climate for language learning.

Culture and Language Learning

People around the world come from varied cultural backgrounds and speak different languages. While culture and language may seem distinct, there is an entangled mutual relationship between them. Language is a defining characteristic of culture and plays an integral role in its creation. When outsiders interact with a language, they are interacting with its culture. Understanding a person’s culture without knowledge of their language is infeasible. Language is not just a product of culture; it is also an important symbol. Language and culture develop reciprocally, with customs, cognition, and other cultural patterns being overtly coded into language (Lustig & Koester, 2010; Rallis & Casey, 2005). The inability to understand social behaviors and cultural settings of a language may result in breakdowns, errors, misunderstandings, and misinterpretations during communication. Language is not just about receiving or sending information, it also maintains appropriate social behaviors in a culture. Communication and culture are two branches of the same tree. Culture dictates both the path and the form that communication takes – a message cannot be understood without knowledge of one’s culture (Emitt & Komesaroff, 2003; Wang, 2011). Cultural differences involving speakers and listeners may possibly create communication barriers. Such differences comprise variations in vocabulary, accents, confusion regarding roles, and assumptions regarding shared data. Therefore, an effective communicator understands the cultural biases inherent to them. Exercising empathy, a focus on content, and suspending arbitrary judgments can alleviate such biases effectively (Garcia, 2002; Samovar, Porter & Jain, 1981). Lustig and Koester (2010) indicated that cultures have unique communication patterns that restrict effective listening if listeners are unaware of appropriate language patterns. Comprehending culture properly endows every word with the right context and meaning. Knowledge of a language’s sociocultural background makes it easier to learn new expressions, words, and speaking methods. Besides, understanding the role of culture is crucial for successful communication with native speakers. It increases engagement levels and promotes thinking in foreign languages. Understanding the lifestyles of native people personalizes the language, making it easier to learn the language (Diaz, 2001). Knowing your counterpart’s culture enables you to speak eloquently. Instead of translating phrases developed in one’s native language, you can think, speak, use appropriate words within the right context in the foreign language. For instance, certain concepts only make sense in English, which do not translate accordingly into other languages.

But by understanding a language and its sociocultural context, you can develop alternative phrases to express them. Understanding the cultural background of a language, including lifestyle, literature, art, and other factors, makes you proficient in it. Without culture, only garbled machine translations remain, forcing people to use the language mechanically (Hayati, 2009; Namaziandost, Sabzevari & Hashemifardnia, 2018).

Necessity of Cultural Background Knowledge in Aural Comprehension

In teaching of aural comprehension, we find many students complain that much time has been spent in listening, but little achievement has been acquired. What is the reason? On the one hand, maybe some students' English is very poor, and the material is rather difficult. On the other hand, a more important reason is that they are unfamiliar with cultural background of the USA and England. Aural comprehension, which is closely related to the knowledge of American and British culture, politics, and economy, in fact, is an examination of one's comprehensive competence which includes one's English level, range of knowledge, competence of analysis and imaginative power. Maybe we have this experience: when we listen to something familiar to us, no matter what is concerned, usually we are easy to understand. Even if there are some new words in the material, we are able to guess their meanings according to its context. However, when we encounter some unfamiliar material or something closely related to cultural background, we may feel rather difficult. Even if the material is easy, we only know the literal meaning, but cannot understand the connotation, because we lack knowledge of cultural background. Here is a sentence from a report: "The path to November is uphill all the way." "November" literally means "the eleventh month of year". But here refers to "the Presidential election to be held in November". Another example is "red-letter days"- which is a simple phrase and is easy to hear, meaning holidays such as Christmas and other special and important days. But students are often unable to understand them without teacher's explanation. In view of this, the introduction of cultural background is necessary in the teaching of English listening.

Necessity of Cultural Background Knowledge in Oral Comprehension

Likewise, speaking is not merely concerned with pronunciation and intonation. Students can only improve their oral English and reach the aim of communication by means of enormous reading, mastering rich language material and acquaintance of western culture. Therefore, in oral training, teachers should lay stress on factuality of language and adopt some material approaching to daily life, such as daily dialogues with tape, magazines, newspapers, and report etc., because the material is from real life, and it helps students to be well acquainted with standard pronunciation and intonation, to speak English appropriate to the occasion, to understand western way of life and customs etc. Otherwise, misunderstanding and displeasure are inevitably aroused. Let's look at some examples. Many fixed English ways of expression cannot be changed randomly. For example, the answer to "How do you do?" is "How do you do?" When asking price, people usually say, "How much, please?" instead of: "How much do you charge me? Or "How much do I owe you"; when paying bill, "Waiter, bill please." Instead of "Excuse me, sir. We're finished eating. How much is it, please?"

When asking the other one's name on the telephone, "Who's speaking, please?" or "Who is it, please?" instead of "Who are you?" "Where are you?" "What's your surname?" or "What is your unit?" During oral communication, speakers need standard pronunciation and intonation, as well as the suitable use of language for the occasion.

Cultural Fluency and Willingness to Communicate

Intracultural communication refers to communication between interactants sharing the *same* cultural background. However, in intercultural communication, interactants come from *different* cultures; during intracultural communication, interactants implicitly share the same ground rule of communication and interaction, but in intercultural communication this is oftentimes not the case (Matsumoto et al. 2005). At the most fundamental level, each individual's interpretation of the world is different, but according to the groups to which people belong (national, regional, local, and professional) they share some interpretations with others. Culture is a system of beliefs and values shared by a particular group of people, and thus, skills described below, which constitute cultural fluency, are essential to become successful global players:

- *tolerance of ambiguity* (the ability to accept lack of clarity and to be able to deal with ambiguous situations constructively)
- *behavior flexibility* (the ability to adapt own behavior to different requirements/situations)
- *knowledge discovery* (the ability to acquire new knowledge in real-time communication)
- *communicative awareness* (the ability to use communicative conventions of people from other cultural backgrounds and to modify own forms of expression correspondingly)
- *respect for otherness* (curiosity and openness, as well as a readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about own cultures)
- *empathy* (the ability to understand intuitively what other people think and how they feel in given situations)

As an example, the quality of teachers' daily social and intellectual interactions is influenced by effective communications and interpersonal skills. When considering the relationships between Japanese and non-Japanese teachers who work together, the quality of their relationships may need to be assessed in terms of their willingness to communicate with persons from different cultures, and the ability to do so while respecting cultural differences (Walker 2005).

Research Objectives

The research objectives are as follows:

1. To investigate how university students in Myanmar and India perceive English language learning
2. To examine the perspectives of English language teachers in Myanmar and India regarding the importance of cultural background knowledge in language teaching

Methodology

This research employed a quantitative approach, utilizing a structured questionnaire survey to systematically investigate the dynamics of language, culture, and society within English language classrooms during the academic year 2021-2022. The survey data collection method aimed to capture quantitative insights into the intricate interplay among these elements, providing a comprehensive understanding of their relationships in the educational context.

Participants

For the exploration of the interplay of language, culture, and society in English language classrooms, this study engaged 124 students from Myanmar and 151 students from India, aged 17 to 22. The participants were selected through a convenience sampling method. Additionally, 44 teachers from Myanmar and 51 teachers from India, aged between 38 to 56 years with 12 to 30 years of university-level teaching experience, were involved in the survey to provide valuable insights into the intercultural dynamics within the educational context.

The Instrument

Instrumental to the study on the interplay of language, culture, and society in English language classrooms, the researcher developed questionnaires encompassing classroom values, including students' perceptions of English language learning and university teachers' perspectives on the significance of cultural background knowledge in language teaching. Each question was assessed using a Likert Scale ranging from 1 to 3. The data collection took place in selected universities in Myanmar and India, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of the cultural and societal dimensions within the English language learning environment.

Results

In unravelling the intricate dynamics of language, culture, and society within English language classrooms, the results of this study shed light on key insights garnered from both student and teacher perspectives. The survey, administered to 124 students in Myanmar and 151 students in India, aged between 17 to 22, aimed to discern their perceptions of English language learning and the role of cultural background knowledge. Concurrently, the viewpoints of 44 teachers from Myanmar and 51 teachers from India, ranging in age from 38 to 56 with a teaching tenure of 12 to 30 years, were explored to provide a nuanced understanding of the importance assigned to cultural factors in language teaching. The quantitative data, measured on a Likert Scale ranging from 1 to 3, offers a comprehensive snapshot of the participants' responses. The ensuing analysis provides valuable insights into the interplay between language, culture, and society, offering a deeper comprehension of how these factors manifest in the English language classrooms of selected universities in Myanmar and India.

Phase 1: Questionnaire

Table 1

Myanmar Students' Perceptions on English Language Learning (n=124)

Sr No	Statements	Responses			Calculation		Interpretation
		No	Not Sure	Yes	Mean	SD	
1	I like learning English.	5%	11%	84%	2.79	0.52	Positive
2	I like to talk with foreigners in English.	26%	17%	57%	2.31	0.86	Moderately positive
3	I don't think that English is an important subject at university.	54%	17%	29%	1.75	0.88	Moderately positive
4	I think that English may be important in future.	7%	12%	81%	2.74	0.58	Positive
5	My parents think that English may be important in future.	13%	33%	54%	2.41	0.71	Positive
6	English is not important in the world.	81%	7%	12%	1.31	0.67	Slightly positive
7	It is easy for me to learn English.	30%	37%	33%	2.03	0.79	Moderately positive
8	My family does not think that English is an important subject at university.	58%	24%	18%	1.60	0.77	Moderately positive
9	Learning English is fun.	16%	15%	69%	2.53	0.75	Moderately positive
10	I can travel around the world if I can speak English well.	3%	17%	80%	2.77	0.49	Moderately positive
11	I always like to attend English classes.	24%	12%	64%	2.40	0.85	Positive
12	English will be useful if I travel abroad.	9%	4%	87%	2.78	0.59	Positive
13	I learn English just to pass exams.	49%	19%	32%	1.83	0.88	Moderately positive
14	I am happy to attend English activities if there are any.	21%	14%	65%	2.44	0.82	Moderately positive
15	I think that games and related class activities are an important part of English teaching.	16%	14%	70%	2.54	0.75	Positive
16	I think that many of the games and activities that are often used in class are silly and a waste of time.	68%	17%	15%	1.47	0.74	Slightly positive
17	I think that we should learn more grammar in class.	23%	26%	51%	2.28	0.81	Moderately positive

Table 1 (Continued)

