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## **THE SELECTION PRACTICES AND RECRUITMENTS OF FRESH GRADUATES IN LOCAL ORGANISATION'S JOB INTERVIEW**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, mastering English language helps fresh graduates to cope with workplace communication in any situation. There are four language aspects that contribute to communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980). The most important is competency in grammatical and sociolinguistic which are needed for successful communication and, importance in promoting and portraying their capabilities especially during employment interviews. However, most of the fresh graduates fail to impress employers when they could not even comprehend the basic interview questions asked by most employers. This shows that not only their proficiency of the English language as a tool of communication is poor, but above all, they neglect to see the importance of successful communication. This inability leads to social and economic drawbacks, in relation to job attainments. Therefore, this study aims to investigate how the ignorant attitudes towards the importance of mastering English amongst the fresh graduates is one of the major causes of not securing jobs in Malaysia.

An in-depth interview was conducted with a sample of 35 Human Resource Managers from well-known organisations in Malaysia. A semi-structured interview protocol was used in this study to find out the reasons of the incapability of fresh graduates to land jobs. The findings show that most of the fresh graduates who attended the employment interviews could not comprehend the basic questions asked in most interviews. They were not able to answer questions accordingly and often, the answers given were misinterpreted by the interviewees because of their inappropriate choice of words, incorrect sentence formation, lack of pragmatic competence, and misinterpreting questions. This indirectly shows the lack of English language competence among fresh graduates. There can be further investigation into learning language and behaviour skills to develop certain communication skills. Fresh graduates are invited to participate in blended learning to enhance their English language proficiency. The Government has also implemented the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP) to create more job opportunities by 2020 and this will benefit graduates who have a good command of English. Most organisations may request fresh graduates to show evidence of English proficiency apart from having excellent academic qualifications.

**Keywords:** communicative competence, employment, interviews, fresh graduates, English language

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Entering the workforce for the first time requires graduates to attend job interviews (Posthuma, Morgeson and Campion, 2002). Job interview will remain as the main tool for selecting and employing graduates in companies that will “ envisage the imminent job attainment of candidates” (Dipboye & Gauglar, 1993, p. 136). Getting employed is the ultimate focus of graduates with the aim of showing their capabilities that employers think will be needed for the effective operation of their companies (Harvey, 2000). Companies would want to hire candidates that can be a valuable asset, and not only giving jobs, but a fulfilling career.

One of the primary considerations for graduate to be employed is the ability to communicate well (Singh & Singh, 2008). Archer and Davison (2008) in their research stated that employers regarded competent communications vital consideration when hiring fresh graduates.—They discovered that many fresh graduates had difficulty in articulating and communicating, therefore performed poorly in job interviews. This drawback in graduates’ ability to communicate effectively has been recognized by the UK government in relation to UK graduates (Dickison, 2000). Malaysian graduates appear to be facing the same issues faced by UK graduates. Between 28,000 to 34,000 graduates in the year 2008 to 2010 were jobless (Department of Statistics [DOS], 2011). This most probably due to inexperience, lack of proficiency in English language and inadequate communication skills (Suresh, 2006). Potential employers discovered during job interview sessions strong indicator that Malaysian graduates, while being exceptionally skilled in their specialized areas, were nevertheless lacking in the required communication skills to communicate effectively and advocate themselves (Singh and Singh, 2008; Abdul Rahim, 2000; Nurita et al., 2010).

The swift increase in the quantity of Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in Malaysia is the result of the government’s policy to train a highly capable and competent human resource, to attain the status of an advanced country by the year 2020. Currently, there are 20 public and 48 private universities in Malaysia (MOHE, 2016). In a difficult and demanding economy, the function of HEI is to create graduates specialized in specific areas, but more critically to grow employable graduates.

Recently many nations as well as Malaysia have recorded an increase in unemployed graduates. Based on statistics report released by the Ministry of Higher Education in 2015, only 45% of 155,278 graduates found employment. This is in contrast with the 9.5% unemployment rate among the total work force of 12,576,400 (Statistics of Labour force Malaysia, 2015). Therefore, unemployment posed a real threat to the nations economical and social aspect. Malaysia’s labour force grew 1.8 per cent to 14.5 million persons in 2015 compared to the previous year. The rise is contributed by the increase of 215,100 employed persons (1.6%) to 14.1 million persons and the increase in the number of unemployed persons by 39,200 persons (9.5%) to 450.3 thousand persons. The labour force participation rate (LFPR) rose 0.3 percentage points in 2015 to 67.9 per cent. The unemployment rate during the same period increased from 2.9 per cent to 3.1 per cent.

Job interviews are a common selection method from many aspects. In entities from the world over, job interviews remain as the most commonly used techniques to evaluate candidates for jobs (Wilk & Cappelli, 2003). In the view of decision makers of companies, supervisors very much favoured interviews for evaluation of candidates (Lievens, Highhouse, & De Corte, 2005). This is also the case with practitioners of human resources (HR) (Topor, Colarelli, & Han, 2007). Furthermore, candidates view interviews as a reasonable method in contrast with other selection techniques (e.g., Hausknecht, Day & Thomas, 2004). Also candidates view interviews as a for selection process (e.g., Lievens, De Corte, & Brysse, 2003). Actually, in the view of an applicant,

being called for a job interview is essential in the search for job success (Saks, 2006). The job interview has been a favourite subject with researchers for almost a century and is still receiving much research attention. Significantly, many meta-studies have shown that "designed" interviews can indicate moderately elevated levels of cogency without the negative effect normally seen with mental ability exams (Hausknecht et al., 2004). While much has been gleaned regarding job interviews, present studies indicate that there is much left to be discovered.

In the six years after Posthuma, Morgeson and Campion's (2002) overall appraisal of the job interview literature, more than 100 new papers have been published in journals and books regarding interview. The contrasting factor here is that while the jobless rate among local ICT graduates has seen an upward trend, the import qualified foreigners to fill in the ICT job market had been increased. Based on data from the Ministry of Higher Education on the factors causing unemployment among graduates in 2009, it is clear that while many graduates are actively seeking employment, only few get employed. So the concern here is the issues that are causing the poor demand for local graduates is regarded as critical in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Lee and Tan, 2003). Many of the new graduates are unable to garner the confidence of employers, as they are unable to answer the standard questions selected for interviews by many employers. Local newspapers have also raised the problem of poor English competence (EC) among job interviewees. David from *The Star* reported that many new graduates request untenable pay packets and conveniences, but they do not exhibit the needed understanding and skill to converse well, and are unable generate a positive imprint with regard to English Language Comperenceduring interview sessions. *The Star* reported that Tan Sri Adenan Satem as saying there are fresh graduates without jobs numbering in the thousands, who are unable to write properly in English language. Consequently, some employers were hesitant to interview new graduates, as most of them were not ready and not prepared with general knowledge and skills to create a positive impression of themselves during interview sessions (Wai, 2011; Yu Ji, 2016). This view is supported by Christopher from *The Malay Mail* (2013), BERNAMA (2014), Mahavera, (2014), Rahman, (2015) from *The Malaysian Insider*, Hussaini (2016) from *New Straits Time* and Rebecca (2016) from *The Star*.

This indicates their lack of using English as a communication tool, as well as their lack of realization of the crucial need to communicate effectively. This weakness results in economic and societal issues, with regard to job prospects. Therefore, this research aims to examine closely how the generally negative attitude of fresh graduates towards the importance of acquiring competency in English has affected their ability to be employed.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Communicative skills at workplace**

In a workplace, communication skills are known as of the most fundamental skills required by employers (Ngah et al., 2011). This is because it serves as a means of mediating between employees, manager and subordinates and clients. Communication skills will not only assist in the daily operation of the organization (Strivers & Hermanson, 2000), it will also help in the growth and expand their business. Therefore an employee who is proficient in English language and has good communication skills will have higher chances to be recognized, promoted and successful (Krizan et al., 2002; Mehta & Mehta, 2010).

There are number of intensive research in communication skills (Chang, 2004; Ayiesah Ramli et al., 2010; Kaur & Kaur, 2008). Chang (2004) defines it an employee who is proficient in English language has the ability to present ideas, explain a situation or problem, to solve problems, understand the company's situation and come up with

solutions in order to assist the company's growth. Ayiesah Ramli et al (2010) interpretation is communication skills involves making effective presentation, the ability to persuade and negotiate, ability to express ideas in a face to face interaction whether to an individual or to a group and not forgetting written form of communication such as email, reports and letters. These are some of the features required in a workplace and it is evident as it is displayed in the job advertisement. Thus, when the candidate is successful in an interview, he or she is assumed to contribute these qualities on the first day of job (Kaur & Kaur, 2008).

### **What do employers seek in potential employees?**

In a difficult economic environment, fresh graduates are required not only proficient in academic, but also must be prepared with the necessary personal attributes that will augment their capability to enter the job market (Zubaidah & Rugayah, 2008). Research to identify categories of graduates personal attributes is vital. Also in depth investigation to offer specifics regarding the pertinence of programmes to advance soft skills to the existing job market. Much of the research seen in literature, indicated that from the employer's point of view, communication competence was given the highest grade in workplace skills (Azian & Mun, 2011; Rahmah *et al.*, 2011; Rasul, Ismail, Rajuddin & Rauf, 2010; Zubaidah & Rugayah, 2008). This was supported by Billing (2003), who explained that the value of communication abilities among graduates was also found in the United Kingdom, the United States, New Zealand, Australia, and South Africa.

Azian and Mun (2011), carried out a study on Malaysian Employers Federation, which conclude that communication abilities as being the top requirement in an employment application by 68% of employers. Next was work knowledge (67%), interactive skills (56.2%), interest and responsibility (55.7%), working as a team (47.8%), possessing the appropriate qualification (46.3%), good educational qualifications (37.9%), interest to acquire knowledge (37.9%), perform well under stress (34.0%), and good leadership qualities (32.5%)., Meanwhile Zubaidah and Rugayah (2008) studied the qualities of non-technical abilities needed by foreign and homegrown companies in the manufacturing sector in Malaysia. They singled out seven distinct non-technical abilities from the viewpoint of an employer; 1) communication 2) rational thinking and solving abilities 3) controlling information 4) management and coordination 5) team efficiency and collaboration 6) work oriented nature and outlooks and 7) personal qualities and taking responsibilities. In the area of effective communication, they ascertained that English was the primary language preferred by local as well as overseas companies. Although certain local companies did find communicating in Bahasa Melayu equally important as English. In the meantime, in the areas of ingenuity and trouble shooting, greater weight was given to trouble shooting by foreign as well as local companies, besides being able to rank projects and jobs, objective analysis through monitoring, and potent questioning. Moreover, foreign as well as local companies are searching for graduates in the critical field of computer skills for analyzing data for improving the decision making.

Zubaidah and Rugayah (2008) likewise discovered that group responsibility, team collaboration, and taking a central role and supervising groups, were of great importance. Locally based and foreign companies equally put great value on work responsibility. Munir, Aniswal, and Haslina (2005) enumerated the requisite talents and skills needed by graduates in the arts and allied sectors (i.e., Humanities, Social Sciences, Communication, Management, and Information Technology) by local employers. Their research established that the sequence of the list revealed the majority of employer considered the quality value of graduates. This shows the graduates level of capabilities, as required by employers. The following abilities is as follows: executive abilities, communication

abilities, relationship skills, intellectual abilities, and ICT abilities. Nevertheless, they also discovered that the level of proficiency and skills of graduates changed based on the type of organisation. For instance, industrial firms gave great importance to individual attributes (i.e. obliging, learned, talented, amenable and accommodating); and service industries gave important consideration to managerial abilities (work delegation, optimistic attitude, recognizing the potential of others). Zulaikha, Ariffin, Ezanee, and Fazli (2005) studied employers' insights of Bachelor of Information Technology alumni, from the Information Technology Faculty of Universiti Utara Malaysia. Based on their academic appraisal, they formulated a skills table made up of 56 features, focusing on multiple accomplishments and personal attributes. In the research they recognized graduate aptitude shortcomings, by comparing the variations between employers' appraised stages of importance and skill levels. They ascertained that the three major shortcomings were non-verbal communication attributes, spoken performance abilities, and written communication skills. They also understood that many of the components with extensive shortcomings were in the area of personal attributes connected to active communication and group effort. Salina et al., (2011) implemented Importance-Performance Analysis (IPA) to determine the difference between the significance of employability competence and accomplishment of graduates of business school, on the abilities employed in their post graduate work. They discovered that issues such as personal attributes and character improvement must be focused on and must be enhanced in the near future. In addition, aspects such as clearcomprehension, experience, intellectually skilled, diligent, and emotional strength, required to be continued with provision of resources currently available. In another research, it was found that formulated a work skills evaluation tool, for technical graduates in industries specialising in manufacturing, employing the Kepner-Tregeo (K-T) technique. They discovered that the top classification for work skills was interactive abilities, which comprises working in a group, and functioning well in socially difference environment.

These are accompanied by work skills, such as reasoning, strategic abilities, soft skills/principles, organizational and technological skills, elementary abilities, and knowledgeable. Employing this instrument, levels of employable graduates can be analysed prior to becoming part of the job sector. Shukran et al.,(2006) deduced that employers' hopes of graduate's talents and skills is much higher than proficiency in educational papers. There are other issues, separate from the educational syllabus, which graduates must be aware of before joining the workforce. These comprise participation in co-curricular pursuits, training and upgrading agendas, and other programmes that can augment a graduate's skills. Besides making graduates verse in technical know how, higher learning institution should also make students to participate in endeavors to prepare graduates with personal attributes needed by the market companies and other related agencies.

### **The Increase of Labour Force, Graduates and unemployment in Malaysia**

In Malaysia, there a few bodies that are constantly working on the statistics of labour force (Department of Statistics of Malaysia), graduates (Ministry of higher education) and unemployment (Malaysian Employers Federation). These bodies gather information and highlights year after year on the statistics of job available, the number of graduates produced and graduates unemployed. The department of Statistics Malaysia updates yearly on the labour force available in the market and up to date there is an increase of 1.8% of labour force to 14.5 million persons in 2015. In other words, there were 215,100 jobs that were employed and 39,200 jobs that are still available to be employed. This number is rather huge.

Based on the National Graduate Employability Blueprint (2012-2017), Malaysia has an adequate number of graduates with technical abilities mostly in knowledge, information and communication and technology (ICT), business, engineering and various other disciplines. Regrettably, the requirement for these graduates is still weak not withstanding the economic development in the country. There are numerous constituents of workforce skills required by the intending employers particularly communication proficiency, English language skills, Information, Communication and Technology expertise, interactive skills, team working skills, management skills, skilled in solving issues, flexibility skills, bold in risk taking, originality skills, and also individual coordination and skilled in organizing schedule. In a research titled A Data Mining Approach to Construct Graduates Employability Model in Malaysia by Sapaat et al., (2011) emphasised that graduates' ability to secure jobs is still considered a national problem because of the escalating number of students produced by universities every year. Figures from Tracer Study (2015) screened showed that graduates produced by universities in 2014 was 254,072 which increased to 273, 371 in 2015. Tracer Study is a tool design by the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE, 2009) to trace graduate's employability by gathering graduates information produced by local and public universities. It was initiated in 2006 and ever since that the number of graduates have been immersely increasing.

The National Graduate Employability Blueprint 2012-2017 also reported, unemployment problem among Malaysian graduates is an increasingly important issue. MHEM, (2014, Nov 26) *Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia* stated, the National Graduate Employability Blueprint 2012-2017 is a comprehensive document which details the multiple features of the job market, including employer anticipations by using survey techniques, diagrams and tables, and important indicators. This will both aspire and encourage IHL managers to assign more weight to the relevant training of their pupils, confirming that they are prepared with the necessary exit qualities. As mentioned by the Prime Minister in his budget speech of 2012 that about 180,000 students graduate every year with diplomas and degrees from universities. The Government Employability (GE) Blueprint will be launched by the government to help jobless graduates by the end of 2012. The impetus of the GE Blueprint is to improve graduates' employability. A Graduate Employability Taskforce will be set up by the government with a budget of RM200 million. Based on the National Graduate Employability Blueprint 2012-2017, employability and employment is defined differently; employment is classified as the possibility of getting employed whereas employability is interpreted as the probability of securing, maintaining, and growing in a specific job in an organisation. In the last few decades there has been a major change in employers' requirement and work specifications in the workplace.

## METHODOLOGY

The main aim of this study is to investigate the perception from Human Resource Manager towards fresh graduates' performance during job interviews focusing on the language production and attitudes. Therefore, an in-depth interview was conducted in this study using impromptu semi-structured interview questions (Creswell, 2014). The semi-structured questionnaire was designed based on the needs of the present study. The questionnaire was validated (Jackson, 2011) by two experts who have several years of working experience in conducting job interviews.

## **Participants**

There were 35 Human Resource Managers participated in this study and they were purposive sampling mainly from recruitment and out sourcing organisations. They were from well-known organisations in Klang Valley, Malaysia who are experienced and experts in the selection and recruitment for employment. .

## **Data Collection**

The data collection was conducted from June 2015 to February 2016, each interview took 8-10 minutes. There were a total of 5 questions asked in the interview; all 4 questions are required to be answered by the human resource managers; only 1 additional question was referred to the Jobstreet expert. This is because Jobstreet has conducted surveys to affiliated organisations on graduates employability skills (2013) which will give an additional insight to the study. The questions were formulated, self-administered after discussion with 2 academic staff to ensure the suitability and validity of the questions. The main aim is to attain the opinion of HR managers on the issues they faced when hiring fresh graduates and their performance in job interviews.

The semi-structured questions were:

- 1) How long have you been conducting job interviews?
- 2) How do fresh graduates perform during job interviews?
- 3) Referring to the JobStreet (2013) survey report, what do you say...  
(This question is only asked to JobStreet people)
- 4) How can we improve their performances in job interviews?
- 5) Do they have knowledge in selling themselves to win a job?