Sr No	Statements	Responses			Calculation		Interpretation
		No	Not Sure	Yes	Mean	SD	
18	I think that we should have more reading in class.	30%	22%	48%	2.18	0.86	Moderately positive
19	I think that English teaching should focus on language that is close to our chosen subjects and professions.	12%	19%	69%	2.57	0.70	Positive
20	I think that we need to be taught only by native speaking teachers at university.	32%	30%	38%	2.06	0.83	Moderately positive
21	I think that we need to be taught only by local teachers at university.	48%	35%	17%	1.69	250.00	Moderately positive
22	I think that we need to be taught by both native speaking teachers and local teachers at university.	5%	14%	81%	2.76	0.53	Positive
23	I think that learning English can help me understand Western culture.	7%	12%	81%	2.74	0.58	Positive
24	I enjoy listening to English language songs.	23%	22%	55%	2.32	0.82	Moderately positive
25	I visit English language websites when I surf the internet.	18%	22%	60%	2.42	0.78	Moderately positive
26	I like to read English language readers.	21%	18%	61%	2.40	0.81	Positive
27	I watch English language television shows.	21%	20%	59%	2.38	0.81	Positive
28	I like to watch English language news shows.	17%	28%	55%	2.38	0.76	Positive
29	I enjoy singing English songs.	17%	28%	55%	2.38	0.76	Positive
30	I like to read English newspapers.	16%	31%	53%	2.37	0.74	Positive
31	I like to look at job opportunities in English speaking countries.	27%	23%	50%	2.23	0.85	Moderately positive
32	I like to write emails in English.	12%	29%	59%	2.47	0.70	Positive
33	I think that all western countries and cultures are similar.	47%	44%	9%	1.62	0.64	Slightly positive

Table 1 (Continued)

Sr No	Statements	Responses			Calculation		Interpretation
		No	Not Sure	Yes	Mean	SD	
34	I think that TV shows and films can give us an accurate idea of western culture.	7%	41%	52%	2.45	0.62	Positive
35	I would like to study in an English-speaking country.	17%	14%	69%	2.52	0.77	Positive
36	I enjoy reading about western countries.	27%	15%	58%	2.31	0.87	Moderately positive
37	I enjoy watching documentaries of western countries.	24%	19%	57%	2.33	0.84	Moderately positive
38	As so many books, films and television shows are available in English, I think that it is important for me learn English.	15%	6%	79%	2.64	0.73	Positive
39	I am interested in western myths and other stories.	34%	22%	44%	2.10	0.88	Moderately positive
40	I am interested in western music and artists.	26%	15%	59%	2.33	0.86	Moderately positive
Average		25.15%	20.63%	54.23%	2.29	0.84	Moderately positive

NOTE:

1.00-1.80=Slightly positive

1.81-2.60=Moderately positive

2.61-3.40=Positive

3.41-4.20=Very positive

4.21-5.00= Completely positive

Table 1 reveals that Myanmar students held moderately positive on English language learning with the average mean score 2.29. They are willing to learn English as they agree that English language is necessary to communicate with different societies when they travel abroad. They claimed that they can travel around the world if they can speak English well so they like learning English with the highest mean score (Mean=2.78).

Phase 2: Questionnaire

Table 2

Indian Students' Perceptions on English Language Learning (n=151)

Sr No	Statements	Responses			Calculation		Interpretation
		No	Not Sure	Yes	Mean	SD	
1	I like learning English.	23%	26%	51%	2.28	0.81	Moderately positive
2	I like to talk with foreigners in English.	20%	13%	67%	2.47	0.81	Moderately positive
3	I don't think that English is an important subject at university.	34%	22%	44%	2.10	0.88	Moderately positive
4	I think that English may be important in future.	34%	16%	50%	2.16	0.90	Moderately positive
5	My parents think that English may be important in future.	43%	35%	22%	1.79	0.78	Moderately positive
6	English is not important in the world.	33%	37%	30%	1.97	0.79	Moderately positive
7	It is easy for me to learn English.	36%	22%	42%	2.06	0.88	Moderately positive
8	My family does not think that English is an important subject at university.	18%	38%	44%	2.26	0.74	Moderately positive
9	Learning English is fun.	31%	29%	40%	2.09	0.84	Moderately positive
10	I can travel around the world if I can speak English well.	26%	27%	47%	2.21	0.83	Moderately positive
11	I always like to attend English classes.	33%	35%	32%	1.99	0.81	Moderately positive
12	English will be useful if I travel abroad.	21%	21%	58%	2.37	0.81	Moderately positive
13	I learn English just to pass exams.	34%	17%	49%	2.15	0.90	Moderately positive
14	I am happy to attend English activities if there are any.	49%	25%	26%	1.77	0.83	Moderately positive
15	I think that games and related class activities are an important part of English teaching.	9%	24%	67%	2.58	0.65	Moderately positive
16	I think that many of the games and activities that are often used in class are silly and a waste of time.	52%	13%	35%	1.83	0.92	Moderately positive
17	I think that we should learn more grammar in class.	36%	22%	42%	2.06	0.88	Moderately positive
18	I think that we should have more reading in class.	31%	19%	50%	2.19	0.88	Moderately positive

Table 2 (Continued)

Sr No	Statements	Responses			Calculation		Interpretation
		No	Not Sure	Yes	Mean	SD	
19	I think that English teaching should focus on language that is close to our chosen subjects and professions.	21%	31%	48%	2.27	0.79	Moderately positive
20	I think that we need to be taught only by native speaking teachers at university.	9%	22%	69%	2.60	0.65	Moderately positive
21	I think that we need to be taught only by local teachers at university.	43%	31%	26%	1.83	250.00	Moderately positive
22	I think that we need to be taught by both native speaking teachers and local teachers at university.	13%	16%	71%	2.58	0.71	Moderately positive
23	I think that learning English can help me understand Western culture.	35%	18%	47%	2.12	0.90	Moderately positive
24	I enjoy listening to English language songs.	47%	20%	33%	1.86	0.88	Moderately positive
25	I visit English language websites when I surf the internet.	13%	36%	51%	2.38	0.70	Moderately positive
26	I like to read English language readers.	32%	22%	46%	2.14	0.87	Moderately positive
27	I watch English language television shows.	34%	31%	35%	2.01	0.83	Moderately positive
28	I like to watch English language news shows.	10%	35%	55%	2.45	0.67	Moderately positive
29	I enjoy singing English songs.	44%	17%	39%	1.95	0.91	Moderately positive
30	I like to read English newspapers.	61%	25%	14%	1.53	0.73	Slightly positive
31	I like to look at job opportunities in English speaking countries.	23%	31%	46%	2.23	0.80	Moderately positive
32	I like to write emails in English.	31%	34%	35%	2.04	0.81	Moderately positive
33	I think that all western countries and cultures are similar.	9%	36%	55%	2.46	0.65	Moderately positive

Table 2 (Continued)

Sr No	Statements	Responses			Calculation		Interpretation
		No	Not Sure	Yes	Mean	SD	
34	I think that TV shows and films can give us an accurate idea of western culture.	42%	22%	36%	1.94	0.88	Moderately positive
35	I would like to study in an English-speaking country.	9%	24%	67%	2.58	0.65	Moderately positive
36	I enjoy reading about western countries.	11%	27%	62%	2.51	0.69	Moderately positive
37	I enjoy watching documentaries of western countries.	23%	20%	57%	2.34	0.83	Moderately positive
38	As so many books, films and television shows are available in English, I think that it is important for me learn English.	11%	30%	59%	2.48	0.69	Moderately positive
39	I am interested in western myths and other stories.	34%	29%	37%	2.03	0.84	Moderately positive
40	I am interested in western music and artists.	11%	27%	62%	2.51	0.69	Moderately positive
Average		28.23%	25.63%	46.15%	2.18	0.84	Moderately positive

NOTE:

1.00-1.80=Slightly positive

1.81-2.60=Moderately positive

2.61-3.40=Positive

3.41-4.20=Very positive

4.21-5.00= Completely positive

As shown in Table 2, Indian students held moderately positive on English language learning with the average mean score (Mean=2.18). They would like to study in an English-speaking country with the highest mean score 2.58. And they also would like to teach with native speakers more than non-native speakers.

Phase 3: Questionnaire Survey

Table 3

Myanmar University Teachers' Perceptions on Importance of Cultural Background Knowledge in Language Teaching

Sr No	Statements	Responses			Calculation		Interpretation
		Important	More important	Most important	Mean	SD	
1	Cultural background knowledge in aural comprehension	46%	33%	21%	1.75	0.78	More important
2	Cultural background knowledge in oral comprehension	34%	41%	25%	1.91	0.76	More important
3	Cultural background knowledge in reading	32%	33%	35%	2.03	0.82	More important
4	Cultural Background Knowledge in Writing and Translating	30%	38%	32%	2.02	0.79	More important
Average		35.50%	36.25%	28.25%	1.93	0.80	More important

NOTE:

1.00-1.66=Important

1.67-2.33=More important

2.34-3.00=Most important

As shown in Table 3, Myanmar university teachers think that cultural background knowledge is more important in language teaching with the average mean score 1.93. Culture is therefore a crucial facet of teaching English as a Foreign Language. The goal behind teaching culture in EFL should be inculcating intercultural communicative competence among learners, rather than propagating or showing superiority of the target culture over native culture. The foreign culture should provide the mirror to the learners in which he can see his own culture reflected. It provides an outside to our inside.

Phase 4: Questionnaire Survey

Table 4

Indian University Teachers' Perceptions on Importance of Cultural Background Knowledge in Language Teaching

Sr No	Statements	Responses			Calculation		Interpretation
		Important	More important	Most important	Mean	SD	
1	Cultural background knowledge in aural comprehension	23%	25%	52%	2.29	0.82	More important
2	Cultural background knowledge in oral comprehension	24%	30%	46%	2.22	0.81	More important
3	Cultural background knowledge in reading	12%	36%	52%	2.40	0.69	Most important
4	Cultural Background Knowledge in Writing and Translating	23%	30%	47%	2.24	0.80	More important
Average		20.50%	30.25%	49.25%	2.29	0.78	More important

NOTE:

1.00-1.66=Important

1.67-2.33=More important

2.34-3.00=Most important

Table 4 reveals Indian university teachers' perceptions on importance of cultural background knowledge in language teaching. Like Myanmar teachers, Indian teachers also think that cultural background knowledge is more important in language teaching with the average mean score 2.29. In addition, they also claimed that cultural background knowledge is the most important in reading with the highest mean score 2.40.

Discussion

Research on the interplay of language, culture, and society in English language classrooms focuses on enhancing the teaching of university-level students by emphasizing the importance of cultural fluency, which enables learners to interpret spoken expressions accurately, craft culturally and socially appropriate statements, and minimize communication breakdowns and misunderstandings. In summary, both Myanmar and Indian students held moderately positive attitude on English language learning. The results of the questionnaires revealed that both the teachers and students considered teaching of culture important. Both have a strong interest in Western culture and see learning English as a key to getting to know Western culture better, however the students from Myanmar appear to be more interested in engaging themselves in Western culture. Myanmar students held positive attitude more than Indian students in every aspect of learning English language. One culture or language is unique and differs from another. Cultural differences can be viewed as the way in which other groups, societies or countries are socially organized, developed, and communicated which have customs, laws and lifestyles from other ethnographic groups. Therefore, understanding the target language is not quite easy and it is very important to be aware of cultural differences, only with that will someone knows how to respect other cultures and how to use their languages well.

In addition, both Indian and Myanmar teachers also think that cultural background knowledge is very important in language teaching. This is further emphasized by the students from both countries showing that they see learning English as very important and acknowledging that English is important in the world today. This view is supported by their families. The respondents suggest that teachers need to spend more time on teaching Grammar and Reading, and also try to incorporate games and activities into their lessons. Whilst Myanmar university students see the value in using games as a teaching tool, they are not as passionate about it as Indian students. The need for a mixture of both native and local teachers was highlighted by students from both universities. To reinforce their learning, student participants should be encouraged to write more, including emails, and also try to follow English.

This research aligns with the findings of a study by Jourdan and Tuite from 2006. They emphasize that culture is very important in foreign language teaching and learning, and this is widely accepted. Language is the main way we communicate culture, and just knowing facts isn't enough – it's more valuable to increase people's cultural awareness because it promotes deeper thinking. Many students are good at grammar and vocabulary but have trouble using the language well because they don't understand the culture linked to it.

To sum up, teachers should let learners not only pay attention to cultural differences but also try to understand and study the differences to avoid misunderstanding in study and communication. It is necessary for students to be taught directly and develop their awareness of cultural background knowledge in order to overcome the obstacles produced by cultural differences. English language teaching professionals should always try to encourage their students to express matters that are important to their lives and how effectively to communicate their concerns, cultural viewpoints, and personal interests by using English as a meaningful interchange with people of other countries, and to relate what it means to be a member of their specific societies and cultures in a positive way to others globally.

All in all, cultural factors play an important role in English teaching and learning. The aim of English teaching is to foster students' comprehensive English capability by learning language and its culture. In successful teaching and study of both language and cultural background knowledge, cultural introduction contributes to foster students' cultural consciousness of target language. By doing so, students can improve their English comprehensive capacity and cultural communication of the target language. This accomplishes the target of foreign language teaching.

Recommendations

In order to enrich the comprehensiveness and impact of this research, several recommendations are proposed. Firstly, expanding the geographic scope beyond Myanmar and India could offer a more holistic view of how cultural fluency influences English language learning in diverse settings. Additionally, the inclusion of qualitative data, such as interviews or open-ended surveys, would provide deeper insights into the personal experiences and perceptions of students and teachers. A longitudinal study could also be considered to assess the long-term effects of cultural fluency on language proficiency. The research might also investigate the availability and efficacy of teacher training programs in imparting cultural knowledge. Providing practical guidance for curriculum developers on integrating cultural fluency into teaching materials and methods is crucial. Further comparative analyses and exploration of effective pedagogical approaches should be explored. The ethical considerations related to participants from various cultural backgrounds should be addressed, and the research findings should be widely disseminated to benefit language educators and institutions. Lastly, future research directions, such as the impact of cultural fluency on specific language skills or comparisons across different language learning settings, could be suggested to guide subsequent studies.

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Author

Associate Professor Mary obtained her degrees from Mandalay University and successfully completed her Master's program in English in 2005. She has been an academic lecturer for 18 years, instructing both undergraduate and postgraduate students. She has a strong aptitude for interpersonal relations, establishing positive connections with individuals from various backgrounds, and find fulfillment in working with a diverse audience. Since 2005, Associate Professor Mary has dedicated her efforts to research in the fields of English Literature, Applied Linguistics, and English Language Teaching (ELT). Her scholarly contributions are evidenced by the publication of over 20 academic papers, both nationally and internationally, showcasing her valuable ideas and insights.

The Formulaic Nature of Comics: Language Learning and Multimodal Texts

Alec Lapidus¹

¹School of Education and Human Development, University of Southern Maine, Gorham, USA
E-mail: TESOLexplorer@gmail.com

Received: November 21, 2023

Revised: December 21, 2023

Accepted: December 26, 2023

Abstract

Can comics be described as an excellent ESL/EFL teaching and learning tool? This paper explores the formulaic nature of multiliteracy materials, with a particular focus on comics and similar visual narratives, to describe their potential as language learning/teaching tools. Building on the New London Group's concept of multiliteracies (1996), it looks at the theoretical foundation for using multiliteracy materials such as comics in the classroom and offers specific examples of how recognizing the formulaic nature of such narratives can support the second/foreign language acquisition and cultural negotiation process. Notably, the paper looks at the formulaic from several perspectives, including the traditional definitions of formulaic language (such as common collocations, idioms, and so forth) and the formulaic structure of visual narratives as designed discourses and texts. The positive impact on learners' personal linguaculture and intercultural personhood is illuminated in this article.

Keywords: comics, formulaic language, multiliteracies, second language teaching

Comics and Second/Foreign Language Learners

Among the many challenges applied linguistics is facing today, the question of how to reach all learners and make second/foreign language learning possible for students stands out due to the rapidly changing environment in which second/foreign language acquisition is taking place. Over the past two decades or so, the notion of language learning as a multidimensional phenomenon has become recognized in our field. Augmented by current research that deals with linguacultural identity (e.g., Kanno & Norton, 2003; Pavlenko, 2003) and personhood (Kim, 2008; Risager, 2008), a new, more nuanced understanding of the language learning process is emerging. This nuanced understanding is made possible by the increasingly interdisciplinary dialogue taking place between and among applied linguistics specialists. Risager (2008), in particular, has introduced her own version of the concept "personal linguaculture" – the idea that every person possesses a combination of language and culture that is unique to him/her/them, formed by interactions with those around him/her/them. More than ever before, this rapidly changing environment is encouraging us to look at the issues and nuances from new angles. "Multiliteracies" (The New London Group, 1996, p. 60) can be one such angle and indeed an opportunity to add to the traditional definitions of literacy a vision for multicultural learning that may guide 21st-century pedagogy as it continues to evolve. "A pedagogy of multiliteracies," members of the New London

Group note, “focuses on modes of representation much broader than language alone” (p. 64) to address “the limitations of traditional approaches by emphasizing how negotiating the multiple linguistic and cultural differences in our society is central to the pragmatics of the working, civic, and private lives of students” (p. 60).

Interestingly, second/foreign language learners tend to associate multiliteracy materials, such as comics, with fun (e.g., Cary, 2004, Kurosawa & Kaneko, 2006; Samantray, 2009). However, teachers (e.g., second language teachers) often disagree and do not necessarily see them as legitimate, genuine literacy learning materials (Burmark, 2002; Baddock, 1993; Cary, 2004; Eisner, 2006; Hamston, 2006; McAllister, Sewell, & Gordon, 2001; Norton & Toohey, 2004, and others). While it would be an oversimplification of the issues to present this as a dichotomy (students “like” comics and teachers “do not”), it is important to point out that motivation is very obviously one of the driving forces behind successful second/foreign language (L2) acquisition. Therefore, it would be a disservice to ignore our students’ affinity for multiliteracy materials.

This is particularly important in contexts where the second/foreign language learner population is rapidly growing. In the area of English language learner (ELL) education, the learner population is expanding; and internationally, English is now commonly viewed as the lingua franca (Crystal, 1997). Additionally, multimodality is increasingly becoming normal and natural to our students, especially to those who are digital natives. These changes are bound to bring with them concerns about how L2 literacy is taught and lead to experimentation with multimodality specifically in second language teaching. From my point of view, this has to lead to a conversation about language learning as a form of Vygotskian play (Lapidus, 2013).

On the other hand, multimodal texts have been a form of technology used by humans for centuries. The modern smartphone is philosophically and even conceptually a continuation of the prehistoric cave art. Texts’ social function is to make it possible for humans to communicate with each other. Thus, “sequential art” (Eisner, 2006, p. 5; McCloud, 2000, p. 42) is more than merely words and images put together. Sequential art, such as comics, is an expression of the linguacultural capital, and ELLs reading visual narratives in their second/foreign language are choosing to immerse themselves in it. They choose to have a dialogue with the author and the context in which the specific text that they are reading was created, and as they engage in this conversation, they make the connection between language and what it is used to express, i.e., emotions, values, and thoughts, in order to acquire multicultural literacy. Thus, I argue, ELLs are often able to see in these visual narratives something they can understand and come to own, even when the texts come from a culture different from the learners’ first language (L1) culture (Lapidus, 2008; McCloud, 2006; Schodt, 2005). The challenges contribute to the learning process.

A Confluence of Culture and Language

According to Wood (2010), “Formulaic sequences and their nature and functions are the subject of growing interest in applied linguistics” (p. 177), particularly because the “cultural factors in fluency development” complement the “affective factors, be they learner-internal or socially influenced,” and these factors “can have an effect on speech fluency development and performance” (p. 82). Wood’s own research suggests that cultural factors are reflected “in patterns of communication,” thus having

a direct impact on output (p. 177). Naturally, since “social identity can play a heavy role in fluency in L2” (p. 79), “the act of communicating in L2 is influenced by a range of factors beyond the linguistic: first language, culture, identity, and issues of voice and attitudes, among others” (p. 72). In other words, one’s personal linguaculture can be expressed subjectively and in context-specific ways. On the one hand, Wood writes, “If the first language is built on different abstractions and principles, it stands to reason that *cultural fluency* and therefore speech fluency in L2 are likely to be inhibited” (p. 80, emphasis added). On the other hand, he continues, “It could be conjectured that cultural issues or the nature of the L1 might influence fluency development in some ways, but again, the quantitative data analysis does not bear that out” (Wood, 2010, p. 172). This leads Wood to conclude that there is more to input and output than just the cultural factors. He writes that the “fear of public embarrassment is key to language anxiety” (p. 73) and “it appears that self-determined motivation is useful in explaining the ways in which social and cultural factors influence L2 learning and performance” (p. 75):

Certainly, the immediate context plays a strong role, as social factors all may have varying effects depending on the nature of the interlocutors, the purpose of the speech produced, setting, and degree of self-investment required. The underlying psycholinguistic processes allow the emergence of voice, cultural fluency, and self-efficacy. Formulaic sequences, if internalized, allow for the expression of those aspects of the self in society (Wood, 2010, p. 83).