Question 1 refers to the experience of HR managers in the area of selection and recruitment for employment. The answers expected shall be in the form of years to categorized them as well as experienced in the particular field. Question 2 was on obtaining information regarding performance of fresh graduates during job interview. This is an open-ended question which gives the participants the opportunity to provide detailed answers. Question 3 should be answered by Jobstreet personnel, since the question refers to the survey conducted by them. Question 4 was more on the suggestion provided by the participants to improve fresh graduates performance during the interview. The suggestion could assist future graduates to be equipped before attending any interviews. And the final question was on fresh graduates capability on securing the job offer. This question is important because it will show graduates capability to impress interviewers.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Question 1: How long have you been conducting job interviews?**

The findings show that the participants have had minimum of 15 years working experience and maximum of 25 years working experience in recruiting field. They have been involved in the selection and recruitment process as well as an interviewer during job interviews. These HR managers also have the experience of interviewing and selecting fresh graduates, thus can be categorized as experts in recruitment. The output they provide for question 2-5 will be a great input to understand the challenges and shortcoming of graduates

### **Question 2: How do fresh graduates perform during job interviews?**

The results reveal that there a number of features described by the HR managers on the performance of fresh graduates during an interview. According to them, majority of fresh

graduates performed either averagely or poorly during job interviews. The fresh graduates which they faced during the interviews found to be lack of some of the important skills and reflects on their attitude e.g poor communication skills, limited vocabulary and not serious. Below is list of features seen during a job interview:

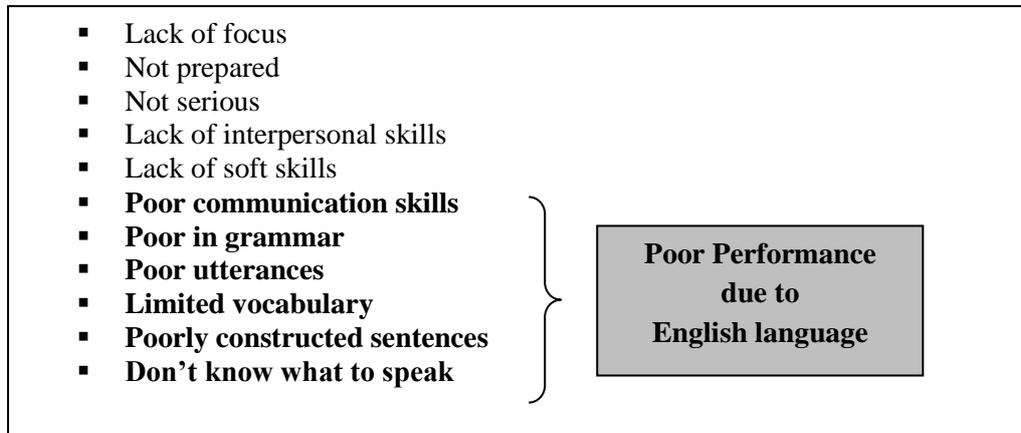


Figure 1. Features shown by fresh graduates during job interview

Figure 1 clearly shows the features of fresh graduates performance during job interviews. Out of 11 features displayed, 6 of them are related to English language; poor communication skills, poor in grammar, poor utterances, limited vocabulary, poorly constructed sentences and don't know what to speak. These features are also considered to be the reasons behind the poor performance shown by fresh graduates. For example a poor communication skills candidate could lead to some misunderstandings and misinterpretation during the job interview. This could lead the interviewer to put more effort in repeating or rephrasing the question in order to get more information and may eventually get frustrated if the answers provided by the candidates were not clear and concise. Another example is don't know what to speak. This particular comment was strongly highlighted by the HR managers. The HR managers found the candidates prefer to be silent mode when they could not answer the question, or they would just utter 'don't know how to say'. This is another contributing factor to frustration, reflecting candidates' attitude of not being prepared and not improving their English language before applying for a job or attending any interviews. This can be considered as the highest probabilities of fresh graduates on being unemployed. The findings are consistent with media articles released from our nation newspaper Rozana Sani (2016) from *New Straits Times* and Ahmad (2016) from *The Malay mail*. The main issue stated was that one of the foremost reasons of not getting employed was poor performance due to inability to deliver in English language.

There are also other features that should be given attention to, lack of focus, not prepared, not serious, lack of interpersonal skills and lack of soft skills. 2 out of 5 features displayed are not related to English language or soft skills; not prepared and not serious in the interview. According to the feedback of the HR managers, 'not prepared' refers to the insufficient documents prepared for submission or did not do some research on the organization's nature of business. 'Not serious' relates to candidates' style of answering questions, often laugh at the beginning or end of answers, providing vague answers or repeating same answers, in other words do not make initiative to provide explicit answer. These two elements are more related to the attitude presented by the fresh graduates which should be seriously taken into consideration (Wai ,2011; Yu Ji,

2016). The attitude displayed during interviews seems to give impact and one of the key area of selection practices by the HR managers or officers.

**Question 3: Referring to the JobStreet (2013) survey report, what do you say...**

This particular question was answered by a Jobstreet personnel who is also a qualified personnel in selecting and recruiting for employment. In the survey there were two areas are deemed to be given attention to. The first area was the feedback from the employers and the other was on the English language competence assessment by fresh graduates. According to the survey, most employers complaint that the undergraduates have difficulty in communicating in English language. It seems that fresh graduates have poor communication skills and unable to communicate well. In other words they are unable to construct simple sentences, have limited knowledge in vocabulary and misinterpret the message. This is quite severe as employers may have wrongly understood and put too much effort on understanding the utterances which gave a negative effect. Apart from being incompetent in English language, it appears that fresh graduates were unable to impress the interviewers during the interview which eventually result in rejected applications. The second area of concern is the Jobstreet English language assessment result. The result shows most of fresh graduates were weak particularly in grammar. There were 40 questions based on multiple choice questions which consist of 10 conversation, 10 grammar, 10 vocabulary and 10 comprehension. These questions are required to be answered within 20 minutes, otherwise the test taker is considered failed and no marks are given and it will not be stated in their jobstreet resume. This may also affect their application through jobstreet applications.

According to the survey, employers also suggested that the Jobstreet English language assessment to be used as a tool to evaluate 3<sup>rd</sup> year students in universities to determine their English language proficiency. The assessment can be administered in a printed version and universities can take initiative update in their database. By doing so, students who are found to be weak will have the opportunity to improve their English language before graduating or before applying for job. This is a form of preparation and will reflect students' initiative to improve their English language. Apart from distributing Jobstreet assessment, IHL should have their own mechanism in identifying students who are weak and proactive steps should be taken to improve the quality of students before they enter the job market.

**Question 4: How can we improve their performances in job interviews?**

This question was asked to get employers suggestions to improve future fresh graduates performances. Below is a list of suggestions shown in Figure 2

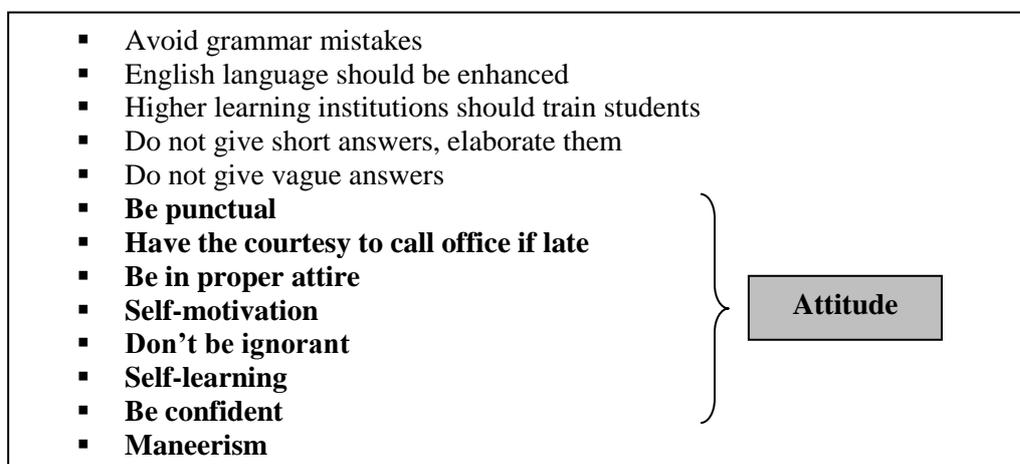


Figure 2: Suggestions to improve performance during job interview

The suggestions displayed in Figure 2 clearly demonstrates the need to improve English language in communication skills among fresh graduates. Fresh graduates are advised to elaborate the answers by giving long sentences or few sentences instead of short answers. In other words, the HR managers or officers would like to receive detailed answers, the candidates should include some examples from previous working experience, internship experience or university experience. The findings reveal that in job interview, fresh graduates prefer giving short answers that lead to the interviewer to ask more questions although it may refer to only one. An example is shown below:

Example 1: Short answer

Interviewer : How does your friend describe about you?  
Candidate : ah..describe...describe?  
Interviewer : I mean ...what does your friend say good things about you...  
Candidate : **hardworking..**  
Interviewer : You mean your friend say that you're hardworking person?  
Candidate : Ah **yes...**

Example 1 shows the interviewer initially ask the candidate 'how does your friend describe about you? Unfortunately, the candidate did not understand the word 'describe' which lead the interviewer to rephrase his/her question. After the second attempt, the candidate understood the question and answered only single word 'hardworking'. It is assumed that the interviewer was waiting for a detailed answer as in complete sentence or some other qualities. After few seconds, the interviewer made another attempt to seek clarification but the candidate only uttered 'yes' without any further elaboration. The findings also reveal that candidates are not prepared for an interview and give vague answers which also made interviewers to make few attempts to ask the question as shown in example 2.

Example 2: Vague answer

Interviewer : Can you tell me one of your strengths?  
Candidate 2 : I can sell  
Interviewer : Sell? Anything else?  
Candidate 2 : Ya....only sell

Example 2 shows a sample of vague answer produced during an interview. The question, 'can you tell me one of your strengths?' was directed to the candidate. The candidate however answered 'I can sell' without elaborating further. It is assumed that the interviewer hopes to get a detailed answer, as in the products, the strategy and planning or other strengths that can be sold. This made the interviewer to make another attempt by asking, 'sell? Anything else?'. Much to the interviewers dismay, the candidate affirmed by answering 'ya...only sell'. Both examples clearly show the candidates may have limited vocabulary that causes them the inability to provide a detail elaborated answer or they may feel the answers are sufficient for the interviewer. This types of answers will definitely effect the outcome of the interview, much to negative outcome.

Apart from what presented earlier, other suggestions made to improve the performances were fresh graduates should enhance their English language proficiency, avoid grammatical errors and higher learning institutions should have some sort of responsibility towards students communication skills. Initiatives should be taken such as giving opportunity to students to be involved in language enhancing skills and also top management must take part in training the students in enhancing their English language

skills. Management support is crucial for students to realize and understand the need to improve their English language as skills and tools for employment.

There are other suggestions given which are not related to English language competency. The suggestions are fresh graduates should be punctual in attending interviews, inform the office if late or unable to attend the interview, dress appropriately, don't be ignorant on the surrounding, be polite as in mannerism, be confident, self-motivated and make attempts to self-learning. All these features can be categorised into one category which is the attitude of an individual. Besides than poor communication skills and low-proficiency of English language, attitude seems to play an important role in job interviews. The features displayed in figure 2 reflected during the interview and gave a negative impact to the interviewer thus resulting candidates to fail in interviews. Attitude also seems to be a determining factor for selection and recruitment in employment. This is because employers would want to hire candidates who are well mannered, knows how to respect other people which are found lacking among the younger generations. This features should instilled when they were young, should be made a topic of discussion at home, school and universities, should be included in learning activities before obtaining their degree. Activities and programs in universities should have input on improving the attitude of students so that future fresh graduates could be an exemplary role to younger generation, stay professional with strong ethnics.

*Question 5: Do they have knowledge in selling themselves to win a job?*

This particular question was asked to find out whether fresh graduates are able to impress the HR managers, able market themselves to be employed or able to convince the employers that they are the right candidate for the job. Surprisingly, the feedback received from the HR Managers were not a favourable answer. According to them, the fresh graduates were unable to impress the interviewers during job interviews, they have difficulty in completing proper sentences, unable to give good impression, unable to impress and unable to convince the interviewers that they are suitable for the position they applied for. On top of that, fresh graduates did not make any attempt to speak up or tried to provide explanation and this rather give a negative impact to the interviewer. In this current competitive job demand, graduates with negative qualities will be a burden to society because unemployment among fresh graduates will continue to escalate if it is not taken into serious consideration.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings presented clearly demonstrate the need to be proficient in English language among fresh graduates. Employers and HR officers expect fresh graduates to communicate well in English language, elaborate well in their answers and have the ability to convince and impress the interviewers. Ability to converse and use English language is essential in today's world, apart from academic achievement. In addition, fresh graduates are expected to show good attitude, be punctual, show enthusiasm and make attempts to speak. As one of the HR manager quoted 'English language is important eventhough fresh graduates do not have experience or skills because our team leaders are prepared to train team, as long they have a good attitude'. Therefore good attitude is sometime are more needed than English language proficiency because as long graduates have good manner, all others can be taught. But, without manners, a company can be brought down due to negligence and ignorance.

In conclusion, this study hopes to bring awareness to policy makers, educational institutes and students on the importance of communicating in English language and

projecting positive attitude. These two elements seem to be the significant factors for human resource and management to select and recruit graduates for employment.

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## A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND POLIO IN RELATION TO NORTHERN NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

In Nigeria, the northern region accounts for the largest population with 53.4 percent and it is noted for various communicable and non-communicable diseases. The region is also noted for the highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS, malaria and polio- the three global scourges. Statistics further indicate that the north has the highest level of illiteracy in Nigeria. It is, therefore, noteworthy that the region is strategically important as its state of affairs has overbearing effects on the socio-economic and political systems of Nigeria. In view of this, this study investigates the newspaper coverage of health issues in relation to the north with particular emphasis on HIV/AIDS, malaria and polo. The author performed content analysis on four national newspapers in Nigeria from 2010-2013 and found a medium correlation coefficient value of .308 between newspaper coverage of HIV/AIDS, malaria and polio and northern region. This correlation value ( $r = .308$ ) implies that Nigerian newspapers have given a moderate attention or coverage to northern Nigeria in their health coverage. However, the study concludes that if this region can enjoy more coverage from Nigerian newspapers, this may influence policy makers in the health sector to focus more attention on the north. The paper then recommends that more national newspapers may need to be established in the north because location of newspaper organisations has great influence on the coverage of health issues among Nigerian newspapers.

Keywords: Nigerian newspapers, health, northern Nigeria, HIV/AIDS, malaria and polio, health communication

### INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is broadly divided into three regions, namely: north, south and west. The north accounts for 53.4 percent of the country's population (National Population Commission, 2006 cited in National Bureau of Statistics, Nigeria, 2011) with 19 states out of the 36 states of the federation. Abuja- the Federal Capital Territory, is also situated in the north. The population profile of the region (53.4 percent) is greater than the combined population of the two other regions. This simply shows that the state of affairs in the north has overbearing effects on the socio-political and economic status of the country at large. The region is, however, noted for communicable diseases caused by high temperatures and has the highest number of malaria cases in the country<sup>1</sup> (Federal Ministry of Health, 2012; Amoran, 2013). This is because *Plasmodium falciparum*, the dominant species of malaria parasites, are responsible for the most severe forms of the disease, and *Anopheles gambiae* (complex A. *gambiae* s.s.), the dominant malaria carrier are both found throughout the northern region (Federal Ministry of Health, 2012).

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<sup>1</sup> Federal Ministry of Health in this study refers to the Federal Ministry of Health in Nigeria.

Furthermore, the northern region has the highest prevalence rate of the three global scourges- malaria, HIV/AIDS and polio in Nigeria (see Tran, 2013; Federal Ministry of Health, 2012; Renne, 2012; Federal Ministry of Health, 2009a; Renne, 2010). In Nigeria, statistics show that Benue State, a state from the north central geopolitical zone, has consistently recorded the highest prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS in the country. Also, the entire north accounts for 49.5 percent of the total prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Nigeria. Moreover, the north has the highest prevalence rate of polio cases in the country. For example, research shows that more than 95 percent of all polio cases occur in the eight northern states where the disease is most endemic. The eight northern states include Borno, Jigawa, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara (Renne, 2010; Tran, 2013).

Despite having the largest population in the country, northern Nigeria ironically has the highest level of illiteracy (Lamido, 2013; United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organisation, 2012) leading to the dearth of health personnel in the region. It is also instructive to note that the north has the highest poverty rate in Nigeria (National Bureau of Statistics Nigeria, 2011). Meanwhile, diseases by nature, are corollaries to poverty (Agbonifo, 1983) as being witnessed today in the region. In view of this, the study also investigates the rate to which Nigerian newspapers focus attention on the northern region of the country in the coverage of health issues with particular reference to malaria, HIV/AIDS and polio.

### **Statement of Problem**

The fact that northern Nigeria has the highest prevalence of various health problems in Nigeria, including HIV/AIDS, malaria and polio, informs why this study mainly focuses attention on the region vis-à-vis newspaper coverage of health issues. The underlying statement of problem here is that if the northern region is well reported in health coverage by Nigerian newspapers, the attention of government health departments and agencies as well as other non-governmental organisations may be drawn more to the health situation in the region. This may consequently lead to formulation and implementation of more health policies by the Nigerian government in order to improve the health conditions of the north.

### **Research Objectives**

- i. To examine the extent to which the selected Nigerian newspapers report malaria, HIV/AIDS and polio in relation to northern Nigeria
- ii. To examine the extent to which the selected Nigerian newspapers focus attention on northern Nigeria in the coverage of health issues in general

### **Research Questions**

- i. To what extent do Nigerian newspapers report malaria, HIV/AIDS and polio in relation to northern Nigeria?
- ii. To what extent do Nigerian newspapers focus attention on northern Nigeria in the coverage of health issues in general?

### **Research Hypothesis**

**H<sub>0</sub>:** The amount of coverage of malaria, HIV/AIDS and polio will not be related to the coverage of northern region in Nigerian newspapers.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** The amount of newspaper coverage of malaria, HIV/AIDS and polio will be related to the coverage of northern region in Nigerian newspapers.

### **Newspaper coverage of health issues: A review of related studies**

Newspapers have been identified as a channel of disseminating health information to members of the public. They also disseminate information to members of the public on various health risks, disease outbreaks, and other prevalent health issues in society (Torwel & Rodney, 2010). For a serious health information seeker, newspapers appear to be the best option to get health information. This is because newspapers are seen to be highly reliable sources of information (Dutta-Bergman, 2004). This is the more reason why information-oriented newspapers have been noted for health promotion as they connect the public with relevant health information (Atkin & Wallack, 1990). Newspapers have often been noted to dedicate pages for health reports to present information on various health issues. By virtue of the archival quality of newspapers (newspapers can be found in libraries, offices, homes and other relevant places), past health reports could readily be accessed by an individual looking for specific health information (Sissors & Bumba, 1977). Such health information can be shared with family members, friends, nurses, or doctors (Dutta-Bergman, 2005). Hence, the health-oriented individual is likely to be drawn to newspapers when in need of health information (Becker & Dunwoody, 1982; Chaiken & Eagly, 1983; Robinson & Levy, 1986; Singer, 1980; Stone, 1987).

Consequently, studies in the field of health communication have continuously focused attention on newspapers as a medium of mass communication and their potential to disseminate information about health issues, which can be of great value to the public (see Rimal & Lapkin, 2009; Westhood & Westhood, 1999; African Women & Child Feature, 2010; Jones-Webb, Baranowski, Fan, Finnegan, & Wagenaar, 1997; Menashe & Siegel, 1998; Sorenson, Manz, & Berk, 1998). Other channels of mass communication also disseminate health information, but newspapers allow the general public the opportunity to read over health pieces many times. Furthermore, the comprehensive analysis involved in newspaper writing makes newspapers acceptable sources of health information (Clark & Illman, 2006; Winsten, 1985). The frequency of daily publication of newspapers and other advantages of the medium over other news media also make newspapers popular among health communication researchers (Lemal & Van den Bulck, 2011; Rachul, Ries, & Caulfield, 2011).

Over the years, health communication researchers across the world have focused their attention on newspapers, examining newspaper coverage of health issues, the extent to which they (newspapers) disseminate information and portray various health problems in society. For instance, Rachul, Ries and Caulfield (2011) found newspaper coverage of the A/H1N1 vaccination program in Canada was largely supportive and effective as serious risks associated with contracting the A/H1N1 virus were frequently discussed in the print media. Also, research has examined differences in the amount and nature of cancer coverage in newspapers and found that cancer was the main topic in a higher proportion of health stories in black newspapers than in general-audience newspapers in Canada (Cohen et al., 2008). The study further indicates that breast cancer was the most commonly reported cancer in both black and general newspapers. This study cites Hoffman-Goetz and Friedman (2005) who had earlier found similar results in previous studies of cancer coverage in Canadian newspapers and United States magazines.

Research shows that the United States of America once recorded the highest rate of non-HIV sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) in the developed world (Institute of Medicine, 1997), as one in four Americans was infected with a STD (Donovan, 1993). In a later study, it was estimated that there are more than 15 million new cases of non-HIV STDs in the United States each year, accounting for an annual financial burden of more than 10 billion dollars (Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, 1998). Therefore, Davidson

and Wallack (2004) examined the content of national newspapers in the United States with regard to the presentation of non-HIV STDs. The authors in their work attempted to provide a baseline assessment on how the problem of STDs was being presented by newspapers to the American public. The authors, however, found that only 19 percent of articles in the total sample mentioned the causes, consequences, prevention, signs, or symptoms, screening, transmission, treatment, trends or rates of STDs. The study shows low reporting of STDs in the print news media contributed to the high prevalence of STDs among the American public (Davidson & Wallack, 2004). It was noted in this research that newspapers have considerable potential to create more awareness and information about STDs among the American public. The researchers, however, concludes that considering the strategic importance of newspapers in society, health reporters need to use more statistical information about the consequences of STDs in ways that would facilitate prevention among members of the public.

In the recent past, major social and economic change has brought an escalating diabetes epidemic to low- and middle-income countries in addition to the diabetes already found in higher-income countries (International Diabetes Federation, 2011). Consequently, the disease kills, disables, impoverishes families and imposes a huge economic burden on governments and business, and affects health systems in general (International Diabetes Federation, 2011). Previously, diabetes was considered a disease of the rich and elderly, but it has now been found prevalent in developing countries. Three out of four people with diabetes now live in low-and middle-income countries. The epidemiological trend is projected to continue over the next twenty years with the highest number of people with diabetes coming from Africa, Middle East and South-East Asia regions (International Diabetes Federation, 2011). Zhang et al. (2010) found healthcare expenditures on diabetes to account for 11.6 percent of the total healthcare expenditure in the world. About 95 percent of the countries covered in the study spent 5 percent or more of their total health care expenditure, and about 80 percent of the countries spent between 5 percent and 13 percent of their total healthcare dollars on diabetes (Zhang et al., 2010).

Health communication researchers have also focused attention on the extent to which the media, especially newspapers, have complemented the efforts of health care providers in reporting and providing health information on diabetes. This is because people access much of their information about health and health policy from print media (Brodie, Kjellson, Hoff, & Parker, 1999). Research also demonstrates the media's influence across cultures and settings, and how the media place high value on health reporting (Seale, 2003). Therefore, Gollust and Lantz (2009) studied newspaper reportage of type-2 diabetes in the United States, examining the extent to which newspapers discussed diabetes in the context of social determinants, upstream interventions, or disparities. The study found behavioural factors and obesity as the predominant explanation for type-2 diabetes in newspapers. This, therefore, suggests that newspapers in the United States disseminate information about type-2 diabetes, and indicates further that behavioural factors and obesity dominate the explanation of type-2 diabetes in newspapers.

Also, in the process of disseminating health information, mass media are noted for portraying health and health care issues in society (Joseph & Kearns, 1999; Seale, 2004). Lawrence, Kearns, Park, Bryder, and Worth (2007) argue that newspapers are a major channel in measuring the media portrayal of health issues effectively. The authors examined newspaper reports in New Zealand on the portrayal of tuberculosis in the three major cities of New Zealand: Auckland, Christchurch and Wellington. The study found tuberculosis occurring in the three major cities, but indicates that tuberculosis predominantly occurs in Auckland. The study concludes that representation of tuberculosis in New Zealand print media is partial, mirroring the reality about

tuberculosis prevalence in New Zealand. The authors, therefore, describe tuberculosis as a national concern in New Zealand. Other health issues which health communication studies have examined in relation to newspaper reportage include HIV/AIDS, malaria, polio, family planning, abortion, drug and tobacco intakes and hypertension (see Leask & Chapman, 1998; Lemmens, Vaeth, & Greenfield, 1999; Wakefield, Loken, & Hornik, 2010; Wilson, Booth, Eastwood, & Watt, 2008).

In Nigeria, however, Okidu (2013) studied communication models in HIV/AIDS coverage in selected Nigerian newspapers. The study confirmed the strategic roles newspapers play in setting the contextual agenda to complement the multi-sectoral and community-based response to HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support adopted by the government. The significant coverage in the frequency of HIV/AIDS activity-oriented information in Nigerian newspapers confirms how HIV/AIDS contextual issues are high on their agenda (Okidu, 2013). The study, however, concludes that the overwhelming burden of new cases of HIV/AIDS in Nigeria cannot be attributed to diminished media coverage of contextual elements. As a further step to Okidu (2013), this study examines newspaper coverage of HIV/AIDS, malaria and polio in Nigeria given the prevalence of these health problems in the country. Also, Okidu (2013) did not examine the newspaper coverage of HIV/AIDS in relation to northern Nigeria, where HIV/AIDS, malaria and polio are mostly prevalent. This study examines newspaper coverage of health issues in the context of this important northern region of the country.

From the above review, it shows that newspapers disseminate information about health issues in society. Newspaper coverage of health issues in society serves as a source of health information and awareness to members of the public. Therefore, this study examines the situation in Nigeria to determine the extent to which Nigerian newspapers report health issues with particular reference to HIV/AIDS, malaria and polio, and the context of northern Nigeria, which are observed as gaps in many health communication studies in Nigeria.

## METHODOLOGY

This study adopted content analysis research method. Content analysis, which is popular in media and communication researches, is described as a structured method, which is based on the principles of social science of measuring and counting of media contents (Zeh, 2005). As postulated by Berelson (1952), content analysis is described as a “research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication.” (p. 18) The ultimate goal in content analysis is to attain a condensed and broad description of the text under study. The outcomes of the analysis are concepts or categories that enable the researcher to describe and explain the text being studied (Macnamara, 2005).

### **Selected newspapers of study and rationale for selection**

In Nigeria, there are over 150 newspapers, most of which are not daily publications but regional in coverage and circulation (Nigeria Press Council, 2009; Dragomir & Thompson, 2012). There are approximately 20 daily newspapers, which have national coverage, circulation and readership in the country (Nigeria Press Council, 2009; Adeyanju & Okwero, 2005). The researcher selected four of the national newspapers for the purpose of this study. These newspapers include: *The Guardian*, *The Punch*, *Nigerian Tribune* and *Daily Trust*.

These four newspapers were purposely chosen based on both common attributes and unique characteristics. For instance, all the four newspapers have national coverage, reach and circulation, which make them popular across Nigeria. All of the newspapers

have been in existence for at least ten years in the country. These newspapers have been consistently published since their establishment and enjoy readership across the length and breadth of Nigeria. Also, Okidu (2013) notes that these newspapers have a strong network of national correspondents and thoroughly bred professionals, which have over the years, earned them respect for their in-depth analysis and coverage of such national issues as politics, health, education, economy, sports, marine and insurance and so forth. In view of this, these newspapers have been widely cited in workshops, seminars, and training sessions on health communication in the country (Okidu, 2013).

All the four newspapers are English language dailies. The selection of only English language newspapers in this study is based on the fact that the English language is the official language in Nigeria. This provides these newspapers wider readership in Nigeria than indigenous newspapers, which mostly focus on particular geo-ethnic areas or regions. In Nigeria today, the selected newspapers are among the top eight standing in terms of circulation, coverage and readership (Dragomir & Thompson, 2012). They all also have online versions for online readership and this is important because Nigerian audience are now conscious of reading online version of newspapers (Dragomir & Thompson, 2012).

Similarly, these newspapers have certain unique characteristics that qualify them for selection in this study. *The Guardian Newspaper* which is based in Lagos State, south west Nigeria, readily draws the attention of the elite class of the country. Still, this newspaper is substantially commercial in orientation and for many years, it has attracted the largest proportion of advertisements among the national newspapers (Osewa, 2005; Dragomir & Thompson, 2012) *The Punch Newspaper*, a Lagos-based publication remains the most widely circulated newspaper in Nigeria. Over the years, *The Punch Newspaper* is characterised with sharp criticism against the government of the day. So, the newspaper readily attracts the attention of the politicians, old and young as well as any Nigerian literate who is interested in the political happenings in the country. .

The *Nigerian Tribune* is the oldest newspaper in Nigeria since 1949, making it the only existing precolonial newspaper, and the only national newspaper currently being published in Ibadan - the largest city in Africa, Oyo State, south west of the country. *Daily Trust* is one of the national newspapers currently being published in the north, specifically located in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory of the nation. There are other newspapers in the north, but they do not have national coverage and circulation. In contrast, these other newspapers are largely regional in orientation and circulation compared to the *Daily Trust Newspaper*.

### **Population, sample, sampling technique and sampling period**

The population of the newspaper editions from which the sample of this study was selected were the entire editions of the four selected newspapers published over four years from the 1st of January, 2010 to 31st of December, 2013 excluding Saturday and Sunday editions. The rationale for a limited timeframe is that most of the health communication studies conducted in Nigeria within the context of newspapers were done within a short period, and at most two years (see Okidu, 2013; Uwom & Oloyede, 2014, Batta, 2012, Towel & Rodney, 2010). This study examines a period of four years as a further step to earlier studies in Nigeria. This timeframe allows for a broader insight into the coverage of health issues by Nigerian newspapers and perhaps, health communication research in Nigeria.

Consequently, the total amount of newspaper editions for the period of four years of weekday coverage are estimated as 1,040 for each newspaper (5 days x 52 weeks=260editions, x 4 years= 1,040) and 4,160 as total editions for the four newspapers

(1,040 x 4 = 4,160). To determine the sample, a composite sampling technique was adopted. This technique has been adjudged the most scientific and superior over random sampling and consecutive day sampling techniques, when analysing newspaper content (Lacy, Riffe, & Fico, 1998; Riffe, Aust, & Lacy, 1993). This sampling technique is also considered effective because it controls the bias of cyclical trends in news coverage (Budd, Thorp, & Donohue, 1967; Riffe et al., 1993). Therefore, composite technique was performed over the 48 months of the four years studied for each newspaper (2010-2013) to determine the selected newspaper editions for content analysis.

Through the application of composite or constructive sampling technique for each of the newspapers, 211 newspaper editions were content analysed. Therefore, for the four newspapers, 844 editions were content analysed as the sample from the total population of 4,160 editions. This sample size is approximately estimated at 21 percent of the entire population, which is adequate to make a representative judgement for the entire population. A sample size between 10 percent and 25 percent is recommended as acceptable when determining sample size in content analysis (Wimmer & Dominick, 2011). The researcher, assisted by one research assistant, sourced all the 844 editions of newspapers by visiting the Olabisi Onabanjo University Library Sagamu Campus, Ogun State, south west Nigeria, the Simeon Adebo Library Abeokuta, Ogun State, south west Nigeria and the *Daily Trust Newspaper* library, Lagos and Abuja Offices.

### **The unit of analysis and content categories**

The study focused on the selected newspapers as the units of analysis. Within the units of analysis, newspaper stories and articles were categorised according to different genres. These genres include: straight or conventional news stories, feature articles, editorials, opinions or columns and letters to the editors and pictures. Content categories that were focused on the story contents or topics include geographical focus (north central, north east, north-west, south-south, south east, south west and foreign land), sources of story, position of stories, speaker in stories and victims of health stories.

### **Validity, reliability and inter-coder reliability**

In any content analysis study, it is essential for the researcher to painstakingly factor the components of validity and reliability in the whole process of the study design. This is viewed as fundamental because validity and reliability are research components through which researchers make a strong case for the data generated through content analysis (Potter & Levine-Donnestein, 1999; Reel & Thompson, 1994; Smith, 1997). According to Hecht, Trost, Bator, and MacKinnon (1997), the questions of validity and reliability in content analysis studies should be carefully and essentially answered by researchers, especially when the results of content analyses are likely to be adopted in public health campaigns. It has also been argued that reporting validity and reliability in content analysis occurs in studies whereby the results of content analysis studies are meant to be applied in crisis management situation (Rogan & Hammer, 1994), to understand and use power in organisations (Chiles & Zorn, 1995), to develop techniques for dealing with spousal abuse (Sabourin, 1995), and to maintain collaborative work groups (Franz & Jin, 1995).

Further to this, while Kvalseth (1989) suggests that a kappa coefficient of 0.61 implies a reasonably good agreement (good reliability), Landis and Koch (1977) suggest a comprehensive benchmark for interpreting kappa coefficient values. The benchmark is stated in the table below.

Table 1. Showing Kappa statistic and its strength of agreement

<b>Kappa Statistic</b>	<b>Strength of Agreement</b>
<0.00	Poor
0.00- 0.20	Slight
0.21- 0.40	Fair
0.41- 0.60	Moderate
0.61- 0.80	Substantial
0.81- 1.00	Almost perfect

In this study, the researcher adopted Cohen's kappa to calculate the degree of agreement between the researcher and one research assistant in the coding exercise in order to determine the reliability of the data. Cohen's kappa coefficient was chosen to calculate the inter-coder reliability because it accounts for agreement that is expected to occur by chance (Murphy & Ciszewska-Carr, 2005). Furthermore, Cohen's kappa is specifically designed to measure the level of agreement between two coders (Murphy & Ciszewska-Carr, 2005). Before the coding exercise, the researcher had designed a coding scheme and coding instruction, which was used to train the research assistant.

The research assistant, at the time of this research, is a fresh graduate of mass communication from Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago Iwoye Nigeria. The training lasted for three days, taking about three hours each day. After the training, the research assistant independently coded 150 health stories across the four selected national newspapers covering the month of June, 2014. Afterwards, the research assistant sought clarifications from the researcher on areas that were not clear during the coding exercise. The researcher took time to clarify these unclear areas, which improved the understanding of the research assistant and his ability to perform content analysis.

After the examination of 150 preliminary articles, the researcher and the research assistant independently coded another set of health stories to determine the level of agreement. In this case, the researcher and the assistant coded the same 241 health stories, which lasted for three days. The 241 health stories coded were used to determine the intercoder agreement. This was estimated at 10.2 percent of the entire 2,368 health stories that were eventually coded for the study. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to calculate kappa coefficient. The kappa coefficient value found was .857, which suggested that there was almost perfect agreement between the researcher and the assistant in the coding exercise (Landis & Koch, 1977). Therefore, the researcher and the assistant then coded all the entire health stories found in the four selected national newspapers for the study from 1st of January, 2010 to 31st of December, 2013. In all, the total number of stories coded was 2,368, out of which the researcher coded 1,491 stories (63.1percent) while the research assistant coded 873 stories (36.9percent) respectively.

## Findings

### A. Study hypothesis

**H<sub>0</sub>:** The amount of coverage of malaria, HIV/AIDS and polio will not be related to the coverage of northern region in Nigerian newspapers.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** The amount of newspaper coverage of malaria, HIV/AIDS and polio will be related to the coverage of northern region in Nigerian newspapers.

This study tested the research hypothesis by carrying out a correlation analysis using SPSS between the coverage of malaria, HIV/AIDS and polio in Nigerian newspapers and the geographical context of health coverage in Nigeria. These two variables were compared to determine how Nigerian newspapers have focused attention on the coverage of malaria, HIV/AIDS and polio on northern region (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1. Correlation coefficient value for the study hypothesis

<b>Correlations</b>			
		Health themes/topics	Geographical context of story
Health themes/topics	Pearson Correlation	1	.308**
	Sig. (1-tailed)		.000
	N	159	159
Geographical context of story	Pearson Correlation	.308**	1
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.000	
	N	159	159

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

Given the correlation coefficient value of .308 and a significance value  $p = .000$  which is less than 0.05 ( $P = .000 < 0.05$ ), this study found that there was a moderate positive correlation between the two tested variables: [ $r = .308$ ,  $n = 159$ ,  $p = .000$ ]. According to J. Cohen (1988), an absolute value of  $r$  of 0.1 is classified as small, an absolute value of  $r$  of 0.3 is classified as medium and an absolute value of  $r$  of 0.5 is classified as large. This finding suggests that there was a medium, or moderate, correlation between the coverage of malaria, HIV/AIDS and polio in Nigerian newspapers and northern Nigeria.