Therefore, he postulates, English language learners forming their own L2 personal linguaculture might benefit from exploring formulaic structures in their reading materials from both the cultural and linguistic point of view. For example, Wood (2010) believes that working with texts that students from many cultures can relate to (such as fairy tales, fables, and so forth) can create a window on the formulaic in building a personal linguaculture.

In turn, if students are “ethnomethodologists” exploring the formulaic in language and culture (Wood, 2010, pp. 88-89), then it can be argued that reading comics and other multiliteracy materials presents an opportunity to immerse oneself in the semiotics of the second language. In other words, what feels like fun and reading for pleasure to ELLs is in actuality a highly complex process of hypothesizing, theorizing, and fantasizing about the second/foreign language culture. Of course, this complicates the study of the second/foreign language culture in that the students are now encouraged to visualize participating in the inner workings of the second/foreign language culture, as opposed to merely accepting sets of rules and customs to memorize. Fundamentally, multiliteracy materials are a powerful tool that helps define a track along which the learner will move when he/she becomes truly autonomous, i.e., instead of continuing to seek out the superficial aspects of culture to read about, learners may choose to define themselves as participants and not mere observers. From this point of view, their exploration of the formulaic has a chance to go beyond the form itself.

Comics and Intercultural Personhood

Learning to function in a new culture is something that language learners around the world are trying to do on a daily basis. Whether they are Korean ELLs, international students studying in New Zealand, or children of asylees entering elementary school in the United States, one thing they all have in common is the need to survive and do well in the new environment. For many, learning is at first limited to learning the rules of the new culture or the basics of the second language, but truly understanding those who speak this second/foreign language as their first language and the values, beliefs, and the incredible amount of ethnic and cultural diversity out of which these values and beliefs have arisen takes effort and desire to learn. That is why this immersion in a new culture and language is also an introspective process that has a direct impact on one's linguacultural identity (Lapidus, Kaveh & Hirano, 2013). The "intercultural personhood" (Kim, 2008, p. 359) that grows in the process of living at the intersection of cultures has a strong autoethnographic side to it (Hanauer, 2010; Lapidus, Kaveh & Hirano, 2013). Coupled with imagination (Vygotsky, 2008), intercultural personhood creates for us a foundation to build on as we continue becoming interested in reading new texts in our second language. Indeed, students become able to see themselves as members of a variety of "imagined communities" (Kanno & Norton, 2003, p. 241).

In turn, it can be argued that intercultural personhood helps us deal with the unpredictable as we continue learning our second language. As Makhлина (2010) points out, art is quintessentially polysemantic, i.e., learning about culture and/or language from sequential art materials and from interactions that take place over such materials means accepting the idea that there are various views on subjects and topics within any given culture. This is cross-cultural hermeneutics. I argue that the unpredictable helps learners become more autonomous, thereby making learner-centeredness more possible (Nunan, 1988). From the social semiotics point of view, Kress addresses this directly when writing on the need to understand how learners learn, manipulate, and create signs (2010). If "human semiosis" is "an inherently social phenomenon in its sources, functions, contexts and effects" (Hodge & Kress, 1988, p. 261), then the evolution of one's intercultural personhood has to be more than simply the acquisition of factual information. Voloshinov/Bakhtin identifies the social nature of word as conducive to dialogue (2010), where the meaning-making process is a form of interaction between the author, the reader, and the characters. Fundamentally, this moves us away from simplistic views on second/foreign language reading and offers an insight into how language learners interact with texts in their second/foreign language.

Recognizing the Formulaic Nature of Comics

The formulaic nature of comics and similar visual narratives is represented, first and foremost, by the gutter, i.e., the blank space between the panes. The gutter's function is to have the reader visualize the connection between the panels, where he/she participates in the action (McCloud, 1993). Fundamentally, the gutter makes it possible for readers to activate their schemata and use imagination to turn the visual narrative into one coherent piece. The formulaic nature of comics as a discourse is what allows the reader to face the unpredictable. When connections to schemata are made, the interaction between the reader, the author, and the hero takes place in the gutter. In a second/foreign language context, this means that reading comics is not simply a process

that involves recalling factual information. On the contrary, visual narratives embrace the notion of incompleteness. Much has been written about learner-centeredness (see Nunan, 1988, for an early example of this), but the implementation of the fundamental principles of learner-centered education, such as placing the learner's inner world at the core of the teaching process (Voloshinov/Bakhtin, 2010), has to be supported with materials that are conducive to learner-driven meaning-making process.

Next, language used in comics is often formulaic, in the traditional sense. A good example of this we find in genre-specific language that varies from one genre to another. This applies not only to phrasal verbs and culturally bound expressions, but also to vocabulary (e.g., slang) and even grammar. For example, a growing trend in comics is English for Specific Purposes (ESP) manga, such as a book that focuses on calculus (see Kojima & Togami, 2009) and another one that deals with statistics (Takahashi, 2008). The statistics book includes numerous examples of formulaic language, ranging from "there is/there are" structures to a multitude of modal verbs used in context. The calculus book includes formulaic expressions such as "It was nice of you to call and let me know you might be running late" and "It's nice to live in Sanda-cho!" (p. 116). The latter set of examples comes from a section on "Using trigonometric functions" in the chapter "Let's learn integration techniques!" (Kojima & Togami, 2009, p. 116). All of these are presented to the reader in a visually stimulating environment and context, i.e., the formulaic language and visuals work in tandem to help the reader make meaning.

Similarly, the Korean manhwa is offering a growing variety of texts that are educational in design and orientation (Lim, 2011), particularly in the graphic novel form. Lim (2011) indicates that Korean second/foreign language educational manhwa offers a variety of educational content presented from the protagonist's point of view and that it allows learners to enjoy the content and acquire new information.

Comics in EAP and ESP Acquisition

From the English for Academic Purposes point of view, formulaic language in comics contains a combination of conversational and academic expressions, structures, and vocabulary. For example, a trait common to a variety of genres of comics is that characters express their thoughts through language, which typically also includes talking about fantasy, dreams, or the future (this is often indicated by a particular form of a speech balloon). In other words, characters use language to narrate and illustrate the process of theorizing and forming hypotheses. Similarly, characters in comics often talk about the affective and use formulaic language to express their likes and dislikes (see the example above, Kojima & Togami, 2009, p. 116). Cultural concepts are often fused with language, allowing the students to experience a moment of hesitation and then either make a connection to their schemata or mentally pose a question to themselves about what the character in question means or implies.

Furthermore, formulaic language used in comics broadly fits into the categories proposed by Yorio (1980). Broadly defined, it augments, illustrates, and makes possible a variety of scenarios. For example, interactions between characters often contain language that exemplifies contextualization, i.e., to understand what the characters are talking about, one has to look at the visual context in which the interaction is occurring (this is similar to Voloshinov's/Bakhtin's thoughts on word and social context, 2010). Furthermore, comics, such as the ESP manga mentioned above,

contain language that illustrates the concept of stylistics, e.g., formulaic language in this case can be indicative of a particular style. Building on this, formulaic language also varies depending on the character's social status and other extralinguistic factors (Yorio, 1980), teaching second language learners about formality. Additionally, a great deal of formulaic language in comics focuses on pragmatics and using language to obtain information. This, too, is helpful to second/foreign language learners, for obvious reasons.

From the pedagogical perspective, all of this can be turned into activities to be used in the second language classroom. A simple example that any second/foreign language teacher will recognize is working with picture dictionaries. For beginners, working with a picture dictionary may mean getting used to using a monolingual glossary; for advanced students, picture dictionaries represent a rich cultural resource that often includes ESP vocabulary and phraseology. Thus, in an academic context, Samantray (2009) has ESL students create their own comics with the language they are learning. Additionally, various ESL researchers have written and spoken on comics and completion tasks (e.g., Kurosawa & Kaneko, 2006; Yoon & Kellogg, 2002; and others), where tasks can range from working with cloze texts to actually drawing additional panels and speech balloons. A variety of methods currently used in second/foreign language teaching, including Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and even the Grammar Translation Method (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011), can benefit from comics as a learning and teaching tool because they can be easily adapted to a variety of curricula. Sorting tasks, games, and collaborative learning activities can all be incorporated into the second/foreign language curriculum, as long as the teacher is open to the idea of using multiliteracy activities in the classroom.

Conclusion

Multiliteracy texts, and comics in particular, have much potential in terms of helping learners form an expressly multicultural, multidimensional personal linguaculture. The theoretical foundation for this is emergent at best, but therein lies an opportunity to improve our understanding of how learners acquire their second/foreign language and use the formulaic in the materials with which they prefer working to construct meaning.

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Author

Dr. Alec Lapidus is an Associate Professor in the Department of Literacy, Language, and Culture, School of Education and Human Development, University of Southern Maine. He teaches a variety of courses that focus on second language acquisition and cultural negotiation.

Improving Grade 8 Struggling Readers' Reading Comprehension Skills through Game-based Learning and Teacher-directed Instruction

Ernest Gerard B. Durano¹ / Kurt S. Candalas²

¹Graduate School, Lourdes College
E-mail: ernest.durano@lccdo.edu.ph

²Professor, Lourdes College
E-mail: kurt.candalas@lccdo.edu.ph

Received: November 27, 2023

Revised: December 15, 2023

Accepted: December 26, 2023

Abstract

The ability to comprehend written material is critical for individuals as it empowers them to accurately interpret and evaluate it, so it is important to facilitate the development of this skill among the learners. The purpose of this research was to determine the effectiveness of Game-Based Learning and Teacher-Directed Instruction in improving the reading comprehension skills of the eighth-grader Struggling readers in a public school in Kinoguitan, Misamis Oriental, Philippines. This study utilized the quasi-experimental design with the use of the teacher-made questionnaire to evaluate the reading comprehension levels of both groups prior to and subsequent to the interventions. Descriptive statistics were used to present results, T-test for paired samples was used to determine significant differences in the two groups, and the T-test for independent samples was used to determine significant differences in the two groups' reading comprehension increments. The findings demonstrate that Game-Based Learning is more effective than Teacher-Directed Instruction. In order to effectively enhance reading comprehension, the research suggests that instructional approaches incorporate interactive and engaging activities as well as structured and explicit approaches as this foster active cognitive involvement and reinforce fundamental comprehension strategies.

Keywords: teacher-directed instruction, game-based learning, reading comprehension skill, struggling readers

Introduction

Reading comprehension skill empowers learners to understand complex problems and questions across various learning areas. It is an essential ability that allows humans to effectively comprehend and analyze written material that requires the capacity to interpret, examine, and assess written content to derive meaning.

Reading alone is not vital. As Yurko and Protsenko (2020) suggested, the interaction between written text and outside information creates reading comprehension. Students need this to decipher, evaluate, and communicate written material. According to Gilakjani and Sabouri (2016), students must develop text comprehension and abilities to become proficient readers. Hence, students should understand textual content, especially for their teachers' academic tasks. Arivuchelvan

and Lakahmi (2017) added that the inability to grasp may inhibit students from learning, retaining, and graduating, which could significantly affect their future endeavors. Elleman (2019) added that reading comprehension is important for school success and everyday relationships.

Disturbingly, the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (2018) results showed that Filipino learners have reading comprehension difficulties. Another study through the report by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) with United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and World Bank (2021) revealed that Filipino learners are challenged in terms of their reading competence due to the effects caused by the pandemic. These findings among the Filipino students are also evidently present in the locale of the study.

The challenges in improving reading competence among students reveal that teaching reading methods is a crucial duty of language teachers since it helps students' comprehension abilities. These techniques can aid students in developing self-directed learning skills and improving progress monitoring. As reading is essential for academic success, it is crucial to make sure that the strategies utilized to teach reading are successful for the best results (Loopoo & Balfour, 2021; Okkinga, 2018; Sa'adah et al., 2018).

With that in mind, this study sought to evaluate the effectiveness of direct instruction and game-based learning approaches in enhancing reading comprehension abilities. The purpose of the study was to assess the effectiveness of these pedagogical methods in improving students' comprehension of written content.

On one hand, Game-based learning (GBL) is recognized for enhancing students' interest, emotional engagement, and knowledge application by balancing subject matter, interactivity, and user retention (Hartt et al., 2020; Molin, 2017; Papadakis, 2018;). GBL makes reading comprehension, language acquisition, and vocabulary improvement fun and interactive (Chang et al., 2018; Dixon, 2022; Hartt, 2020; Hung et al., 2018; Molin, 2017; Papadakis, 2018; Purgina, 2019). However, game plot complexity hinders educational goals, digital GBL development is expensive, and its effects on language proficiency and academic performance are mixed (Dimitra et al., 2020; Ebrahimzadeh & Alavi, 2017; Fotaris et al., 2017; Pinto & Ferreira, 2017; Ronimus et al., 2014; Shi et al., 2019; Zammit, 2022; Zhang et al., 2018).

On the other hand, Direct Instruction (DI), a teacher-centered method, was seen as effective for teaching reading comprehension, especially when combined with cognitive approaches and instructional media (Frampton et al., 2021; Nuraeni & Aisyah, 2022; Yaghmour & Obaidat, 2022). However, concerns were raised about the long-term impact and potential limitations of relying solely on scripted DI programs, with suggestions that its effectiveness may vary among student populations, particularly those with different levels of expertise (Eppley & Dudley-Marling, 2019; Nuraeni & Aisyah, 2022). With the conflicting results of these related readings, the study sought to determine which method is more effective in addressing the reading comprehension challenges faced by students in the research locale.

This study was conducted due to the report of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (2018) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) with United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and World Bank (2021), as well as the Phil-IRI result of the locale of the study for the current school year which showed that there is indeed a reading problem that affected the learners.

In a nutshell, this research hoped to contribute to the existing literature on interventions aimed at improving reading comprehension and offer information on productive teaching methods for Filipino students by providing not only insights into the effectiveness of Game-Based Learning and Teacher-Directed Instruction, but also shed light on their applicability and suitability within the local educational setting.

Research Objectives

The purpose of this research was to determine the effectiveness of the Game-Based Learning and Teacher- Directed Instruction in improving the *Struggling* readers' reading comprehension skills: determining the meaning of words or expressions through context clues, differentiating facts from opinions, interpreting visual-verbal relationship, comparing and contrasting opinions with those presented in familiar texts, and recognizing positive and negative messages, among eighth graders in one of the public high schools in Kinoguitan, Misamis Oriental, Philippines.

Methodology

This research employed a quantitative approach, utilizing a quasi-experimental design. The study utilized a pretest and posttest with non-equivalent groups, designating one group as the experimental group and the other as the control group. The experimental group, which had 39 students, 19 males and 20 females, used Game-Based Learning as an intervention that involved interactive and group activities. In contrast, the control group applied Direct Instruction with 40 students, 23 males and 17 females, with the use of independent and explicit instruction. Out of the total participant pool, the researcher specifically directed attention toward Struggling readers, defined as students scoring 58% and below in their reading comprehension assessments. The primary focus was to assess how much each group's reading comprehension had improved as a consequence of the focused treatments that were implemented. In the conduct of the study, the researcher first sought the approval of the Lourdes College Ethics Committee. After the issuance of the certification from the committee, the research started with a pretest to assess the initial reading abilities of both groups, followed by a posttest after implementing the respective interventions to evaluate their reading comprehension performance. The study utilized descriptive statistics, as well as T-Test for paired samples and T-test for independent samples to evaluate the impact of interventions in enhancing reading comprehension skills.

Results and Discussion

Problem 1. What is the participants' reading comprehension level before and after the interventions?

Table 1

Summary Table of Participants' Reading Comprehension Level

	DIRECT INSTRUCTION						GAME-BASED LEARNING					
	Pretest			Post test			Pretest			Post test		
	M	In t	SD	M	In t	SD	M	In t	SD	M	In t	SD
Context Clues	2.52	Fr	0.78	2.79	Fr	1.35	2.25	Fr	0.93	3.00	Fr	1.12
Fact or Opinion	2.07	Fr	0.96	2.93	Fr	1.41	1.89	Fr	1.10	3.89	Fr	1.87
Visual-Verbal Illustration	2.41	Fr	1.05	3.17	Fr	1.34	2.39	Fr	1.17	3.46	Fr	1.48
Comparison & Contrast	2.17	Fr	0.80	2.97	Fr	1.12	1.68	Fr	0.82	2.96	Fr	1.10
Positive & Negative Message	2.14	Fr	0.92	2.41	Fr	1.18	2.07	Fr	1.15	3.50	Fr	1.53
OVERALL	2.26	F r	0.54	2.85	F r	1.18	2.06	F r	0.51	3.36	F r	0.84

Legend: Fr-Frustration Level

The study's findings reveal that both Teacher-Directed Instruction and Game-Based Learning groups are likely helpful in improving students' various comprehension domains. Moreover, Game-Based Learning consistently yields higher mean scores on posttest reading comprehension assessments compared to Teacher-Directed Instruction, except on comparison and contrast where Teacher-Directed Instruction has a slightly higher mean score than Game-Based Learning. Although both methodologies resulted in improvements, Game-Based Learning facilitated a more substantial increase in the reading comprehension levels of the participants. Conversely, Teacher-Directed Instruction's effectiveness in improving reading performance among those readers who were under the *Frustration* level can be attributed to its focused and explicit guidance, providing a structured learning environment that directly addresses individual challenges. The Teacher-Directed Instruction approach offered clear explanations, targeted interventions, and personalized support, fostering a more tailored learning experience that contributed to enhanced reading comprehension skills among the participants.

Consistent with prior research and literature, these results underscore the importance of implementing strategies that encourage self-directed learning and proficient progress monitoring. The usefulness of reading instruction strategies is critical, given the significant impact that reading has on scholastic performance (Loopoo & Balfour, 2021; Okkinga, 2018; Sa'adah et al., 2018). The results demonstrate the potential of both Teacher-Directed Instruction and Game-Based Learning in improving the reading comprehension of the *Struggling* readers. Teacher-Directed Instruction provides targeted instruction to address specific obstacles in an organized manner, leading to improved comprehension. Likewise, the efficacy of Game-Based Learning in promoting enhanced understanding corresponds with existing research, emphasizing the significance of interactive approaches for achieving the best learning results. The findings underscore the necessity of employing a comprehensive strategy that combines organized instruction and interactive components to address the varying requirements of learners in improving their reading abilities.

The compelling findings of this study highlight the relevance of using proficient tactics to boost reading comprehension. In addition, the significance of this study is highlighted below. It is commonly known that in order to improve comprehension, a diverse approach that incorporates a variety of tactics is required. The perceived efficacy of game-based learning corresponds perfectly with this widely acknowledged consensus (Abame et al., 2017; Dwiningtiyas et al., 2020; Gilakjani & Sabouri, 2016). Furthermore, Nanda and Azmy (2020) emphasized the relevance of fixing these reading comprehension difficulties in order to prevent inhibiting the opportunities students will have in the future for education and work.

Problem 2. Do the two groups of participants' reading comprehension levels differ significantly before and after the interventions?

H01. The two groups of participants' reading comprehension levels do not differ significantly before and after the interventions.

The results of a test comparing the participants' reading comprehension skills before and after two interventions, Direct Instruction and Game-Based Learning, are shown in Table 2. The null hypothesis (H01) posits that there is no significant difference in the reading comprehension level of the two groups before and after the interventions. Nevertheless, the null hypothesis is rejected for both groups, as indicated by the results. The overall p-values in both Direct Instruction and Game-Based Learning are statistically significant at the 0.01 level. The findings indicate that both teaching approaches can improve the reading comprehension abilities of the participants.