### B. Research Questions:

- i. To what extent do Nigerian newspapers focus attention on the coverage of malaria, HIV/AIDS and polio in relation to northern Nigeria?
- ii. To what extent do Nigerian newspapers focus attention on northern Nigeria in the coverage of health issues in general?

In answering the first research question (To what extent do Nigerian newspapers focus attention on the coverage of malaria, HIV/AIDS and polio in relation to northern Nigeria?), this study further investigated the frequency of newspaper coverage of malaria, HIV/AIDS and polio in relation to northern Nigeria within the context of the ten most frequently reported health issues in Nigerian national newspapers. This study focused on

the ten most frequently reported health issues out of the 45 health issues analysed in Nigerian newspapers from 2010-2013. This study focuses on the ten most frequently reported health issues out of the 45 health issues analysed as a benchmark and the basis of analysis in order to draw a contextual conclusion on the coverage of malaria, HIV/AIDS and polio in relation to northern Nigeria (Table 1.2).

Table 1.2. The geographical context and frequency of newspaper coverage of the ten most frequently reported health issues in Nigerian national newspapers from 2010-2013

			Geographical context of story						Total
			North	south south	south east	south west	foreign countries	not indicated	
Health themes/topics	Health care delivery	Count	87	16	5	126	13	4	251
		% within Geographical context of story	15.4%	20.5%	12.8%	16.7%	1.8%	1.8%	10.6%
		Adjusted Residual	4.3	2.9	.5	6.6	-9.0	-4.5	
	Health systems administration	Count	82	13	7	97	9	13	221
		% within Geographical context of story	14.5%	16.7%	17.9%	12.8%	1.3%	5.8%	9.3%
		Adjusted Residual	4.9	2.3	1.9	4.0	-8.8	-1.9	
	HIV/AIDS	Count	69	13	2	55	39	11	189
		% within Geographical context of story	12.2%	16.7%	5.1%	7.3%	5.5%	4.9%	8.0%
		Adjusted Residual	4.3	2.9	-.7	-.9	-2.9	-1.8	
	Cancer	Count	13	2	4	37	74	11	141
		% within Geographical context of story	2.3%	2.6%	10.3%	4.9%	10.5%	4.9%	6.0%
		Adjusted Residual	-4.2	-1.3	1.1	-1.5	6.1	-.7	
	Nutrition and balance diet	Count	8	2	0	19	62	23	114
		% within Geographical context of story	1.4%	2.6%	.0%	2.5%	8.8%	10.3%	4.8%
		Adjusted Residual	-4.3	-.9	-1.4	-3.6	5.9	4.0	
	Polio	Count	67	1	2	19	10	10	109
		% within Geographical context of story	11.9%	1.3%	5.1%	2.1%	1.4%	4.5%	4.6%
		Adjusted Residual	9.4	-1.4	.2	-3.3	-4.8	-.1	
	Maternal health	Count	31	0	1	27	25	13	97
		% within Geographical context of story	5.5%	.0%	2.6%	3.6%	3.5%	5.8%	4.1%
		Adjusted Residual	1.9	-1.9	-.5	-.9	-.9	1.4	
	Malaria	Count	25	4	0	37	21	6	93
		% within Geographical context of story	4.4%	5.1%	.0%	4.9%	3.0%	2.7%	3.9%
		Adjusted Residual	2.1	.6	-1.3	1.7	-1.6	-1.0	
	Infant health	Count	12	2	2	20	30	12	78
		% within Geographical context of story	2.1%	2.6%	5.1%	2.6%	4.2%	5.4%	3.3%
		Adjusted Residual	-1.8	-.4	.6	-1.2	1.7	1.8	
	Reproductive health	Count	8	1	0	24	16	8	57
		% within Geographical context of story	1.4%	1.3%	.0%	3.2%	2.3%	3.6%	2.4%
		Adjusted Residual	-1.8	-.7	-1.0	1.7	-.3	1.2	
Total	Count	564	78	39	756	707	224	2368	
	% within Geographical context of story	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Table 1.2 shows that the coverage of malaria, HIV/AIDS and polio in Nigerian national newspapers about northern Nigeria is relatively higher than other regions covered in this study within the context of the ten most frequently reported health issues in Nigerian newspapers. Though malaria was reported more in the south-west than the north, this argument is further based on the fact that the adjusted residuals found for the north in relation to these three diseases: malaria (2.1), HIV/AIDS (4.3) and polio (9.4)

(Table 1.2) were more than +/-2.0. Kenix (2015) notes that strong effects are found between two variables if adjusted residuals are +/-2.0 because adjusted residuals or the difference between expected and observed counts are used to demonstrate actual effects of any given relationship.

Furthermore, the adjusted residuals found for the north in relation to HIV/AIDS, malaria and polio are greater than those found for south-western Nigeria and foreign countries (Table 1.2). This is contrary to the general reportage of health issues in the four national Nigerian newspapers studied, whereby south-western Nigeria dominate all the four national newspapers studied (n=756, 31.9 percent), followed by foreign countries (n=707, 29.9 percent) and northern Nigeria as third (n=564, 23.8 percent) (Table 1.5). Therefore, this may inform why the adjusted residuals found for the south west and foreign countries in table 1.2 in relation to health issues other than HIV/AIDS, malaria and polio are greater than those found for the north.

The frequency of newspaper reportage of malaria, HIV/AIDS and polio about northern Nigeria than other regions, as extracted from table 1.2, is reflected below (Table 1.3).

Table 1.3: The coverage of HIV/AIDS, malaria and polio about northern Nigeria, south-western Nigeria and foreign countries in Nigerian national newspapers from 2010-2013

Regions	Freq	Percentage	Freq	Percentage	Freq	Percentage
	<b>HIV/AIDS</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Malaria</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Polio</b>	<b>%</b>
North	69	37	25	27	67	61
South West	55	29	37	40	19	17
Foreign	39	21	21	23	10	9
Others	26	14	10	11	13	12
Total	189	100.0	93	100.0	109	100.0

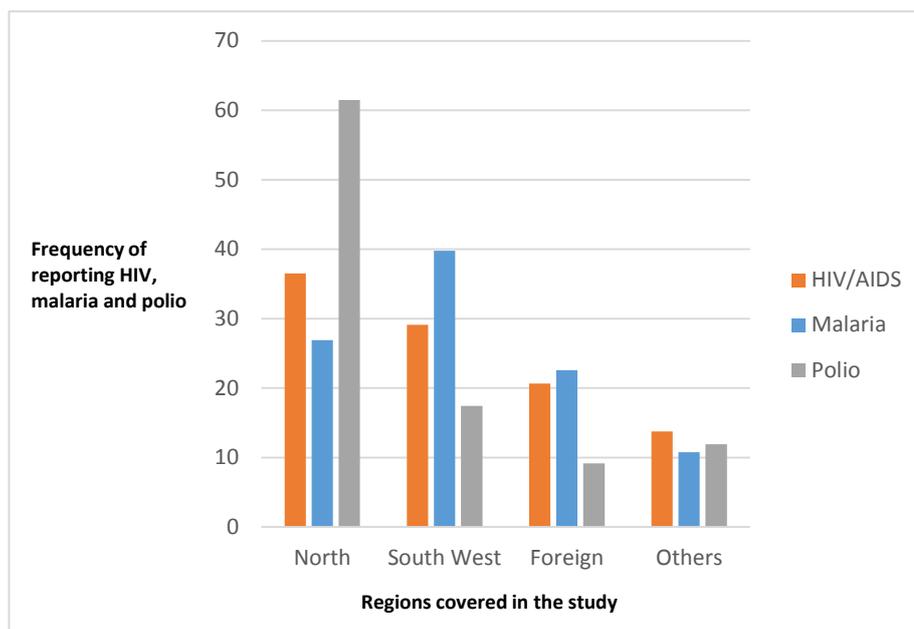


Figure 1.1. The frequency of coverage of HIV/AIDS, malaria and polio about northern Nigeria, south west and foreign countries in Nigerian national newspapers from 2010-2013

This finding specifically indicates that Nigerian national newspapers have given a relatively significant amount of attention to northern Nigeria in the coverage of malaria, HIV/AIDS and polio than other regions. This argument is based on the adjusted residuals found for the north in relation to these three health problems, namely: malaria: 2.1, HIV/AIDS: 4.3 and polio: 9.4 and a significance value ( $p = .000$ ), which is less than 0.05 ( $P = .000 < 0.05$ ). Therefore, it may be argued further that the relatively high coverage of Nigerian newspapers to the north in relation to these three health problems than other regions, is related to the moderate positive coefficient correlation (.308) found in this study.

This study further examined how Nigerian newspapers have given attention to northern Nigeria in their health coverage generally. This was examined within the geographical context and the position of health stories. This was undertaken in order to answer the research question ii (To what extent do Nigerian newspapers focus attention on northern Nigeria in the coverage of health issues?). This, therefore, shows the level of prominence given to the north by Nigerian newspapers in their coverage of health issues in general (Table 1.4).

Table 1.4: The geographical context and the position of health stories in Nigerian national newspapers from 2010-2013

**Position of story \* Geographical context of story Crosstabulation**

			Geographical context of story						Total
			North	south south	south east	south west	foreign countries	not indicated	
Position of story	lead story	Count	3	0	1	3	1	0	8
		% within Geographical context of story	.5%	.0%	2.6%	.4%	.1%	.0%	.3%
		Adjusted Residual	.9	-.5	2.4	.3	-1.1	-.9	
other front page		Count	10	0	3	11	9	2	35
		% within Geographical context of story	1.8%	.0%	7.7%	1.5%	1.3%	.9%	1.5%
		Adjusted Residual	.7	-1.1	3.2	-.1	-.5	-.8	
back page		Count	6	1	0	2	8	2	19
		% within Geographical context of story	1.1%	1.3%	.0%	.3%	1.1%	.9%	.8%
		Adjusted Residual	.8	.5	-.6	-2.0	1.2	.2	
inside page		Count	543	77	35	740	689	220	2304
		% within Geographical context of story	96.3%	98.7%	89.7%	97.9%	97.5%	98.2%	97.3%
		Adjusted Residual	2.5	.8	-2.9	1.2	.3	.9	
center spread		Count	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
		% within Geographical context of story	.4%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.1%
		Adjusted Residual	-1.7	-.3	-.2	-1.0	-.9	-.5	
Total		Count	564	78	39	756	707	224	2368
		% within Geographical context of story	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

A cursory look at table 1.4 shows that lead stories about the north were only very slightly above what would be expected. This implies that the north, including other regions, was not prominently covered through lead stories, other front page stories, centre spread and back page stories. This argument is based on the adjusted residuals found for the north in relation to the position of health stories. The adjusted residuals found for the north in relation to the position of health stories were: lead stories (.9), other front page stories (.7), back page (.8), inside page (2.5) and centre spread (-1.7). Except the inside page stories, these adjusted residuals indicate that the coverage of the north vis-à-vis general health issues in Nigeria was insignificant. Furthermore, if the coverage of health issues about northern Nigeria (where health problems are mostly prevalent) is generally compared to south-western Nigeria and foreign countries, it is shown that south west and foreign countries were more reported than the north. An illustration of this is depicted below (Table 1.5 and Figure 1.2). This finding is further supported by the adjusted residuals found for the newspapers studied and the regions covered in this thesis (Table 1.5). Except in the *Daily Trust Newspaper*, which is located in the north and mostly reported health issues about northern Nigeria than other regions covered, the adjusted residuals found for both south-western Nigeria and foreign countries generally indicate more strength than those that were found for the north (Table 1.5).

Table 1.5. The geographical context of health reporting in Nigerian national newspapers from 2010-2013

**Geographical context of story \* Newspaper Crosstabulation**

			Newspaper				Total
			Daily Trust	Nigerian Tribune	The Guardian	The Punch	
Geographical context of story	North	Count	188	150	123	103	564
		% within Geographical context of story	33.3%	26.6%	21.8%	18.3%	100.0%
		Adjusted Residual	8.7	-1.3	.6	-7.0	
south south	south south	Count	13	24	17	24	78
		% within Geographical context of story	16.7%	30.8%	21.8%	30.8%	100.0%
		Adjusted Residual	-.8	.4	.2	.1	
south east	south east	Count	6	7	15	11	39
		% within Geographical context of story	15.4%	17.9%	38.5%	28.2%	100.0%
		Adjusted Residual	-.8	-1.5	2.7	-.3	
south west	south west	Count	32	361	153	210	756
		% within Geographical context of story	4.2%	47.8%	20.2%	27.8%	100.0%
		Adjusted Residual	-13.4	14.1	-.5	-1.6	
foreign countries	foreign countries	Count	170	102	149	286	707
		% within Geographical context of story	24.0%	14.4%	21.1%	40.5%	100.0%
		Adjusted Residual	2.9	-10.0	.1	7.2	
not indicated	not indicated	Count	74	35	38	77	224
		% within Geographical context of story	33.0%	15.6%	17.0%	34.4%	100.0%
		Adjusted Residual	4.9	-4.5	-1.5	1.5	
Total	Total	Count	483	679	495	711	2368
		% within Geographical context of story	20.4%	28.7%	20.9%	30.0%	100.0%

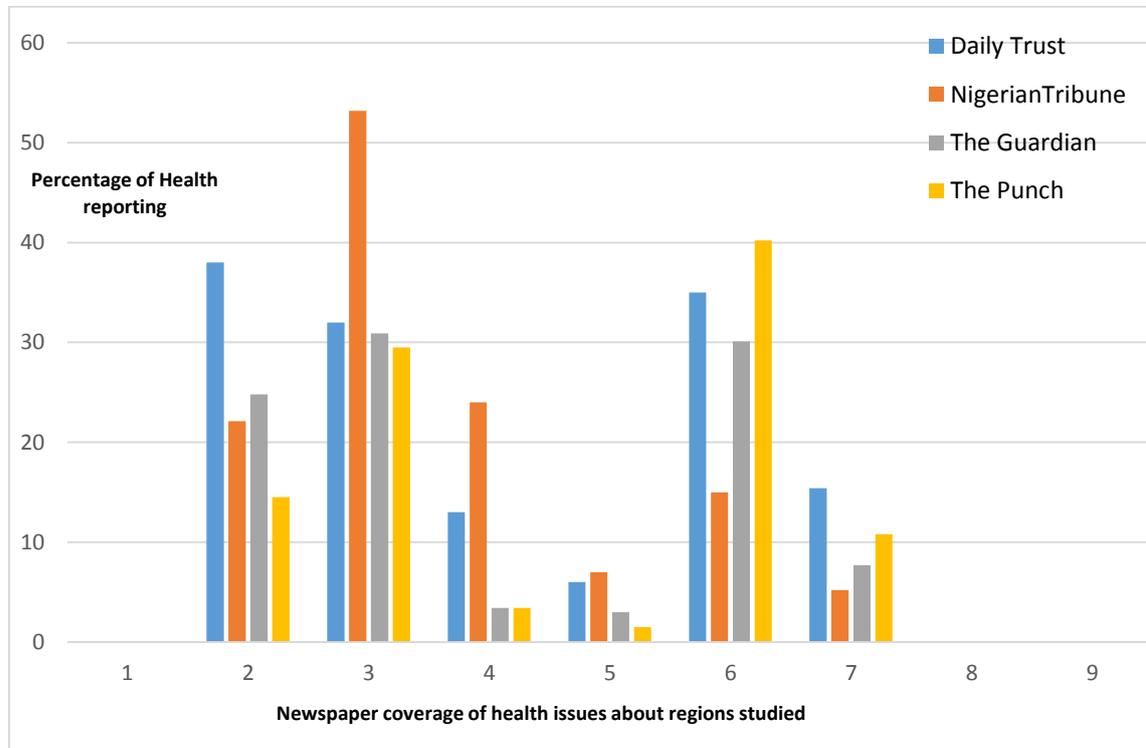


Figure 1.2. The geographical context of health reporting in Nigerian national newspapers from 2010-2013

As reflected in table 1.5 and figure 1.2, Nigerian newspapers mostly covered the southwest more than other regions in the country, except the *Daily Trust*, which gave more attention to the north in its health coverage. This may be related to the fact that the *Daily Trust* is located in Abuja, the north central geopolitical zone of the country, while the other newspapers studied are located in the southwest. This finding may suggest that Nigerian newspapers are influenced in their health coverage by the environment within which they are located. But given the prevalence of health problems in the north, and the need to complement the ongoing efforts to ameliorate the health condition of the region, it could be argued that Nigerian newspapers should have given more attention to the north than south west and foreign countries in the coverage of health issues in general. Similarly, this study further found that Nigerian newspapers used more photographs in health stories related to south west and foreign countries than the north (Table 1.6).

Table 1.6. The use of photographs in the coverage of health issues in Nigerian newspapers about northern Nigeria and other regions from 2010-2013.