Table 2

Result of the Test of Difference in the Participants' Reading Comprehension Levels Before and After the Interventions

Reading Comprehension	DIRECT INSTRUCTION							GAME-BASED LEARNING						
	Pretest		Posttest		T	P	Effect Size	Pretest		Posttest		t	P	Effect Size
	M	SD	M	SD				M	SD	M	SD			
Context Clues	2.5 2	0.7 9	2.7 9	1.3 5	1.5 5	.13 3	-.284	2.2 1	0.9 4	3.0 3	1.1 2	4.1 6**	.00 0	-.762
Fact or Opinion	2.0 7	0.9 6	2.9 3	1.4 1	3.9 1*	.00 1	-.717	1.9 3	1.1 0	3.9 3	1.8 5	5.8 8**	.00 0	-1.077
Visual-Verbal Illustration	2.4 1	1.0 5	3.1 7	1.3 4	4.6 8*	.00 0	-.858	2.4 1	1.1 5	3.4 8	1.4 6	5.0 9**	.00 0	-.932
Comparison & Contrast	2.17	0.81	2.97	1.12	3.95 **	.000	-.723	1.69	0.81	3.0	1.10	5.75 **	.000	-1.053
Positive & Negative Message	2.14	0.92	2.41	1.18	1.35	.187	-.248	2.17	1.26	3.62	1.64	5.56 **	.000	-1.018
OVERALL	2.26	0.54	2.86	0.68	7.17 **	.000	-1.313	2.08	0.52	3.41	0.86	10.2 2**	.000	-1.872

Legend: ** significant at 0.01 level

For the group subjected to Teacher-Directed Instruction, the pretest to posttest comparison reveals improvements in various comprehension categories, including Fact or Opinion, Visual-Verbal, and Comparison and Contrast. However, the data shows that Teacher-Directed Instruction is not significant in two comprehension skills such as, Context Clues and Comparison and Contrast. The overall reading comprehension also exhibited a substantial increase ($t = 7.17, p = .000$). Despite a lack of statistical significance in Context Clues and Positive & Negative Message, the overall pattern suggests that Teacher-Directed Instruction had a positive impact on enhancing participants' reading comprehension. The result highlights the significant positive impact of this instructional approach on improving the reading abilities of struggling readers. An effect size of -1.313 indicates a large and practically significant difference in improving the reading comprehension skills of struggling readers through Teacher-Directed Instruction.

Turning to the group exposed to game-based learning, the results are even more robust. Significant improvements are observed across all comprehension categories, including Context Clues, Fact or Opinion, Visual-Verbal Illustration, Comparison & Contrast, and Positive & Negative Message. The overall reading comprehension improvement with game-based learning is substantial ($t = 10.22$, $p = .000$). The result, demonstrated by an effect size of -1.872 , which signifies a substantial and practically significant distinction in enhancing the reading comprehension abilities of struggling readers via game-based learning, underscores the formidable and influential character of this intervention. It implies that in comparison to alternative approaches, this one has a more pronounced and favorable impact on students' reading capabilities. These findings indicate that game-based learning has a more significantly improved Struggling readers' reading comprehension across various categories compared to Teacher-Directed Instruction.

The findings of the research comparing levels of reading comprehension before and after interventions indicate discernible trends in the two pedagogical approaches. Although Teacher-Directed Instruction yielded substantial gains in various comprehension domains, game-based learning exhibited superior performance across all measures. The findings of the research comparing levels of reading comprehension prior to and subsequent to interventions indicate discernible trends in the two pedagogical approaches. Although Teacher-Directed Instruction yielded substantial gains in various comprehension domains, game-based learning exhibited superior performance across all skills. Despite the increase of the overall performance of the participants, it is noteworthy that most of the participants fell under the *Frustration* level which highlights the necessity for focused interventions and customized assistance to tackle specific difficulties and guarantee comprehensive skill advancement. The implications indicate that both approaches contribute to the improvement of reading comprehension, with Teacher-Directed Instruction showing effectiveness in certain areas. Nevertheless, the notable results noted in the game-based learning group suggest its potential as a more comprehensive and impactful method for improving overall reading comprehension levels among participants.

The data shows that Teacher-Directed Instruction improved the reading performance of the participants. Multiple studies repeatedly highlight the importance of explicit teaching in improving reading comprehension abilities. Yaghmour and Obaidat (2022) emphasized the crucial function of independent comprehension development through the instruction of multiple abilities, particularly by fostering connections. Nuraeni and Aisyah (2022) also argued that combining Teacher-Directed Instruction with the integration of media improves proficiency in this particular skill. The combined results emphasize the significant impact of instructional approaches, specifically Teacher-Directed Instruction, on the development of reading comprehension abilities, thereby showing its effectiveness for students.

Moreover, worldwide research substantiates the effectiveness of Teacher-Directed Instruction in improving learning results. According to Witt (2018), who references Jones-Carey (2013), the decision to stop formal direct reading instruction resulted in a decrease in students' proficiency. Teacher-Directed Instruction is also seen as effective to students of various ages and status and has perceived significance on specific training in reading strategies for more advanced topics. Structured content reading instruction and Teacher-Directed Instruction demonstrate equivalent effectiveness in fostering critical thinking and teaching college algebra (Butler, 2020; Dugasa, 2022; Gatcho and Hajan, 2019; Head et al., 2018; Maandig et al., 2017). Overall, these researches collectively emphasize the widespread efficacy of Teacher-Directed Instruction in improving reading comprehension skills in many situations.

The study also revealed that Game-Based Learning is effective in improving the Struggling readers' reading comprehension skills. As Marsa et al. (2021) emphasized, games helped improve on students' level of involvement, drive, and favorable disposition toward understanding written material. This study confirmed that games significantly improve reading comprehension skills. Moreover, the research conducted by Williyan et al. (2016) supports these findings by highlighting the beneficial effects of utilizing games for the purpose of enhancing reading skills. These studies highlight the potential of games as effective instruments for language acquisition, underlining the importance of creating engaging classroom settings that cultivate a passion for reading among the learners.

Similarly, the research conducted by Bondaug (2021) investigated the impact of game-based learning on students' reading comprehension levels in the Philippines. The study found notable improvements in students' reading comprehension abilities. Both teachers and students expressed favorable feedback, highlighting that the use of games in delivering knowledge was captivating and stimulating, thereby improving the reading lesson. The alignment between the results of this study and the favorable outcomes reported in the Game-Based Learning group strengthens the idea that game-based learning is a promising approach for enhancing reading comprehension and fostering students' excitement for learning. These studies together confirm that game-based learning is effective in improving students' reading comprehension skills and promoting their active participation and enthusiasm in the learning process.

Problem 3. Do the increments of the two groups of participants' reading comprehension differ significantly?

Ho2. The increments of the two groups of participants' reading comprehension do not differ significantly.

The table presents the results of a test of difference in reading comprehension test score increments between two groups of participants: one group received Direct Instruction, and the other group received Game-Based Learning. The null hypothesis (Ho2) posits that the increments in reading comprehension do not differ significantly between the two groups. However, based on the results, it is evident that the null hypothesis is rejected, as the p-values for most of the individual reading comprehension categories are statistically significant at the 0.05 level or lower.

Table 3

Result of the Test of Difference in the Comprehension Test Scores Increments

Reading Comprehension	DIRECT INSTRUCTION		GAME-BASED LEARNING		T	p	Effect Size
	M	SD	M	SD			
Context Clues	0.28	.96	0.83	1.07	2.07*	.044	1.017
Fact or Opinion	0.86	1.19	2.00	1.83	2.81**	.007	1.544
Visual-Verbal Illustration	0.76	0.87	1.07	1.13	1.17	.247	1.010
Comparison and Contrast	0.79	1.08	1.31	1.23	1.70	.094	1.157
Positive and Negative Message	0.28	1.10	1.45	1.40	3.54*	.001	1.260
OVERALL	2.97	2.23	6.66	3.51	4.78*	.000	2.938

**significant at 0.01 level

Significant differences were noted in the following components: Positive and Negative Messages; Fact or Opinion; and Context Clues. However, no significant differences in the mean increments of the two groups on Visual Verbal illustration and Comparison and Contrast.

The overall increment score exhibited exceedingly significant overall increases in reading comprehension ($t = 4.78$, $p = .000$) suggesting that these gains were substantial and all-encompassing. The findings of this study indicate that game-based learning produces more substantive improvements in reading comprehension than Teacher-Directed Instruction. The table also shows the effect size of 2.938 which indicates a large and statistically significant difference in the comprehension test score increments of students who participated in a game-based learning intervention versus those who received Teacher-Directed Instruction, implying that game-based learning is a more effective approach for improving students' reading comprehension skills. This underscores the capacity of interactive and engaging learning approaches to facilitate considerable advancements in comprehension abilities. When comparing the findings of the two groups, it is evident that Game-Based Learning consistently achieves higher reading comprehension improvements than Teacher-Directed Instruction across most areas.

The findings show that Teacher-Directed Instruction improved the struggling readers' reading comprehension skills. This underscores the effectiveness of Teacher-Directed Instruction in improving reading comprehension skills across diverse student populations, including at-risk students and third-grade pupils. These findings suggest that direct, teacher-centered education is a valuable approach with positive outcomes for enhancing critical thinking abilities, understanding mathematical concepts, and managing reading comprehension questions that require higher-level thinking (Butler, 2020; Dugasa, 2022; Gatcho & Hajan, 2019; Head et al., 2018; Maandig et al., 2017; Yaghmour & Obaidat, 2022).

Moreover, the results are consistent with the current body of research on Game-Based Learning, which underscores the advantages of interactive, captivating, and stimulating learning settings. Research has demonstrated that GBL can augment students' curiosity, emotional involvement, and eagerness for acquiring knowledge, while also offering a well-rounded method for instructing academic content (Hartt et al., 2020; Molin, 2017; Papadakis, 2018). Moreover, research has demonstrated that educational games can increase student engagement and motivation (Hertati & Asrowi, 2022) and foster a favorable learning environment that encourages students to develop a passion for reading (Williyam et al., 2016). On the other hand, Teacher-Directed Instruction, although it offers personalized learning, may not encourage students to actively engage in conversations, which could account for the observed variations in reading comprehension improvements.

These findings are consistent with the relevant scholarly works. Several studies highlighted the capacity of game-based learning to generate interactive settings that inspire students through guided exploration (Hartt et al., 2020; Molin, 2017; Papadakis, 2018). Hertati and Asrowi (2022) observed that students who utilize educational games demonstrate enhanced learning results and heightened engagement. Furthermore, the research conducted by Williyam et al. (2016) further supported the idea that games can establish stimulating educational settings that foster a passion for reading. The findings not only validate the effectiveness of Game-Based Learning but also underscore its capacity to augment reading comprehension and foster students' excitement for learning.

Recommendations

Based on the study's findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are offered, that:

1. language teachers employ dynamic and engaging methodologies such as game-based learning, and structured teaching approaches to augment students' reading comprehension and cultivate their enthusiasm.
2. school administrators allocate resources for the purpose of enhancing reading comprehension through the integration of technology and educational activities into the curriculum.
3. future researchers conduct an inquiry into the enduring consequences of Game-Based Learning and Direct Instruction on reading comprehension in order to furnish an all-encompassing assessment of their influence.