**Geographical context of story \* Photo diversity Crosstabulation**

			Photo diversity			Total
			coloured with clear faces	black and white clear faces	no photograph used	
Geographical context of story	North	Count	81	26	457	564
		% within Geographical context of story	14.4%	4.6%	81.0%	100.0%
		Adjusted Residual	-2.1	-2.0	7.7	
	south south	Count	8	8	62	78
		% within Geographical context of story	10.3%	10.3%	79.5%	100.0%
		Adjusted Residual	-2.7	.2	2.3	
	south east	Count	5	4	30	39
		% within Geographical context of story	12.8%	10.3%	76.9%	100.0%
		Adjusted Residual	-1.5	.1	1.2	
	south west	Count	133	78	545	756
		% within Geographical context of story	17.6%	10.3%	72.1%	100.0%
		Adjusted Residual	-4.0	2.8	3.1	
foreign countries	Count	232	79	396	707	
	% within Geographical context of story	32.8%	11.2%	56.0%	100.0%	
	Adjusted Residual	7.7	3.7	-8.0		
not indicated	Count	78	32	114	224	
	% within Geographical context of story	34.8%	14.3%	50.9%	100.0%	
	Adjusted Residual	4.6	2.5	-5.7		
Total	Count	537	227	1604	2368	
	% within Geographical context of story	22.7%	9.6%	67.7%	100.0%	

Table 1.6 indicates that Nigerian newspapers published health stories with more photographs in relation to south west and foreign countries than northern Nigeria. Furthermore, the adjusted residuals found for south west and foreign countries in relation to coloured and black and white photographs indicate strong strength, while those found for the north show slightly more than would be expected by chance alone (Table 1.6). In actual fact, the health situation in the north should require more projection through photographs in Nigerian newspapers than other regions. In general, it is observed that the use of photographs in newspapers by journalists is to strategically give attention to some issues, events and places over and above others in their agenda setting function. Therefore, this finding suggests that Nigerian national newspapers have given less attention to the north through the use of photographs in spite of the prevalence of health problems in the region.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In general, this study has found that Nigerian newspapers have given a relatively significant attention to northern Nigeria in the coverage of malaria, HIV/AIDS and polio more than all other geographical areas covered. This is premised on the fact that these three health issues were frequently reported in relation to northern Nigeria by the four Nigerian national newspapers studied except in the south west, where newspapers reported malaria more than the north. More importantly, the overall frequency of reporting malaria, HIV/AIDS and polio in relation to the north was more than the frequency of reporting them in relation to south west, where Nigerian newspapers are mostly located, and other regions (south south, south east and foreign countries) covered in this study. In other words, it can be argued that within the context of all the geographical areas covered in this study, Nigerian national newspapers significantly reported HIV/AIDS, malaria and polio in relation to the north from 2010-2013 than other areas. This is contrary to the trend in the reportage of general health issues in all the geographical areas studied, whereby south western Nigerian and foreign countries were more reported than the north and other geographical regions by Nigerian newspapers.

Therefore, it may be suggested that perhaps, the prevalence of malaria, HIV/AIDS and polio in the north than other regions in Nigeria may have attracted the attention of Nigerian newspapers to have given more coverage to the north than other regions vis-à-vis these three diseases. This argument can be further supported by the fact that over 50% malaria cases occur in the north, where all the species of malaria parasites are predominantly found in Nigeria (Federal Ministry of Health, 2012). Furthermore, statistics show that Benue State, which is located in the north central geopolitical zone, has consistently recorded the highest prevalence rates of HIV/AIDS in the country and the entire north accounts for 49.5 percent of the total prevalence of HIV/AIDS in Nigeria (Federal Ministry of Health, 2012). The north has the highest prevalence rate of polio cases in the country with more than 95 percent of all polio cases occurring in the eight northern states, which consist of Borno, Jigawa, Kano, Katsina, Kebbi, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara (Renne, 2010; Tran, 2013).

Overall, it is essential to state that if Nigerian newspapers can consciously, consistently and strategically give prominent attention to HIV/AIDS, malaria and polio in Nigeria through their the lead stories and other important sections, it may go a long way in setting the agenda on these diseases in Nigeria thereby creating more awareness about them. Furthermore, the fact that newspapers are a strategic medium of mass communication to draw the attention of national governments to pressing issues of national interest (American Public Health Association, 2000) is also a considerable factor for this study to have focused attention on northern Nigeria despite the high illiteracy level in the region. Various government agencies, including ministry of health across the world, place important concern on media monitoring. This is demonstrated by designating specific officers to monitor media events and general media contents in both print and electronic media in order to integrate issues from media reports, public yearnings and aspirations into the policy formulation process (American Public Health Association, 2000). Therefore, the health condition of northern Nigeria, including HIV/AIDS, malaria and polio, can be improved through newspaper attention on the region in the coverage of health issues in Nigeria. In other words, if the north is given prominent attention in the coverage of general health issues by Nigerian newspapers, analysing the socio-economic implications of the prevalence of health issues in this region, the attention of the governments at all levels (federal, state and local) may be drawn more to the deplorable health condition of northern Nigeria. This may consequently facilitate formulation of more health policies and action plans than what the three tiers of government in Nigeria

are doing at the moment and this may facilitate an improvement of health situation in the north.

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The author posits that if Nigerian newspapers can give adequate attention to the north in their coverage of health issues, there is every possibility of improving the health status of the region. More importantly, the recent development of polio eradication in the north, and Nigeria at large, is such that requires consolidated efforts by all stakeholders including the media, with particular emphasis to newspaper. Nigerian newspapers need to create more awareness by prominently and strategically disseminating information about the deadly nature of malaria and HIV/AIDS, their social and economic consequences in order to make members of the Nigerian public improve their health preventive attitudes. The media also need to be part of the process of consolidating the success achieved in eradicating polio in northern Nigeria. This can be achieved through the agenda-setting function of the media, which may go a long way in influencing health policymakers in Nigeria to focus more and consistent attention on the northern region in order to reduce the prevalence of health issues. It is, however, important to recommend that there is need for more national newspapers to be located in the north. This is because this study has shown that Nigerian newspapers focus more attention on the geographical area within which they operate.

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## **HESITATION STRATEGIES ENGAGED BY FOREIGN LANGUAGE (FL) LEARNERS DURING AN INTERVIEW**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Hesitations are pauses with different lengths, which are not generally left unfilled. They occur when the speaker is at a loss for words or engages in cognitive or verbal planning. Hesitation strategies belong to the larger class of ‘disfluencies’ or ‘self-repairs’. The objectives of this article are, firstly, to identify the hesitation strategies used by FL (Foreign Language) learners when participating in an interview and, secondly, to identify the distribution of hesitation occurrences during a discourse. This study presents an investigation of hesitation strategies among fifteen international students from one of the public universities in Malaysia. Video and audio recording were used for all participants during the interview. Two standard interviews were prepared for each participant. The interviewer asked a few questions about two specific topics from each participant. Concentrating on hesitations, DF (Disfluency) and pauses, and idiosyncratic fillers, the interviews were transcribed and analysed qualitatively. The video recordings were also coded and analysed according to non-verbal/paralinguistic features, including different body gestures. The results indicated the disability to speak fluently was endemic among the FL students even though they possessed linguistic abilities. Consequently, they need to be taught to apply effective oral skills, including appropriate hesitation strategies, to improve their ability in fluent speech production.

**Keywords:** Hesitation, disfluency (DF), foreign language (FL) learner, second language (L2), idiosyncratic filler, paralinguistic feature

### **INTRODUCTION**

One of the challenges faced by many FL/L2 learners is to speak fluently and without hesitation in an interview. The negative results of the inability to speak confidently and fluently are obvious for people who have struggled with speech during their lives despite their positions. Examples of people who may face such problems are lecturers, managers, consultants, and even students who participate in class discussions, oral exams like IELTS (International English Language Testing System) speaking tests, interviews, or any type of presentation. The negative effects of not being able to communicate fluently are unavoidable not only in one’s personal life but also in their professional life, as well.

It is fact fluency offers speakers more opportunities in upper organizational levels than others with the same level of knowledge since individuals with the capability of fluent speech are able to communicate in a more efficient way. Thus, in order to achieve effective communication ability, fluent speech is a must. According to Crystal and Davy (1979), “one of the initial issues about learning a foreign language is to know how native speakers hesitate in it.” Levinson (1883) mentioned that communication is a kind of planning which is satisfied or accomplished by being recognized. Therefore, hesitation is

not a shortcoming but a characteristic of a language, either the second language or the first one known as the mother tongue (Crystal & Davy, 1979; Levinson, 1983).

Many studies have been done on fluency of foreign students' speech in English language learning. Komos (1999) reviewed psycho-linguistic studies on self-repair in a L2, while focusing on the relevance of it in L2 production. Poulisse and Van Hest (1997) revealed that content words are more often corrected than function ones. Hence, findings from these two studies emphasized that fluency is a very important issue in being effective in learning any L2.

According to observations, even though foreign students are mostly fluent enough in their routine daily speech, hesitations occur a lot when they take part in interviews. Moreover, learners' hesitation in an L2 is different from that of their L1. Some features of DF are not valuable in L2 studies because they are developmental errors of the inter-language more than being grammatical errors related to learner's performance (Selinker, 1972). Nonetheless, there are some other DF features to analyse such as fillers, silent pauses, hesitations, false starts, slips of the tongue, repetitions, repairs, and miss-selected lexical items. There is a dearth of studies on second language DF in the literature. Moreover, studies on DF types and outcomes are not globally widespread yet. Assisting to fill this gap, L2's DF types and the approaches of dealing with them are presented as a part of this study. A new grouping for DF and its significances are introduced and presented briefly. Although there are a few studies on DF and hesitation and gesture production (Finlayson, Forrest, Lickley & Beck, 2003; Griffin, 2001; Krauss et al., 2000; Eklund & Shriberg, 1998; Lickley & Bard 1996), very few of them have dealt with types of DF and gesture in L2 both linguistically and paralinguistically. This lack of attachment of linguistic and paralinguistic features are covered in this research. Previous L2 studies on behavioural speech production and hesitation's internal structures have not been done specifically in interview situations. One of the most challenging problems in speech production and communication theories is the number of hesitation strategies used by students in an interview. In addition, how these strategies are distributed during discourse must be investigated. Furthermore, paralinguistic features like gestures and idiosyncratic fillers must be scrutinized in detail. Previous studies have not focused on these three mentioned issues during interviews (Bard, Lickley, & Aylett, 2001).

According to an exploration for deficits in the literature, this study aims to identify hesitation strategies used by FL students when participating in interviews, to determine the distribution of these hesitations' occurrences, and to identify paralinguistic and idiosyncratic features employed by participants during interviews. Currently, there are a huge number of FL students in Malaysia who do not perform well in interviews because of not using appropriate hesitation strategies. This makes them unable to express themselves clearly. Furthermore, the number of FL students in Malaysian universities has been increasing dramatically over the last five years. This study will help L2 researchers to develop modules and prepare effective textbooks on preparation for interviews. In addition, the findings of this study may be used to develop methods in order to assist FL learners to overcome anxiety and DF in interviews.

A communication theory is a general theory for the natural biologically-based features of communication as well as symbolic structured and learned features. Moreover, this general theory includes a feedback process (explanations of message production alone or message reception alone). Communication theory is a consequence of two criteria. It should be justified for the co-evolution of symbolic and non-symbolic feedback processes and their incorporation into communication systems. Whereas the clarification of this general theory is beyond this study, the theory of developmental interactionist Buck (1984) aims to offer an integrated view. The premise of the present study is based

on how developmental interactionist theory deals with the relationship between verbal and nonverbal communication.

### Verbal Communication

Communication is the foundation of human interactions. Verbal communication refers to interactions during the execution of the work. Verbal communication should be qualified by the following characteristics: clarity, audibility, flexibility, control, and fluency. The research of Krauss (2000) is one of the prior studies among all studies, which have been done on verbal communication. According to Krauss (yr), all communication systems operate similarly, without relation to complexity or simplicity. The principle suggests that, signals may transfer messages from the source to the destination without any verbal feature. In fact, verbal communication is only 35% of features of speech. The remaining 65% of nonverbal communication/body language includes facial expression, tone of voice, movement, appearance, eye contact, gestures, and postures. Figure.1 shows that the greater part of communication includes nonverbal features of speech.

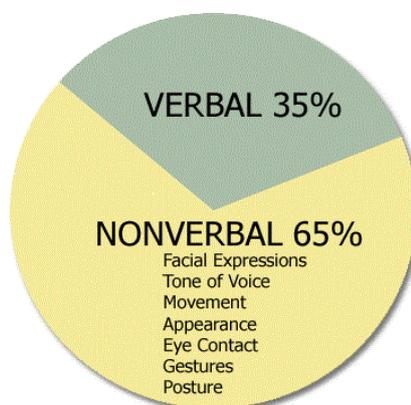


Figure 1. Distribution of verbal via non-verbal features of speech

### Non-Verbal Communication

Two early studies by Mehrabian and Ferris (1967) were conducted to recognize the relative effects of spoken words and facial expressions. In the first study, participants listened to nine recorded words, three conveying liking (thanks, dear, and honey), three conveying neutrality (oh, really, and maybe) and three conveying disliking (terrible, brute, and don't). Each word was spoken with dissimilar tonality, and subjects were requested to guess what was behind the emotion of the words. Findings from this study revealed that a word carried less meaning than its tone. In the second study, participants were requested to listen to an audio recording of a woman saying the single word 'maybe' in three different tones of voice to express neutrality, liking, and disliking. The participants were then shown pictures of women's faces with the three emotions and asked to match the related picture to the audio-recorded voice. Results revealed that the pictures carried more effective meaning than the voice by ratio of 3:2. Findings from these studies revealed the importance of non-verbal communication in discourse analysis and speech production.

Mehrabian (1971) found that non-verbal aspects of a speech production is a major part of communication, especially when mixed messages are sent. Later studies have revealed that the percentage of validity for this hypothesis differs in various situations. For example, tones and words are more important in communication where the speaker

does not move during the speech production. Many aspects of non-verbal communication were found to be used as paralinguistic/non-verbal features of hesitation in the current research (Figure.2).

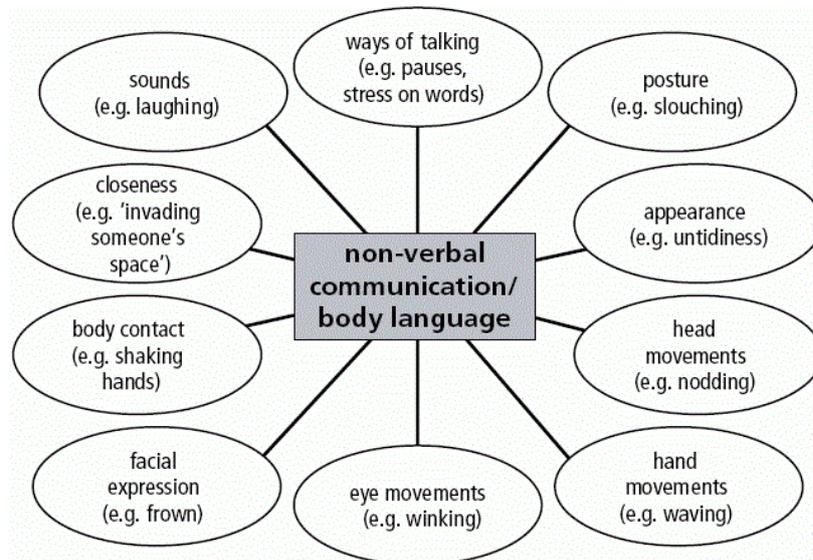


Figure 2. Paralinguistic/ Non-verbal features of Hesitation

### Fluency of FL Learners

Natural speech includes hesitations, pauses, truncated words, prolonged sounds, repetitions, repairs, etc. According to Bortfeld, Heather & Silvia, Leon & Jonathan, Bloom & Michael, Schober & Susan and Brennan (2001), three factors are the most important issues of speech fluency in the L2 learning environment: familiarity with the interlocutor, speaking with a native English interlocutor, and the nature of a conversations' topic. These factors have a direct relation with speech production and fluency stages. These stages are: conceptualizing, generation of phonology and morphology, accessing of words, processing syntax, and articulation (Levelt, 1989; Levelt, 1999). The effect of their argument was fundamentally strong as their speech production theory has been contributed to by Roelofs (1992, 1993, 1996) for language connected issues.

### DF Strategies

Reports of DFs occurring after a subcortical stroke are not new to the literature. Many studies have been done on DF patterns and strategies associated with such medical cases, such as Carlier, Marie, Defer, Coskin, and Rossa (2000), Ciabarra et al. (2000), and Ludlow, Rosenberg, Salazar, Grafman, and Smutok (1987). Ciabarra et al. (2000) surveyed DF patterns for three patients. Two of them had lesions to the basal ganglia. These two patients exhibited initial consonant prolongations and repeating of initial syllables during natural speech. The study found that the output included disruption of (a) intra-hemispheric connections due to basal ganglia lesions, (b) timing of speech motor control after a subcortical stroke. In summary, multiple mechanisms were expected to be in play resulting from the complex lesion variety occurring in subcortical structures. The same patterns have been observed in individual cases with lesions to the basal ganglia (Carlier et al., 2000; Kono et al., 1998; Ludlow et al., 1987) and other subcortical structures like the thalamus (Andy & Bhatnagar, 1992; Heuer & Sataloff, 1996).

Alm (2004) views that there are neuro-anatomical explanations for the experiential DF patterns. Although the general trend of these patterns was declining in patients who had stroke, there was persistence of DF rates over different time periods (1, 6, or 12 months). Meanwhile, considerable in-group variability was observed across each time period. Consequently, in-group variability was considered during analysing the observed outcomes (Nespoulous, 2000). The experiential changes (increases or decreases) were potentially artefacts of health status behavioural changes (depression or unrecognized second strokes) that remained unknown to the authors. The next studies narrowed down the DF area to hesitation and its strategies.

### **DF and Hesitation**

As mentioned before, hesitation strategies belong to the larger class of DF. Gestures, as one of the major paralinguistic features of hesitation, are stimulating phenomena associated with both DF and speech production, which are supporting elements during speech. For instance, gestures possess descriptive power on both DF and speech production. Krauss (2000) exposed the relation of DF as one of the aspects of speech production and gesture production as a major non-verbal hesitation feature. Krauss (2000) also recommended a gesture production model parallel with models of word production Levelt, 1999). This model was assembled for lexical gestures that have semantic relations to discourse and are categorized as meaningful gestures.

Another feature of the relation between DF and hesitation strategies is using some words as fillers. Fillers as one of the self-repair parts of hesitation strategies always deserve the specific focus of conversation analysts who have not considered them as self-repair cases without specific analysis of them. In this regard, Fox, Hayashi, and Jaspersen (1996) found that fillers belong to a similar category as other self-repair cases and analysed them separately. Despite these struggles, this identification did not play any role in the self-repair typology of Fox, Barbara, and Jaspersen (1995) in which fillers were totally ignored. These fillers mostly function to gain time in order to avoid losing the field when searching for a structure, word, or organizing for the rest of the speech. These words are referred to with the term 'idiosyncratic fillers' in this research so that they are specifically different for all individuals.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study presents an investigation of hesitation strategies among international students of Universiti Putra Malaysia. A mixed methods design was used employed. The objectives were to (1) identify the hesitation strategies used by students when participating in an interview, (2) identify the distribution of hesitation occurrences during an interview, (3) examine the non-verbal/paralinguistic features employed during an interview and (4) recognize the idiosyncratic features used by each participant in an interview. The participants were fifteen international students aged 23-31 years old. All of them achieved average IELTS scores of six and English was the second language in their country. Two standard interviews for each participant were prepared. The focus of asking interview questions was not on the quality of answers but on a few minutes L2 speaking of each sample to enable the researcher to pull out all verbal and non-verbal communication features. The audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed and analysed with concentration on the hesitations, DF and pauses, and idiosyncratic fillers. In addition, video recordings of the interviews were also coded and analysed qualitatively according to specific non-verbal/paralinguistic features in the current study, such as ways of talking, posture, head movements, hand movements, eye movements, facial

expressions, body/eye contact, and speech sounds. Then the results were interpreted through descriptions, explorations, and observations. The results included some numerical data for verbal and nonverbal communication features which were presented descriptively but analysed qualitatively. For qualitative analysis of hesitation strategies used by participants and distribution of these strategies during the discourse, the researcher interviewed the participants again after transcribing the interviews to get their reasons and analyse them in order to obtain logical and effective results.

### **Findings and Results**

Findings of the study are described according to the objectives and research questions, which are as follows: identifying the hesitation strategies used by students when participating in an interview, detecting the distribution of hesitation occurrences during an interview, examining the paralinguistic features employed during an interview, and recognizing the idiosyncratic features used by each participant in an interview.

### **Hesitation Strategies Used by International Students during an Interview**

Speakers use different fillers to fill the hesitation pauses, like non-lexical fillers (the stretching or lengthening sounds), quasi-lexical fillers (uhm, Uh), repetitions of one or several lexical items and lexical fillers (you know, Well...), and other discourse features. Findings of this study show four major types of hesitation strategies used by L2 learners, which are non-lexical fillers, quasi-lexical word, repeating one or several lexical items and lexical fillers/ idiosyncratic words.

#### **Non-lexical fillers**

Long and short pauses are the most common sub-branches of non-lexical fillers used as hesitation strategies. In this study, short pauses were shown with / and long pauses were shown with //.

Interviewer: In what way?

Sample 9: // they can, for example, they can avoid the stress in their life // they can be happy // and anything else.

#### **Quasi-lexical words**

Usual quasi-lexical fillers in English are *er, um, erm, hm, mm, hh-aaaah, h-nmm, unkay, hn-hn, ummum, uuh, nyeah, and um-hm-hm-uh*.

Interviewer: Do you think having a hobby is good for people's social life?

Sample 1: Having hobby // *Eee* Yes // of course. *I think* when people get tired of daily *Eee* chores.

#### **Repeating one or several lexical items**

One type of hesitation during an oral task is repeating one or several lexical items in order to escape from being silent. This strategy was also used by participants of this study during interviews.

Interviewer: Are there any negative effects of a person spending too much time on their hobby?

Sample 1: I think it may distract them from their *Aaa* // *their* jobs, what *ee what* they have to do, *Aaa* by job I don t mean what they do for earning money. I mean whatever they need to do during the day, *Aaa* too much hobby *Aaa* let me *Aaa* give an example, like *like* gambling.

### **Lexical fillers/idiosyncratic words**

Lexical fillers are typically idiosyncratic words. Idiosyncratic words refer to a particular lexical filler used by individuals in order to fill hesitation gaps like pauses or other gaps in speech. Results from the interviews showed that these words are individually specific, differing person by person.

Interviewer: Why do you think the internet is being used more and more for communication?

Sample 15: Good question, it's very interesting <laughing>you know because at the same time you can communicate with several people and Mmm you can be at home, at your room and take rest and just communicate with them, no need to go out yea you know you no need to go out and where you can see them and communicate with them. // and it's easier to communicate with others.

### **Distribution of Hesitation Occurrences during an Interview**

Hesitation occurs at various places in the interview: initial, medial, and end of the utterance. In this regard, the participants of this study were divided into three groups, as follows:

#### **Hesitation occurs in initial utterances during an interview**

Hesitations of this group occurred usually in the first or second sentences of each interviewee response rather than the middle or last ones. According to observations, participants of this group used hesitation strategies mostly in the starting sentences of their responses to think about the question while they were speaking. Thus, after uttering a few sentences with hesitation, they became more comfortable and fluent in the rest of their speech.

Interviewer: What effects has the internet on the way people generally communicate with each other?

Sample 11: I think / communication through the internet, I don't like it totally, Aaa in some way it actually is socializing the people, Eee/ I think through the internet when you communicate with anyone you don't see them and they can say any answers that they want and you cannot judge whether the answer is correct totally or not correct, because mainly you can decide whether that was correct or incorrect that for the bad language from the way you give them and it's important for me.

Interviewer: What effects has the internet on the way people generally communicate with each other?

Sample 14: Well // Aaa when / when they use internet, they can talk about all the topic, they can express themselves, their feeling as it is so they won't be as intimate as people used to be before, that's all.

#### **Hesitation occurs in medial utterances during an interview**

Participants of this group hesitated in the middle sentences, which form the body of the response. Findings from this group's responses illustrated that they were not confident enough to speak English in an interview or had serious language problems.

Interviewer: What effects has the internet on the way people generally communicate with each other?

Sample 8: What effects it will has // well *Eee* // some people spending too much time on internet, will be / you know it will, the effects on their study and their work. This is the negative effect, but also it has a positive effect. Nowadays internet is also // I mean *Eee* so usual // you know for the social life, you can communicate in *Eee* Email / through Email.

Interviewer: Are there any negative effects of a person spending too much time on their hobby? What are there?

Sample 9: Aaa, maybe Yea, Maybe effect on // their *Eee* for example education //, something the study like us <laughing>

**Hesitation occurs in ending utterances during an interview**

Participants of third group, which were more fluent in the starting sentences, showed enough knowledge in their responses. They were more confident in continuing their speech than the participants of other groups. However, they hesitated in the last sentences of their speech to think more about what else they wanted to add to their speech or to overcome their lack of knowledge about the topic.

Interviewer: Do you think having a hobby is good for people’s social life? In what way?

Sample 1: Yes of course. I think when people get tired of daily chores, they spend the whole day working, they are out dealing with different people, with different issues, if they have a have a hobby, either for *Mmm* // you know, daily or for the weekend, it may have people’s social life, when *when* they have gathered together, it may *Eee* you know, it changes their mode.

Interviewer: ...for example about the news?

Sample 13: About the news Yes, maybe for famous companies like BBC, CNN something like that, you can depend on the news, / but for other // sites or other // *Eee* news you cannot.

**The Non-Verbal/Paralinguistic Features Employed during Interviews**

Table.1 shows the paralinguistic features employed by samples of this study. As can be seen, most of the paralinguistic/nonverbal features were used by most of the participants during an interview. The popularity of using these features at the same time with verbal hesitations revealed the relevance of non-verbal/paralinguistic features with verbal/linguistics features of language production.

Table.1 Paralinguistic features used by samples during interviews

Sample	PARALINGUISTIC/NONVERBAL FEATURES
S1	Ways of talking <smiling><pauses> Eye movement <looking around><looking down><looking up> Facial expression<frown> Eye contact<looking at interviewer eyes> Sounds<laughing>

S2	Ways of talking <pauses> Hand movement<waving> Eye movement<winkling><looking around><looking up> Facial expression<frown> Eye contact<looking at interviewer eyes> Sounds<laughing>
S3	Ways of talking <smiling><pauses> Posture<slouching> Hand movement<waving> Eye movement<winkling><looking around> Facial expression<frown> Eye contact<looking at interviewer eyes>
S4	Ways of talking <stress on words><pauses> Head movement<nodding> Hand movement<waving> Eye movement<looking around>
S5	Ways of talking <smiling><stress on words><pauses> Posture<slouching> Head movement<nodding> Hand movement<waving> Eye movement<looking around> Eye contact<looking at interviewer eyes>
S6	Ways of talking <pauses> Posture<slouching> Eye movement <looking around><looking down><looking up> Body contact<shaking hands>
S7	Ways of talking <stress on words><pauses> Eye movement<looking around> Hand movement<waving> Eye contact<looking at interviewer eyes>
S8	Ways of talking <smiling><pauses> Posture<slouching> Hand movement<waving> Eye movement<looking around><looking down> Eye contact<looking at interviewer eyes>
S9	Ways of talking <smiling><pauses> Eye movement<looking around><looking up> Facial expression<frown> Eye contact<looking at interviewer eyes> Sounds<laughing>

S10	Ways of talking <smiling><stress on words><pauses> Head movement<nodding> Hand movement<waving> Eye movement<looking down> Eye contact<looking at interviewer eyes>
S11	Ways of talking <pauses> Hand movement<waving> Eye movement <looking at a point><looking down><looking up> Eye contact<looking at interviewer eyes>
S12	Ways of talking <smiling><pauses> Posture<slouching> Hand movement<waving> Eye movement<looking around> Eye contact<looking at interviewer eyes> Sounds<laughing>
S13	Ways of talking <smiling><pauses> Hand movement<waving> Eye movement<looking around><looking up> Facial expression<frown> Eye contact<looking at interviewer eyes>
S14	Ways of talking <smiling><pauses> Head movement<nodding> Hand movement<waving> Eye contact<looking at interviewer eyes> Sounds<laughing>
S15	Ways of talking <smiling><pauses> Head movement<nodding> Hand movement<waving> Eye movement<looking around> Eye contact<looking at interviewer eyes>

Figure.3 presents the frequency of non-verbal/paralinguistic features used by all interviewees (S1-S15) during their speech.

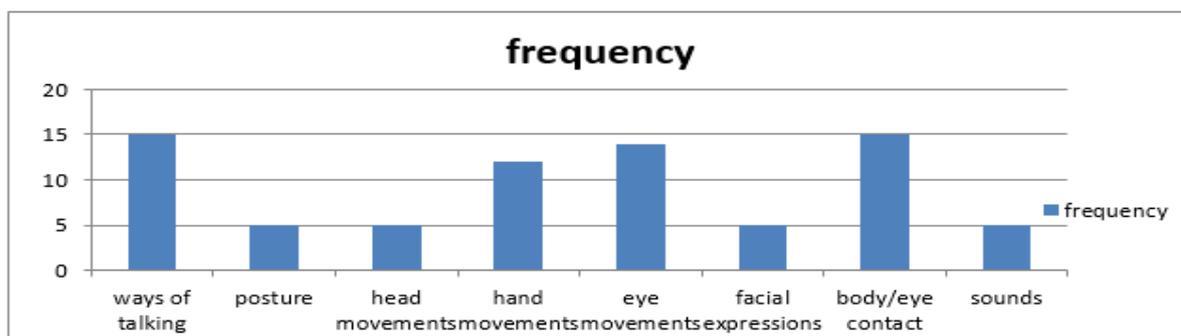


Figure.3: the frequency of non-verbal/paralinguistic features used by interviewees during their speech

As can be discerned from this figure, different ways of talking and body/eye contact were the most popular features of speech production among FL students in this context. Hand movements and eye movements ranged in the next level of popularity among them. Finally, different postures, head movement, facial expressions, and different speech sounds were the less used features in this context. Findings of this descriptive report help to recognize the range of popularity of non-verbal aspects of communication. This would enable researches to compare verbal and non-verbal aspects of communication in different contexts when hesitations occur.

#### **The Idiosyncratic Features Used by Each Participant in an Interview**

Idiosyncratic fillers were analysed as noticeable devices which give a conversation an individual, unique style or marked characteristic because they have dominance amongst all the other fillers. Idiosyncratic filler might be different for each individual. Findings of this study show that 13 out of 15 samples applied an idiosyncratic filler during their speech. Sample 6 and 12 were the exceptions who did not use any idiosyncratic word during their speech, which caused a weaker speech production than the other 13 samples who applied at least one of these fillers during the discourse (*you know, actually, of course, for example, I think, in my idea, definitely*).

### **DISCUSSION**

Previous studies based on theory of communication have not specifically examined hesitation of FLs in an interview nor focused on paralinguistic features as part of hesitation (Bard, Lickley, & Aylett, 2001). However, all of their findings, as well as findings of the present research, can be discussed by referring to communication theory, which is the fundamental theory for this research. As mentioned above in the introduction section, the communication theory includes a feedback process that an interview is a good example of it. Communication theory is a consequence of two criteria. It should be justified for the co-evolution of symbolic and non-symbolic feedback processes and their incorporation into communication systems. The theory of developmental interactionist Buck (1984, 1989, 1994) aims to encompass integrated verbal and non-verbal communication. Accordingly, this present research discusses how the theory of developmental interaction deals with the relationship between verbal and nonverbal communication. Ways of talking, posture, head/hand/eye movements, facial expression, body/eye contact, and sounds are good standing examples of nonverbal communication, while non-lexical fillers, quasi-lexical words, repeating one or several lexical items and lexical fillers are appropriate ones for verbal communication.

Four research questions were formulated to guide the direction of this investigation. The research questions were (1) which hesitation strategies are used by the subjects of the study? (2) How were hesitation occurrences distributed during an interview? (3) Which non-verbal/paralinguistic features are most common in an interview? and (4) What are the idiosyncratic features used by individuals during an interview? The findings for RQ1, this study revealed that all participants at least partially used all four major types of hesitation strategies—non-lexical fillers, quasi-lexical words, repeating one or several items, and lexical fillers. Based on the qualitative analysis of this study, it was found that participants engaged in all hesitation strategies to overcome their hesitation problems and improve their fluency in speech production. For RQ2, the findings found that hesitations occur at various places in an interview—initial, medial, and end of the utterance. Regarding the distribution of hesitation strategies during the discourse, the samples of this study were divided into three main groups. Hesitations of the first group occurred in the first or second sentences of each interviewee's speech. In their second interview, participants of this group tended to think about the question while they were speaking. Another hesitation strategy can rise from this intention. This strategy is using intentional/unintentional hesitation strategies to gain time for thinking, especially in the discourses which do not consider any extra time for thinking, like an interview or formal meeting. The second group hesitated in the middle sentences, which are the body of their responses. It can be concluded that, through their second interview, they were not confident enough to speak in an interview or they possessed serious language problems in their speech production. The third group, in which participants were more fluent in the starting sentences, showed they had enough knowledge to respond. Consequently, they were more confident to continue their speech. The participants of this group sometimes hesitated in the last sentences of their responses to think more about what else they wanted to add to their speech or to overcome their lack of knowledge about the topic. For RQ3, Figure.3 shows the frequency of non-verbal/paralinguistic features used by interviewees during their speech production in their first interview. As can be understood from this bar chart, different ways of talking and body/eye contact were the most popular features of speech production among FL students in this context. Hand movements and eye movements ranged in the next level of popularity among them. Finally, different postures, head movement, facial expressions, and different sounds were the less used features in this context. Findings of this quantitative analysis help to recognize the range of popularity of non-verbal aspects of communication. As a result, this would enable researchers to compare verbal and non-verbal aspects of communication in different contexts. For RQ4, all idiosyncratic fillers used by subjects of this study were reported. According to the results, the idiosyncratic fillers were used by a majority of participants during their speech, except for two of them. Lack of using idiosyncratic words by these two participants obviously affects the quality of their speech. It was clear in transcriptions that their performances were weaker than the other interviewees. This weakness can be observed also in their video recordings, evidently.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study has identified verbal and non-verbal hesitation strategies used by FL students during an interview, distribution of hesitations, and the paralinguistic features. Studies on hesitation have shown that the disability to speak fluently is endemic in FL students, although they possess linguistic ability. It is obvious from the findings that FL students need to be taught to apply effective oral skills, including appropriate hesitation strategies, to improve their discourses during their speech production. Moreover, results of this study

suggest L2/FL instructors to provide speech opportunities to FL learners widely. These opportunities include to create contexts for the students to communicate, ask question, or give them tasks that require both verbal and non-verbal signals.

### **Limitation of Study**

As can be observed, hesitation includes verbal features, nonverbal features, and linkage between verbal and nonverbal features. This study has focused only on verbal and nonverbal features, separately, although it speculated about potential linkages between the verbal and nonverbal features that could have been observed and analysed. The main interests of this study were to identify hesitation strategies used by students when participating in an interview, distribution of hesitation occurrences and paralinguistic features employed during the interview. This suggests that, in order to provide a full account of hesitation strategies and make a stronger claim about its relevance, research in this area needs to be improved by studies specifically concerned with the relationship between the verbal and nonverbal features of hesitation.

### **Future Research**

During the course of this study, several possible topics have emerged to be expanded in future research. Firstly, the possible linkages between verbal and nonverbal features of hesitation can be discussed during any discourse in order to enhance the qualitative outcomes of the current study. Secondly, the current samples could be changed to a larger group of ESL/EFL students. This would provide a wider coverage of oral skills that could not been shown by the subjects of this study. In addition, it would produce a broader view of the problems faced by international students who are using English as L2. Moreover, this study can be extended to design intervention programs for instructors to improve oral skills of ESL/EFL students in institutions and universities in Malaysia or in any other context, which would help them to enhance students' ability to choose the most appropriate hesitation strategies for any language and overcome their DF.

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## **IRANIAN HIGH SCHOOLS: OCCUPATIONAL VISIBILITY IN ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study uses Hartman and Judd's (1978) framework to investigate the occupational and stereotypical roles assigned to women and men in two volumes of English textbooks belonging to Iranian high schools. Although some decades have passed since the first investigation of sexism in textbooks, gender-bias still exists. The results of this study demonstrated that the manifestation of women and men regarding occupational roles in the textbooks was unfair. In other words, women were depicted in more stereotypical occupations than men and the men's occupations were more diverse than the women's.

**Key Words:** Gender, sexism, occupational visibility, occupational roles, stereotypical occupations

### **BACKGROUND**

The study of gender has been a controversial issue in language studies for about 50 years. Studies in different countries (Ansary and Babaii, 2003; Hartman & Judd, 1978; Porreca, 1984; Bahman and Rahimi, 2010; Mustapha, 2013) show that there is still sexism in EFL textbooks. Weiss (2001, p.45) states, 'even with widespread awareness of and attempts to redress gender biases, they continue - if only in more subtle forms.' Equality and fairness in education is not just equal access of education; the content of materials should also be taken into consideration (Mustapha, 2013). Sexism, or gender-bias, has been studied in different areas, including male-generics, titles, occupational roles, stereotypical occupations, unfair representation of female and male characters in reading passages, conversations, illustrations, and so on (Hartman & Judd, 1978; Porreca, 1984; Bahman & Rahimi, 2010).