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Authors

Mr. Ernest Gerard B. Durano earned his undergraduate degree of Bachelor in Secondary Education major in English at St. Rita's College of Balingasag, Balingasag, Misamis Oriental, Philippines. He is currently taking his Master's Degree in Education, major in Teaching English Communication Arts at Lourdes College, Inc., Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines. He was a junior high school and senior high school teacher at Holy Child High School, Kinoguitan, Misamis Oriental for two years (2018-2020). He is currently affiliated with the Department of Education, Division of Misamis Oriental, Philippines and is a faculty member and the adviser of The Current-The Official Publication of Esperanza National High School. He is teaching English subjects to Grade 8 level and 21st Century Literature from the Philippines and the World in senior high school.

Dr. Kurt S. Candilas is the Dean of the Arts and Sciences Program of Lourdes College, Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines. He earned his undergraduate degree of Arts in English at Bukidnon State University, Malaybalay City. He acquired his Master's degree in Education major in Teaching English Communication Arts at Lourdes College, Cagayan de Oro City. He completed his Doctorate degree in English major in Literature at the University of San Jose Recoletos, Cebu City, Philippines. He also earned his TESOL advanced certification with the American TESOL Institute of the Philippines, Inc. Presently, he is an advisory board member, editorial board, and peer-reviewer of research journal articles in local and international journals and conference proceedings such as Asia CALL Online Journal, International Journal of TESOL and Education, OPENTesol Annual International Conference Proceedings, USeP Journal of Research and Development, Recoletos Multidisciplinary Research Journal, and International Review of Social Sciences Research. His research interests include the following areas: communication, literature, linguistics, education, and religion.

Using AI Platforms toward English Language Learning: A Case Study of English Program Students

Thanadun Krasaesom¹ / Weerawoot Jeanmano² /
U-krit Sompeng³ / Purisa Watcharenwong^{*4}

^{1, 2, 3}Students of English Program, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Buriram Rajabhat University, Thailand

⁴Lecturer of English Program, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,
Buriram Rajabhat University, Thailand

*Corresponding Author

E-mail: purisa.wa@bru.ac.th

Received: December 7, 2023

Revised: December 19, 2023

Accepted: December 26, 2023

Abstract

The purposes of the research were to study the perceptions and the effect of using AI platforms towards English as a foreign language of English program students, and to investigate which AI platforms is mostly used among English program students. The participants in this quantitative research were 90 third-year English program students from Buriram Rajabhat University. The researchers collected data by using a questionnaire. The results revealed a positive perception of the students towards using Artificial Intelligence in learning English and the students agreed that AI can improve their English abilities. The results also indicated that the most used AI platforms was Google Translate. These show that AI platforms have impact and advantages in education. The learners can use AI to improve their knowledge if they use it appropriately.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, AI platform, English language learning

Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI), commonly referred to as machine intelligence, is a subfield of computer science that focuses on creating and overseeing machinery that can learn to make judgments and do actions independently on behalf of a person. In terms of technologies, AI is not one. Rather, it is an all-encompassing word that refers to any kind of software or hardware part that enables robotics, computer vision, natural language processing, natural language creation, and machine learning. (Rouse, 2023). Students who are still developing their skills in using English to study or communicate successfully are known as English language learning. They frequently come from families and backgrounds where English is not their native language; therefore, they need specialized or altered training in both their academic courses and the English language. The strategic use of AI for education is a topic of an increase of discussion (Seldon and Abidoye, 2018). Loeckx (2016) suggested that AI may be a useful educational tool that decreases the daily tasks of instructors and students while providing them with engaging learning opportunities. Coupled with current education reforms such as the digitalization of educational resources, gamification, and

personalized learning experiences, there are many opportunities for the development of AI applications in education. Students may utilize AI to enhance learning results in some cases since they are digital citizens. However, they might not employ the proper AI strategies in a given learning situation, which might lead to unfavorable attitudes about learning (Ijaz & Bogdanovych, 2017). AI technology is being utilized in Thailand's education system to enhance the learning experience for both teachers and students. English program students at Buriram Rajabhat University are utilizing AI to enhance their proficiency in English as a second language, focusing on four core English skills that can lead to success in their personal and professional lives. This study aims to explore the perceptions and effects of using AI platforms in English language learning among English major students. It will use popular AI to poll students who are most likely to use it, focusing on listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The research will also investigate which AI platforms are most and least used in English language learning, considering students' previous knowledge of the subject matter.

Literature Review

The Definition of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) was developed since the late 19th century and still developing for a better version that help human in 21st century or in the future. The term of Artificial Intelligence (AI) was first known in 1956, during a summer conference at Dartmouth College. John McCharthy, the AI pioneers, was coined the term "Artificial Intelligence (AI)" in the conference and the term was being used until nowadays. Artificial Intelligence (AI) really came into existence with the birth of computers in around the 1940s and 1950s for the earlier period of its development, attention was clearly focused on getting computers to do things that, if a human did them, would be regarded as intelligent (Warwick, 2012). The first study of Artificial Intelligence (AI) begun in the 1950s, by Alan Turing during World War II. He considered the question of the study "Can machines think?" (Turing, 1950). In the study, he used computer's ability to deceive interrogators into believing its response to their questions were made by a human being, also known as the Turing test to determine if machines could think. This is an importance part of the history of Artificial Intelligence (AI). According to Russell and Norvig (1995), they described the artificial intelligence from their study into four definitions categories:

1. Systems that think like humans
2. Systems that act like humans
3. Systems that think rationally
4. Systems that act rationally

Also, Alan Turing's definition would have fallen under the category of "systems that act like humans" which is one of the artificial intelligence's definitions. To act like human and to be able to deceive human in Turing test with rationally, computer systems required natural language processing which mean it needs to be able to communicate in a natural language, knowledge representation, automated reasoning, and machine learning which mean it needs to be able to learn from its environment (Kok, Boers, Kosters, Putten & Poel, 2009). It can conclude that the computer systems need more intelligence to process by itself and after that, the computer systems were developed continuously until the computer systems have intelligence that capable to process by itself and it was called artificial intelligence nowadays. The definition of

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in this time is a computer processing combines with science and strong datasets, to enable problem-solving. It is a deep learning machine that can make predictions or classifications based on input data.

English Language Learning

Akbari (2016) stated that in the current era of science and technology expansion, increasing demands for international communication, exchanging, and progress have made English language learning an essential tool required by many people around the world. Many countries in 21st century accepted English language as the importance factor in communication and it became international language used to communicate around the world. Learning English language can be done in many ways including self-study through social or environment and studying in an educational institution where the English language course is offered.

Listening skill

Listening skill is the first skills that the learners need to practice. Egamnazarova and Mukhamedova (2021) indicated that listening comprehension is the basis for your speaking, writing, and reading skills. To practice listening skills, it is important to listen actively, which means to pay attention to what you are listening to. They can practice other skills from listening. Also, practice comprehension skill too. If the learners have a good listening and have a comprehension skill. The learners can learn other skills more easily. According to the study conducted by Obari and Lambacher (2019). The study utilized AI smart speakers to enhance students' English language skills, including listening and speaking. The results showed a positive impact on students, who were satisfied with the improvement. The study suggests that improving listening skills is a foundation for other language skills.

Speaking Skill

Speaking skill is the most important skill to acquire foreign or second language. Among the four key language skills, speaking is deemed to be the most important skill in learning a foreign or second language (Rao, 2019). The speaking skill is also, the hardest skills of all. According to Abugohar, et al. (2019)'s study, the researchers aimed to explore the most trouble-provoking skill for EMP students through a questionnaire report and interviewees. To improve your English speaking skills, immerse yourself in the language and practice regularly. Even if it's just a few minutes, focus on something related to English daily. Regardless of the method, dedicate time each day to improving your skills, as with enough practice and dedication, your abilities will significantly improve.

Reading Skill

Reading comprehension skill is a skill of a person that capable to read, comprehend, interpret, and decode written language and texts. Takaloo and Ahmadi (2017) stated that reading comprehension is the organization of meaning of a written or spoken communication by a reciprocal, holistic exchange of ideas between the interpreters and the message in a specific communicative context. This skill requires the learners' prior knowledge and experience such as the main idea, topic of a text. If the learners have prior knowledge and experience, the leaners will be able to understand

the meaning of the written text. Reading comprehension skill can strengthen English language skills but it's hard to improve. According to the study conducted by Naeini and Duvall (2012), the researchers studied the improvements in English Language Training (ELT) university students' reading comprehension performance. The researcher utilized Lev Vygotsky's (1978) dynamic assessment approach to teach English language skills. Results showed students struggled with reading comprehension due to limited vocabulary. This suggests that knowledge and experience are necessary for effective reading practice. Good reading skills can help strengthen English language skills.

Writing Skill

Writing skill is the second important skill that the learners need to practice. Writing skill is the ability to express opinion, and the writer delivers message and opinions through it (Chicho, 2022). Writing skill is hard skill among others because it must be a concern more about it, and we need to follow some rules that related to every single step, they are word choice, coherent, correlation, and grammar (Sa'adah, 2020). To practice writing skill, the learners must have knowledge of writing rule and grammar to practice writing skill. Writing skill is a hard thing for the teachers to teach their students too, but if the teachers capable to make students understand writing skill. It will give a good benefit for the students. Moses and Mohamad (2019) stated that writing skill will benefit the rest of the students' lives. Introducing and practice writing with attractive activities in schools could increase students' confidence and they will fall in love with writing in a long run.

Artificial Intelligence in English Language Learning

In the 21st century, advancements in technology and science have made English language proficiency crucial for global communication, while artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged to aid in education. AI has been integrated into teaching and assessment practices to enhance learning outcomes and instructional experiences (Mushthoza, et al., 2023). Artificial intelligence is a tool that easy to access and easy to use for everyone and enable to solve problem in a short duration of time which suit very well with the 21st century English language learning. The integration of AI in language learning environments offers numerous possibilities for fostering the four fundamental language skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Rusmiyanto, et al., 2023). Artificial intelligence (AI) platforms like ChatGPT, Google Translate, and Grammarly are widely used in English language learning to assist learners in improving their skills, as highlighted by Dewi's (2021) study. The researcher utilized an artificial intelligence platform to enhance students' English language performance in education. The study demonstrated that AI can aid students in learning and completing various English assignments, highlighting its significant role in the 21st-century education field.