Textbooks play a significant role in EFL education, and are one of the influential 'gender agents' (Brusokaitė & Verikaitė-Gaigalienė, 2015). It is in and through textbooks that learners get acquainted with the target language, culture, and the native speakers of the target language. Prodromou (1992, cited by Gray, 2000, p. 280) believes there '... is quite a strong association in learners' minds between learning a language about the people who speak that language.' Moreover, it is believed that 'textbooks relay to students a hidden curriculum that can reinforce or challenge their values and beliefs about gender identity' (Lee, 2014, p. 51).

Demir and Yavuz (2017, p. 104) believe that gender-biased materials have 'detrimental effects on learners' and Amini and Birjandi (2012, see Demir & Yavuz, 2017, p. 104) argue that discriminatory gender materials may lead female learners to limit their linguistic, social, and behavioural roles. Gender-biased course books may also lead female learners to experience 'feelings of exclusion, devaluation, alienation, and lower-expectations' (Gharbavi & Mousavi, 2012, p. 42, quoted by Demir & Yavuz, 2017, p. 104).

In 95% of countries that are exam-oriented, most of the class time is spent studying textbooks (Tao, 2008, see Wijetunga, 2017, p. 47). Therefore, if textbooks are sexist, the *value* that is inevitably transmitted to the learners is that ‘sexism is normal and natural’ (Wijetunga, 2017). Gender stereotyping is defined as ‘the tendency of a given culture to assign particular traits, characteristics, and roles distinctly to women or men.’ (Mkuchu, 2004, quoted by Demir & Yavuz, 2017, p. 111).

Women and men are depicted in various roles in any society. Thorne and Henley (1975, p. 20) state ‘every society uses sex, to one degree or another, in allocating tasks, activities, rights, and responsibilities.’ In EFL material, women and men are found in different occupational roles, and the area which discriminates between women and men is referred to as ‘occupational visibility.’ ‘Occupational visibility,’ according to Pauwels (1998, quoted by Farooq, 1999, p. 3), is ‘... nomenclature for men and women in relation to occupations, professions, offices, and related positions.’

According to Hartman and Judd (1978, p. 385) ‘... the most pervasive sexism... is the shunting of women and men into stereotypical roles’; that is, stereotypical roles assigned for women usually are ‘household work’, like cooking, baking, cleaning, polishing, mending, sewing, washing, and ‘child care.’

The literature representing women and men in EFL materials proves that females are not manifested fairly in textbooks, as Ansary and Babaii (cited by Otłowski, 2003) found that men were more visible than women in the textbooks they studied. Mukundan and Nimehchisalem (2008, cited by Jannati, 2015, p. 213) investigated English textbooks taught at secondary schools in Malaysia. Their results indicated absolute gender bias, in which males outnumbered females.

Esmaili and Amerian (2014, p. 286) studied Iranian high school English textbooks, finding that these textbooks ‘follow a cultural-based ideology in which no room for female visibility is tolerable’. Similar findings were obtained when Lee (2014) investigated English textbooks taught in Japan. Lee (2014) found that there was gender inequality and gender bias in the textbooks and women were under-represented. Pawelczyk et al. (2014, p. 52) also believed that there were ‘gendered patterns of occupational stereotyping in both type and range of jobs’.

Hellinger (1980, cited by Ansary & Babaii, 2003) found that in ELT textbooks taught in Germany, women were often found to have fewer occupational options, but men had more occupational roles. The occupational roles depicted are not fair, because men occupy mainly of high-status roles, while those of women are often low-status ones; that is, ‘... woman’s place is mainly, and primarily, in the roles of wife and mother’ (Thorne and Henley, 1975, p. 21). In a study carried out on ELT course books in Turkey, Demir and Yavuz (2017, p. 109) found that ‘the number of occupations assigned only to men’ were ‘more than double the occupations assigned only to woman’. It demonstrates that men are represented with a wider variety of occupations than women.

Although the job titles ‘pilot’, ‘surgeon’, and ‘doctor’ are gender-free, ‘... the covert social presumption is often that the incumbents are males...’ (Bauer et al., 2006, p. 160). Moreover, the high-status occupational roles like *lawyer*, *surgeon*, or *scientist* are often assigned to men, but low status occupational roles such as *secretary*, *nurse*, or *schoolteacher* are usually assigned to women (Hellinger & Bubmann, 2002, pp.10-11).

Farooq (1999, p. 17) claims that males are depicted as having occupations which are considered as ‘... responsible and respectable such as prime minister, employer, and editor...’; however, females are represented as having ‘limited and unstable occupations, such as part timer or such stereotypical jobs a stewardess’.

In the ESL textbooks Hartman and Judd (1978) investigated, the occupations ‘student, landlord, doctor, ambassador and his abide, professor of Spanish, store manager,

stock boy, real estate agent, policeman, ambulance driver, tow truck operator, flight controller, pilot, media anchor-man, army general, senator, priest, motel manager, and school principal' were assigned to males, but limited occupations such as 'student, bank employee, nurse, stewardess, salesgirl, and housewife' were assigned to women. This shows that men are presented in more occupational roles than women.

Sunderland (2006, p. 35) states that different job titles are used for both women and men, even if the work is the same. This is believed to be another form of sexism, because the terms which are used for males have positive connotations, but the ones which refer to females lack positive connotations. The list of these words are given below (Sunderland, 2006, p. 35):

<b>Male job titles</b>	<b>Female job titles</b>
Assistant manager	Manager's assistant
Technician	Operator
Office manager	Typing supervisor
Administrator	Clerk
Chef	Cook

Hellinger and Bubmann (2002, p. 11) believe that social gender causes people to have specific expectations about the social roles of females and males. In other words, different jobs are assigned to both females and males; otherwise, it will show a kind of 'overt formal markings', like 'female surgeon or male nurse'. People say *woman professor* or *woman surgeon* as if the norm is male and *male nurse* as if the norm is female. Porreca (1984) also argues that some writers add the words *female* or *woman* before a high-status occupation even if the sex of the person will be identified later in the text. This is shown in the example below:

'A T.V. host is interviewing a famous *woman author* who is eighty-five years old. He is asking *her* about the changes she has seen in *her* lifetime.' (Fingado, Freeman, Jerome, & Summers, 1881, p. 289, quoted by Porreca, 1984, p. 717).

Wareing (1999, p. 70) believes that the insertion of female or woman before the occupation is sexist because '... they imply that 'normal' (or, in the case of the medical profession, 'high status') people are men'.

Bauer et al. (2006, p. 163) state, '... the fact that many people feel the need to signal the gender of the doctor, editor or judge when she is female but not when he is male is yet another indicator of covert sexism and the 'male as norm' principle.'

Of course, evidence shows that women are more willing and supportive to gender-neutral language than men (Parks and Robertson, 2004).

Furthermore, Martyna (1978a, cited by Mackay, see Thorne et al., 1983, pp. 39-41) states that the occupational roles such as *doctor*, *lawyer* and *engineer* refer to males but *secretary* and *nurse* and *model* refer to females. Also, in the textbooks Porreca (1984, p. 719) investigated, 'Occupations for women are often restricted in the traditional service and entertainment jobs, such as waitress, nurse, secretary, and actress, occasionally including a token professional job such as teacher or doctor'. In his examination of the EFL textbook *Speakout: Elementary*, Musty (2015) found that although different occupations were assigned to both men and women, 'the only engineers and politicians were men, while the only nurses and cleaners were women' (p. 42).

Hall (2014, p. 260) argues that in previous studies of the secondary schools textbooks taught in Iran (*Right Path to English I and II*) the roles of *student* and *nurse* were assigned to women. However, in her study she found that three other occupations were given to women namely *driving instructor*, *librarian* and *farm worker*. In another similar study carried out by Ebadi and Shahbazian (2015) examining *Right Path to English* (taught in grade 3 in secondary schools) and *Basic 2* (taught in Iran Language Institute) more occupations were assigned to women than men.

Bauer et al. (2006) also claim that the use of occupational titles like surgeon, lawyer, and scientist as he, and the use of other titles such as nurses, secretaries and teachers as she is another gender bias in EFL materials. Mills (1995, p. 88) states 'Professors, scientists and engineers tend to be labelled as necessarily male, and nurses, librarians, secretaries and models as females'.

According to Amini and Birjandi (2012), women are associated with stereotypical occupational roles like mothers, whose job is to stay at home, bring up children, or do household chores.

Nilsen (1973, cited by Thorne & Henley, 1975, p. 21) investigated a dictionary and found that more jobs were assigned to men, and the occupations like aviatrix and stewardess behaved as 'the marked, or deviant category'. In a study carried out by Brusokaitė and Verikaitė-Gaigalienė (2015, p. 29), it was explored that even when there was a gender-neutral occupation, it was substituted by a male pronoun.

Another point worthy of attention is that when '-ess', '-ette', '-nne' or '-trix' are added to the words to make the occupations feminine, they are diminished and usually have derogatory and belittling connotations, like *sculptress* or *jockette* (Thorne and Henley, 1975; Mills, 1995). Similarly, the occupational titles which are not marked for the masculine sex, such as *sculptor*, *director*, *author*, etc become even more sexist when compared with their female counterparts: *sculptress*, *authoress*, *directress* as Hartman and Judd (1978, p. 388) believe '... the female version of the position only serves to underlie the assumption that a woman in one of these roles is a deviation from the norm'.

Mills (1995, p. 93) believes that 'the terms 'actress', 'authoress', 'hostess', 'stewardess', 'poetess', 'comedienne', 'aviatrix', and so on have this issue of lack of seriousness about them'. So, we should not make these occupations female by adding the above-mentioned affixes; rather, we should mention the words 'female' and 'male' before the occupations, like *male steward* or *female steward*.

In an early research done by Bem and Bem (1973, cited by Weatherall, 2002), job advertisements were claimed to use language to show traditional roles of females and males, and often discouraged the opposite sex-applicants to apply for the job. Bauer et al. (2006, p. 165) believe that lower-status occupations are assigned for women and, in fact, they reinforce gender stereotypes in EFL materials.

In a study of textbooks carried out by Farooq (1999), it was found that more occupations were attributed to men than women. Farooq (1999, p. 17) states, '... even after the Hartman and Judd's (1978) study twenty years ago, sexism in terms of occupational roles continues to flourish both in ESL and EFL materials'.

## METHOD

### Materials

Two EFL textbooks taught currently at Iranian high schools were used as the corpus for this study. The details of the textbooks are presented in table 1:

Table 1. Details of the Textbooks

Title	Publisher/Authors	Grade	Date of Publication	Number of Pages
Vision 1	Organization for Educational Research and Planning (OERP)/ Alavi Moghaddam et al.	10	2016	128
Vision 2	Organization for Educational Research and Planning (OERP)/ Alavi Moghaddam et al.	11	2017	112

The occupational roles of the males and females were identified in these textbooks. In some cases, it had not been mentioned whether the person having a certain kind of occupation was a female or male in the texts; however, the drawings or illustrations gave a clue that it was a female or male. So, with the help of the drawings and illustrations, it was decided whether it should be counted as a female or a male. For example, in the sentence ‘The doctor is listening to my father’s heartbeat.’ (Alavi Moghaddam et al. 2017, Vision 2, p. 55), the illustration shows a male doctor, so, this occupation has been considered as an occupation for males.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As discussed earlier, in EFL materials, males and females are represented in different occupational roles. In other words, stereotypically, women are represented in low-status occupations, such as ‘secretary’, ‘nurse’ (Mills, 1995, p. 88), or ‘schoolteacher’ (Hellinger & Bubmann, 2002, p.10), while men are shown in high-status occupations, such as ‘pilot’, ‘policeman’ (Hartman & Judd, 1978, p.387), or ‘doctor’ (Martyna, 1978a, cited by Mckay, see Thorne, et al., 1983, p.39).

As it can be observed in table 2, the frequency of the occupational roles of males is more than females in Vision 1. In other words, the total frequency of the occupational roles of males (11) is more than females (5).

Table 2. Males and Females Portrayed in Occupational Roles in Vision 1

Occupational Roles of Males and Females in Vision 1	
Male	Female
Zookeeper	Writer
Postman	Translator
Pilot	Thinker
Student	Student
Scientist	Driver
Researcher	N=5
Inventor	
Doctor	
Driver	
Travel agent	
Policeman	
N=11	

Males were found to have 11 different occupations, but females had only 5 different roles. Therefore, more occupations were attributed to men than women. Out of 11 occupations assigned to men, ‘scientist’, ‘doctor’, ‘policeman’ and ‘pilot’ were high-status stereotypical occupations attributed to men. Men were represented in two other high-status jobs namely ‘researcher’ and ‘inventor’.

As it is observed in table 2, the non-normative occupations of ‘thinker’, ‘writer’ and translator’ are assigned to women. At first glance, it seems encouraging to see women in non-normative jobs, however, these three occupations were attributed to only **one** woman (Tahereh Saffarzadeh) in **one** reading passage (Vision 1, p. 82).

In Vision 2, males were portrayed in 8 jobs but women were represented in 5 jobs. So, men occupied more jobs than women. Males were represented in high-status stereotypical occupations of ‘doctor’ and ‘policeman’ and women were represented in the low-status stereotypical occupations of ‘teacher’, ‘cook’ and ‘nurse’.

Table 3. Males and Females Portrayed in Occupational Roles in Vision 2

Occupational Roles of Males and Females in Vision 2	
Male	Female
Translator	Student
Student	Teacher
Teacher	Nurse
Doctor	Cook
Sportsperson	Craftswoman
Firefighter	N=5
Craftsman	
Policeman	
N=8	

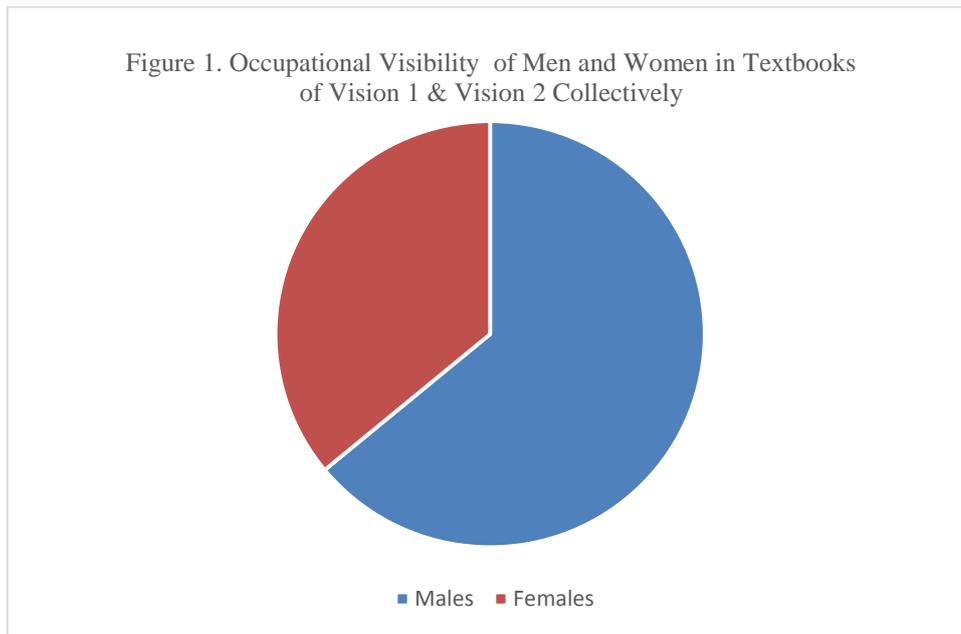
Assigning different stereotypical occupations to men and women in textbooks may convey this message to the learners that some occupations are appropriate for men and some suit women.

Analysis of the data showed that in the two volumes of English textbooks (Vision 1 and Vision 2) taught in grades 10 and 11 of Iranian high schools respectively, women were less visible than men in regards with occupational roles. As it can be observed in Table 4, males were represented in 16 occupations, whereas females were represented in 9 occupations in Vision 1 and Vision 2 collectively.

Table 4. Males and Females Portrayed in Occupational Roles in Vision 1 & 2 Collectively

Occupational Roles of Females and Males in Vision 1 & 2 Collectively	
Male	Female
Zookeeper	Writer
Postman	Translator
Pilot	Thinker
Student	Student
Scientist	Driver
Researcher	Teacher
Inventor	Nurse
Driver	Cook
Travel agent	Craftswoman
Policeman	N=9
Translator	
Teacher	
Doctor	
Sportsperson	
Firefighter	
Craftsman	
N=16	

Figure 1 shows the occupational visibility of males and females in Vision 1 and Vision 2 collectively.



Analysis of the data showed that although the occupation ‘fireman’ had been adapted in its gender-neutral form (‘firefighter’), there were still instances of occupations which used the suffixes –man and -woman, for example, the occupations ‘craftsman’ (Vision 2, p. 87, p. 91& p. 95), ‘craftswoman’ (Vision 2, p. 87,p. 91), ‘policeman’ (Vision 1, p. 117; Vision 2, p. 89) and ‘postman’ (Vision 1, p. 37) had been used in these textbooks. Instead of the suffixes –man and -woman, gender-inclusive terms of the occupations could be introduced.

Also, in Vision 2 (p. 65), there were three sentences which implied the occupation of ‘business person’ although this occupation was not explicitly mentioned in the textbook. These sentences are given below:

1. ‘He has started a business.’
2. ‘Samira has started a business.’
3. ‘Erfan and Ehsan have started a business.’

‘Starting a business’ has been assigned to three males :He (Sentence 1), Ehsan and Erfan (Sentence 3) but it has been assigned to one female only (Samira) in sentence 2 which is also gender-bias as males outnumber females.

In another sentence ‘Has Mr. Ahmadi produced that movie?’ (Vision 2, p, 65), the occupation ‘movie producer’ is implied although it is not explicitly mentioned. If these are also counted in the occupations representing men, the occupational visibility of males gets more than what mentioned earlier.

## CONCLUSION

Although sexism has been discussed for many decades and a lot of research has been conducted, it is still rampant and pervasive in textbooks. One of the most important issues regarding sexism is the representation of men and women in various occupational roles. This implicitly conveys discriminatory messages as well as certain beliefs and expectations about the social roles and norms of learners.