Methodology

1. Research Design

This research applied a quantitative method. According to the research objectives, this research aims to study the effect of using AI platforms in English language learning skills and which AI platforms is the most and the least used among English program students of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Buriram Rajabhat University.

2. Population and Samples

The population of this research were 120 third-year students from English Program, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Buriram Rajabhat University. The samples were selected by purposive sampling method which was referenced from table of Krejcie and Morgan in amount of 90 students.

3. Instrument and Procedures

The research instrument used to collect data was questionnaire behavior of using AI platforms. The researcher used a five-point rating scale questionnaire. The three-part questionnaire comprises of part 1: General perception of the used of AI platforms, part 2: The use of AI platforms in English language learning in any situation which contained four language skills, and part 3: AI platforms used in English language learning.

4. Data collection

The researchers have collected the information related to the research. There were steps to precedes as follows:

1. The researcher made an online questionnaire from literature review with cite scale level in two types: Agreement opinion and how often do they use AI platforms.
2. The researcher sent an online questionnaire's link made by google form to 90 third-year English Program students.
3. The researcher collected the online questionnaire's link that has been sent to English Program students and already answered.
4. The researcher examined the information that provide on questionnaire and analyze to find the result.

5. Data Analysis

A five-point rating scale questionnaire was analyzed by using mean (\bar{x}) and standard deviation (S.D.). The data from part 1 and part 2 was computed for mean (\bar{x}), and standard deviation (S.D.), and the data from part 3 was analyzed using frequency and percentage.

Results

The aims of this research were to study the perceptions and the effects of using AI platforms towards English language learning of English Program students and to investigate which AI platforms were the most and the least used in English language learning of English Program students. In this section the results collected from 90 third-year students from English Program, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Buriram Rajabhat University were presented and discussed.

Perception of Using AI Platforms

Table 1

Result Found from Student's Questionnaire Survey

No	Question	\bar{x}	S.D.	Meaning
1	I use AI platforms to help me understand information when I learn English.	4.24	0.65	Much
2	AI platforms give me more advantages than disadvantages.	4.12	0.74	Much
3	AI platforms save time in English learning.	4.23	0.76	Much
4	I can learn English language better when I use AI platforms.	3.81	0.86	Much
5	AI platforms is easy to use and quickly.	4.39	0.76	Much
6	AI platforms can be used in daily life.	4.29	0.76	Much
7	When I have to talk with foreigners, AI platforms help me to understand what they said.	4.08	0.81	Much
8	I think AI platforms have good benefits in Education.	4.37	0.71	Much
9	AI platforms encourage me to improve listening, speaking, reading, and writing in English.	4.24	0.69	Much
10	I often use AI platforms when I learn English.	4.13	0.78	Much
TOTAL		4.19	0.49	Much

As presented from Table 1, the overall of the finding indicated the perception of using AI platforms, the result was much. When considering in each category, the participant was much agreed in AI platforms is easy to use and quickly ($\bar{x} = 4.39$), followed by the participant was much agreed in AI platforms have good benefits in Education ($\bar{x} = 4.37$), and the participant was much agreed in AI platforms can be used in daily life ($\bar{x} = 4.29$), respectively.

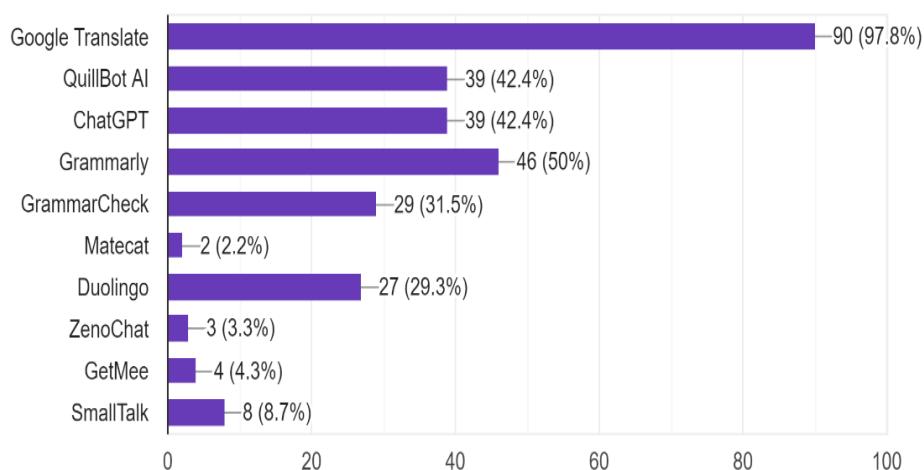
Using AI Platforms in English Language Learning**Table 2***Results Found from Student's Questionnaire Survey*

No	Question	\bar{x}	S.D.	Meaning
1.	AI platforms help me familiar with native English speaker's accent.	3.97	0.86	Much
2.	I use AI platforms to listen voice when I don't know how to pronounce of words.	4.22	0.70	Much
3.	I am better with AI when I need to listen something in English. For example, I don't need to read the subtitle just listening from generated text-to-voice.	3.98	0.77	Much
4.	I can watch movie and understand what is going on with AI platforms.	3.97	0.86	Much
5.	AI platforms made me want to improve my listening skill.	4.14	0.82	Much
6.	I use AI platforms to help me practice pronunciation when I learn English language.	4.02	0.79	Much
7.	I can pronounce better when I practice speaking by AI platforms.	4.02	0.83	Much
8.	I am better with AI when I need to say something in English. For example, I can start a conversation naturally.	3.94	0.81	Much
9.	AI platforms guild me the manner of how to speak and what it should be.	3.88	0.80	Much
10.	AI platforms made me want to improve my speaking skill.	3.96	0.86	Much
11.	AI platforms help me read a book easier when I don't understand some English vocabulary.	4.23	0.72	Much
12.	I use AI platforms to help me practice reading when I learn English.	4.04	0.77	Much
13.	I am better with AI when I need to read something in English. For example, I can understand the story faster.	4.03	0.72	Much

Table 2 (Continued)

No	Question	\bar{x}	S.D.	Meaning
14.	I have known some English vocabulary that has more than 1 meaning from AI platforms.	4.07	0.80	Much
15.	AI platforms made me want to improve my reading skill.	3.92	0.85	Much
16.	I use AI platforms to help me practice writing when I learn English.	4.09	0.81	Much
17.	I use AI platforms to check grammar when I write the sentence.	4.21	0.80	Much
18.	I am better with AI when I need to write something in English.	4.07	0.85	Much
19.	AI platforms can help me to write something easier.	4.12	0.77	Much
20.	AI platforms made me want to improve my writing skill.	3.97	0.80	Much
TOTAL		4.04	0.56	Much

From Table 2, the finding provided the effect of using AI platforms in English language learning. The overall of the finding indicated the use of AI platforms which contained four English skills, the result was much. When considering each category, the participant was much agreed in AI platforms to help them reading a book easier when they don't understand some English vocabulary ($\bar{x} = 4.23$), followed by the participant was much agreed in AI platforms to listen voice when they don't know how to pronounce of words ($\bar{x} = 4.22$), and the participant was much agreed in AI platforms to check grammatical when I write the sentence ($\bar{x} = 4.21$), respectively. According to the study, there are advantages of using AI platforms separated into four English language skills. In listening skill, AI help them to listen voice when they don't know how to pronounce of words. In speaking skill, AI platforms to help them practice pronunciation when they learn English language and they can pronounce better when they practice speaking by AI platforms. In reading skill, AI platforms help them read a book easier when they don't understand some English vocabulary. In writing skill, they use AI platforms to check grammar when they write the sentence.

The Most and the Least Used AI Platforms**Figure 1***Results Found from Student's Questionnaire Survey*

From Figure 1, the finding provided the most and the least used AI platforms. When considering each category, it can list from the most and the least used as follows: Google Translate (97.8%), Grammarly (50%), QuillBot AI (42.4%), ChatGPT (42.4%), GrammarCheck (31.5%), Duolingo (29.3%), SmallTalk (8.7%), GetMee (4.3%), ZenoChat (3.3%), and Matecat (2.2%), respectively.

According to the study, AI platform that was used the most was Google Translate and the least used was Matecat. The findings indicated that AI platforms can actually help the participants to practice and develop their English language skills. For listening, they can hear a word or conversations more comprehended and from variety of English accents. For speaking, they can now speak more naturally. For reading, they can understand the story by the unknown vocabulary. For writing, they can write with more ease and grammatical correct.

Discussion

1. The study explores the perceptions and effects of AI platforms on English language learning among English program students. Results show that students use AI platforms in their daily lives and see their benefits in various situations and educational settings, enhancing their understanding and proficiency in English. These findings are in line with Rusmiyanto, et al. (2023) who found that Artificial Intelligence is a tool that easy to access and easy to use for everyone and enable to solve problem in a short duration of time.

2. The study analyzed the most and least used AI platforms in English language learning among English program students. The results showed that AI platforms significantly improved students' understanding and learning of English. The study revealed the most and least used AI platforms by presenting 10 popular platforms and asking students to check which ones they used. The results were arranged from the most to the least used as follows: Google Translate (97.8%), Grammarly (50%), QuillBot AI (42.2%), ChatGPT (42.4%), GrammarCheck (31.5%), Duolingu (29.3%), SmallTalk (8.7%), GetMee (4.3%), ZenoChat (3.3%), and Matecat (2.2%), respectively. Those were the AI platforms which they were familiar with and used with

their English skills to help or practice when necessary. These findings are in line with Dewi, et al. (2021) who studied Artificial Intelligence (AI) which provides a useful tool to aid the learners in improving their skills.

Recommendations

1. Implications

1.1 The results might be helpful for students who are interested in using artificial intelligence (AI) platforms to improve their English language abilities via their learning of each skill, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

1.2 The results of the study can be used as a guideline for teachers or educators in integrating AI in language classrooms.

2. Further Studies

2.1 Additional research ought to focus more on the subject and might use a bigger sample size in order to obtain more trustworthy findings.

2.2 It could be possible to interview the participant to gather further information that's relevant and has more information about student's attitude toward adopting AI platforms.

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Author

Miss Purisa Watcharenwong is currently a lecturer at English Language Program, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Buriram Rajabhat University. She graduated in Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics (Teaching English for Specific Purposes) from Mahidol University. Her areas of interests include teaching English as a foreign language, translation, and English for specific purposes.

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Buriram Rajabhat University, Thailand

✉ eltjournal@bru.ac.th

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