Nevertheless, sexism is not only restricted to textbooks; rather, it exists anywhere in society. Therefore, learners' awareness regarding it can enhance their understanding of gender issues, social roles, and social discriminations between the sexes in society. The findings may have implications that females would be stereotyped with the incorrect notion that their role is secondary.

This study was an attempt to investigate and analyse occupational roles and stereotypical occupations of women and men in English textbooks in Iranian schools. For this purpose, two English textbooks taught in grades 10 and 11 at Iranian high schools were investigated thoroughly.

The results revealed that stereotypical occupations are reinforced and there are occupational biases in these series of textbooks. That is, females and males were not equally visible regarding occupational roles. In other words, males were represented in more diverse occupational roles than women, and mostly high-status occupations were assigned to them; however, females were manifested in very limited, fixed, normative occupations, most of which were of traditional and stereotypical ones like nurse, cook and teacher. Therefore, more non-normative occupations need to be assigned to females.

The results of the present study have obvious importance for EFL educators to review their teaching materials for the gender-related attitudes they portray, and try to pay more attention to writing unbiased and gender-free EFL materials; for example, both females and males should be assigned non-discriminatory spheres of work. Also, gender-neutral or gender-inclusive terms can be introduced, including *police officer* instead of *policeman* and *policewoman* because 'students who have not been exposed to the concept of inclusive language are not prepared for the disparity between their textbooks and real life English' (Sudo, 2007, pp. 12-13).

Therefore, EFL teachers must be cognizant of the negative effects gender-biased materials might have on female language learners' attitudes and their self-esteem. This, in fact, may hinder their learning rather than facilitate. When the language learners experience discrimination and bias in textbooks, they will feel inferior and may acquire negative feelings and attitudes toward the target language they are learning. Therefore, gender equality and gender balance should be promoted.

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## **SOCIAL POSITIONING AND SOCIAL IDENTITY: DISCLOSURE DILEMMA OF ORGANISATIONAL MEMBERSHIP**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Organisational membership of workplace social positioning could provide individuals a sense of social identity and at the same time, give way to some form of disclosure dilemma. In such context, one may have dilemma sharing their views due to ethical reasons among organisation members. Such dilemma may affect the manner in which caregivers and teachers address the welfare of foster children in order to safeguard their social positioning to the organisation they serve. This paper applies Scager et al.'s (2017) dilemma analysis instrument to examine the effect of social positioning among teachers' and caregivers' disclosure dilemma. Semi-structured interview data among teachers and caregivers in Malaysia reveal that disclosure dilemma of teachers and caregivers were realised through the use of mitigation devices. To preserve their social identities, they positioned themselves positively in the organisation they serve.

Keywords: social positioning, social identity, disclosure dilemma, mitigation, foster care

### **INTRODUCTION**

Organisational membership refers to the group or categories people classify themselves into, which evidently give them 'a sense of social identity' (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Workplace social positioning through the action of safeguarding by members of an organisation could to some extent give way to disclosure dilemma. When organisation members such as employees have dilemma in disclosing issues at workplace, they might end up with dissatisfaction. Employees then could be cautious or aware of their social positioning when they are addressing negative issues about their organisation or workplace. In such social positioning, Jackall (1988, p. 56) claims it is necessary for employees to conceal any 'blunders' from their superiors in order to protect their organisation. In such situation, conformity or compliance may play a part in the way employees express or voice their claims. With this, employees may find it difficult to address or discuss any form of negative issues with the higher authority. Hence, how would they handle such situation?

To illustrate, a total of 85% of participants who attended the seminar organised by the Malaysian Child Resource Institute in 2013 complain that there is a lack of interaction between management and foster caregivers in foster care organisation (MCRI, 2013). The difficulty of interaction and cooperation between caregivers and child welfare agencies can negatively affect foster children and their educational services (Weinberg et al., 2009). Therefore, this paper examines the effect of social positioning among teachers' and caregivers' disclosure dilemma in addressing the needs of children in foster care. Teachers and caregivers' level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction at workplace, to a certain extent, is revealed when their disclosure dilemma is addressed. In this study, social positioning is confined to the roles of caregivers of a foster care organisation and teachers of a school.

### ***Social Positioning and Social Identity in Organisational Membership***

Within an organisational field, there are organisations and social groups such as one's professional or occupational groups (e.g. teachers). Organisational fields according to Bourdieu (1977) can be viewed as organised systems consisting of social positions. These systems of social positions are known as 'political arenas' (Brint & Karabel, 1991, p. 353) where the positions are held by superiors from top-bottom hierarchy in workplace organisations.

Social positioning refers to the 'standing of various kinds of relations' of an individual and others through communication; this could be traced through 'the use of rhetorical devices' (van Langenhove & Harre, 1994, p. 362). These relations, according to Davies and Harre (2001), contain power, knowledge and trust that mutually occur even in workplace. Moreover, the concept of positioning, to Davies and Harre, is often related to 'roles' and 'personhood'. Interestingly, from a language perspective, Davies and Harre claim that the notion of social positioning mainly develops from the analysis of conversation during social interaction processes.

Meyer and Rowan (1977) and DiMaggio and Powell (1983) suggest that individuals' behaviours are determined by their institutional environment as individuals and organisations tend to conform due to institutional political pressures from top-bottom organisation hierarchy. Hence, the social positioning of an individual representing an organisation in any form of discussions may be tied to institutional political arenas.

Based on a social identity standpoint from an institutional political arena for instance, a manager might reach out to balance loyalty and identification with subordinate organisation to secure a harmonious environment and cooperative relation. This could be done to promote "positive identity of an organisation" (Hogg & Terry, 2014).

This study adopts Tajfel's (1978, p. 63) definition of social identity, which relates to the 'part of self-concept' of an individual that derives from his/her knowledge of social group membership. Additionally, Hassard, Holliday and Willmott (2000, p. 9) point out that the 'awareness of one's self-identity' is a means and result of a person's emotion, cognitive and the way one attributes value. Therefore, in workplace, social identity could be related to the values and awareness one holds as a member to workplace organisation with an emotional evaluative positioning. With this in mind, loyalty, trust and integrity to an organisation are significant to members in order to positively preserve their social identity.

Nevertheless, while maintaining their social identity as trustworthy employees, they may conceal sharing any form of information related to their organisation. Concealment could be detrimental to employees' satisfaction as they may not be able to reveal the constraints and issues in managing foster children. In such an environment, organisational membership of workplace positioning could give way to certain extent of disclosure dilemma.

### ***Linguistic Cues in Disclosure Dilemma***

Disclosure dilemma often occurs in the context of therapeutic session (Caffi, 1999; Petronio et al., 2004; Flores-Ferran, 2010), school (Hogwood, Campbell & Butler, 2012), or workplace (Griffith & Hebl, 2002). To illustrate, in Hess' (2004) study, many teachers have dilemma disclosing their political belief in a classroom. They tend to ignore the controversial nature of a particular issue in the classroom in order to avoid being biased as it could negatively affect their school or local community. These concerns are widely spread in the United States noting how teachers have been dismissed from voicing their supportive or opposite views on current polarising events (Westheimer, 2006). The decision on whether to disclose one's personal political beliefs is termed as 'disclosure

dilemma' (Hess, 2005, p. 47). The notion of disclosure dilemma by Hess (2005) is referred in this study as it addresses teachers in school context; this notion applies to both teachers and caregivers.

Speakers often employ 'hedges', 'hesitation' or 'linguistic cues' (e.g. on the one hand) as strategies to express dilemmas or contradictions (Engeström & Sannino, 2011, p. 373). The use of hedges, mitigation and disclaimers are common strategies to attenuate criticisms (van Dijk, 1992, 2008; Tusting et al., 2002; Galasinska & Galasinska, 2003). The use of disclaimer also frequently serves as a strategy to resolve the 'dilemma' between contradictory views (Galasinska & Galasinska, 2003, p. 860).

Scager, Akkerman, Pilot, and Wubbels (2017) focus on analysing teachers' dilemma in nurturing challenging students from tertiary level. Their study reveals that while facing dilemma, speakers either hesitate or deliberate (Scager et al., 2017, p. 322-324) while communicating orally. With this finding, they developed *Dilemma Analysis Instrument*, which comprises four steps of dilemma analysis. In *Step 1 Indicating Dilemmas*, they have developed a list of linguistic cues which is used to identify hesitations, deliberations, problematisations, questions or solutions, and eliminations. *Step 2 Detecting the Choices and its Direction* helps identify options and directions in the choice of dilemmas that may differ from the speaker's choice. In *Step 3 Determining the Urgency Status*, there are three types of status: 'urgent', where the speaker is addressing present issue and is dissatisfied with the decision made; 'in deliberation', where the speaker is speaking of the future and is hesitant about the choice made; and 'decided', where the speaker is speaking of the past and is satisfied with the decision made. Finally, *Step 4 Uncovering the Considerations* identifies the consideration underlying the speaker's decision through their argumentation, reasons, elaborations, experiences and examples.

Disclosure dilemma could be potentially detrimental because it may affect the employees' satisfaction. However, studies concerning social positioning and social identity especially in disclosure dilemma among teachers and foster caregivers seem to be lacking. Moreover, only few studies have analysed the way teachers and caregivers verbally address the academic needs of foster children in Malaysia (e.g. Jariah Mohd. Jan & How, 2015; How & Jariah Mohd. Jan, 2016). Hence, there is a need to investigate the effect of social positioning among foster care organisation members at workplace in regards to any form of disclosure dilemma. In this paper, the effect of social positioning among teachers' and caregivers' disclosure dilemma in addressing the needs of foster children is examined.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Theoretical Framework*

This study adopts a dilemma analysis instrument as a tool for analysis that is based on the four steps developed by Scager et al. (2017):

Table 1. Scager et al.'s (2017) Dilemma Analysis Instrument

<b>STEP 1</b>	<b>STEP 2</b>	<b>STEP 3</b>	<b>STEP 4</b>
<b>Indicating Dilemmas</b>	<b>Detecting the choices and its direction</b>	<b>Determining the urgency status</b>	<b>Uncovering the considerations</b>
<p><b>1) Hesitations</b> Cues: 'maybe', 'I am not sure', 'I think'</p> <p><b>2) Deliberations</b> Cues: contrasting 'if I do this, it endangers that'; 'on the one hand...on the other hand', Talk of discussions with colleagues, 'but'</p> <p><b>3) Problematisation</b> Cues: 'difficult', 'challenging', labelling his / her own behaviour negatively</p> <p><b>4) Questions or Solutions</b> Cues: rhetorical questions, questions to the interviewer; 'maybe I could', 'I'm thinking of'</p> <p><b>5) Eliminations</b> Cues: 'I do not want to ...'</p>	<p><b>Choice A</b></p> <p>↓   ↑</p> <p>VERSUS</p> <p>↓   ↑</p> <p><b>Choice B/C/D</b></p>	<p><b>1) Urgent</b> Position uncertain Teacher chooses A, but is not happy with A, or with the alternative B.</p> <p>Cues: Speaking in the present</p> <p>Providing recent examples Speaking of emotions Repetitions and/or length of discussion.</p> <p><b>2) In deliberation</b> Position hesitant Teacher chooses A, but in the future considers B.</p> <p>Cues: Speaking in the future. Speaking of 'could' rather than 'should'</p> <p><b>3) Decided</b> Position certain Teacher chooses A, is satisfied with choice, and does not consider B (anymore).</p> <p>Cues: Speaking in terms of they, he, she, instead of I Speaking in the past. Theorizing, generalizing</p>	<p>Cues: Argumentation Reasons Elaborations Experiences Examples</p>

Based on Scager et al.'s (2017) framework, these four steps are used in the analysis of the data:

- *Step 1* would assist in identifying any form of dilemma from the types of linguistic cues employed by teachers and caregivers during interviews.
- *Step 2* helps in identifying the options and directions in the choice of dilemmas that may contradict with the teachers' and caregivers' choice.
- *Step 3* identifies whether the teachers and caregivers' status of dilemma is urgent, in deliberation or decided when addressing the needs of foster children.
- *Step 4* detects the consideration underlying the teachers' and caregivers' decision in making the choices between the given options.

### Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

The interview data were transcribed based on the adaptations of Jefferson Transcription Notation (1984, 2004). Verbal and written permissions were obtained from teachers and caregivers prior to the data collection. Semi-structured interview sessions were conducted with 27 teachers from a selected semi-urban school and 6 caregivers from a foster home in Klang Valley, Malaysia.

Content analysis was used to analyse the dilemma among teachers and caregivers through two levels: descriptive and interpretive. At the descriptive level, transcription of interview data was analysed using Scager et al.'s (2017) dilemma analysis instrument to identify the linguistic cues and emerging steps in dilemma. At the interpretive level, linguistic cues and steps were further related to the social positioning of caregivers and teachers as members of an organisation. To maintain the validity and reliability of the analysis at descriptive level in order to overcome subjectivity with the findings, linguistic cues and emerging steps of dilemma of caregivers and teachers were reviewed and verified by two coders with academic linguistics background. The patterns of coding of the two coders were compared with "similarities and differences" of the researchers (Hatch, 2002, p. 155). Using Cohen's (1960) kappa coefficient formula, the value of intercoder reliability was 0.93, which indicates a near perfect level of agreement between coders (Landis & Koch, 1977).

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Overall, the steps of dilemma analysis that emerged from the interview data are *Step 1 Indicating Dilemmas*, *Step 3 Determining the Urgency Status*, *Step 4 Uncovering the Considerations*, except *Step 2 Detecting the Choices and its Direction*. The realisation patterns of disclosure dilemmas are discussed in Excerpt 1, which is for the caregiver and Excerpt 2 for the teacher.

#### Disclosure Dilemma of Caregiver

Disclosure dilemma of the caregiver (G1) is depicted in Excerpt 1 where G1 uses various linguistics cues in addressing the lack of support from social welfare department.

#### Excerpt 1

- |      |   |                        |
|------|---|------------------------|
| [1]  | G1: For me <b>I wouldn't be able to really tell you too much</b> /        | ← Disclaimer           |
| [2]  | but <b>like</b> I said the monitoring will be one thing /                 | ← Hedge                |
| [3]  | definitely / and <b>like</b> a lot of things <b>like er</b> ICs and BCs / | ← Hedge & pause filler |
| [4]  | some children come in without that / we / for three four                  |                        |
| [5]  | years / <b>sometimes we to have go back and forth</b> / and               |                        |
| [6]  | <b>we still cannot get their BCs done / still can't get their</b>         |                        |
| [7]  | <b>ICs done / see / welfare can do something about it /</b>               |                        |
| [8]  | <b>but because they've got so many cases pack up as well</b> /            | ← Disclaimer           |
| [9]  | <b>I'm sure</b> / so it hasn't happened / there's one girl we had         | ← Assertive            |
| [10] | her since she was in this home / that a mean she was                      |                        |
| [11] | already primary student when she came in / she's eighteen                 |                        |

- [12] / **still cannot get her BC** / so we **can't get her IC** / so she's  
 [13] like an illegal immigrant in Malaysia / and **we've been**  
 [14] **fighting the case** / we've gone up to **court** even /  
 [15] **but it's gonna take** / **see** that's the thing / **see** /  
 [16] **the welfare you're** / **talking about** / **could step in to the**  
 [17] **things like this but I don't think they can also because**  
 [18] **they are pack up with a lot of work** /
- 

*Step 1 Indicating Dilemmas:* The caregiver's (G1) disclosure dilemma is realised through the use of linguistic cues such as pause filler, hedges, discourse marker, disclaimer and incomplete utterance to mitigate her utterances during interview session. As illustrated in Excerpt 1, G1 seems to be in hesitant to disclose social welfare's level of cooperation when she admits that she could not reveal much, which can be seen from the use of pause filler /er/ (line 3). This could be taken as a way to avoid any conflict in her profession. She attenuates her statement about social welfare agents not resolving the issues on foster children's identity cards and birth certificates by repetitively using hedge 'like' (lines 2 and 3). The use of hedge is also illustrated in line 16 when she utters 'the welfare you're talking about' to soften her utterance; in doing so, she is referring welfare perhaps to 'political arena' (Brint & Karabel, 1991, p. 353). Moreover, the use of discourse marker 'see' (lines 7 and 15) serves as a mean to seek solidarity from the interviewer to understand her position in which she needs support from social welfare.

G1 seems to be in deliberations before sharing her thoughts about the lack of support from social welfare, which can be seen in the use of disclaimers in lines 7 and 8. She cautiously defends and highlights the heavy workloads of the social welfare agency although she asserts that the agency should give them more support. Following her disclaimer, she asserts the heavy workload of the social welfare agents, as depicted in the utterance 'I'm sure' (line 9). G1's disclosure dilemma is reflected by masking her assertion about not getting support in order to show allegiance to the organisation in which she belongs. The utterance 'but I don't think they can also because they are pack up with a lot of work' (lines 17 and 18) serves as a shield to soften G1's criticism about the social welfare management system. Furthermore, the short break after the incomplete utterance 'but it's gonna take' (line 15) also constitutes a sense of dilemma. Perhaps, she felt the need to conform to the organisation by masking their condition.

G1 problematises the issue on the foster children's background documentation by indicating that 'we still cannot get their BCs (*birth certificate*) done' (line 6) and 'still can't get their ICs (*identity card*) done' (lines 6 and 7). The caregiver appears to suggest that the social welfare can do something about it (line 7) and expects the issue of foster children's birth certificates and identity cards to be resolved accordingly. The social welfare agents are responsible to deal with these cases because it is illegal for foster children to not have proper background documentation. However, apart from having to manage the foster children's academic performance and wellbeing, the caregiver and her colleagues are now taking over these cases given that social welfare agents are laden with other cases. In reference to the extra workload that they have to deal with, this information could be something that she cannot publically share. Therefore, she cautiously highlights this problem.

*Step 3 Determining the Urgency Status:* According to Scager et al. (2017), speakers are considered to be in deliberation when he or she is speaking of the future using modal verb such as ‘could’ instead of ‘should’. The caregiver in this excerpt appears to be in deliberation when she uses modal verb ‘could’ (line 16) to make reference to the future. At the same time, she is in dilemma to suggest the social welfare to give more support in helping to resolve the issue of foster children’s background documentation at hand.

*Step 4 Uncovering the Considerations:* G1 indicates that she and her colleagues have several visits to the court (lines 5 and 6). The multiple attempts to sort out the background documentation of the foster children are indeed a challenge as she is fighting for these children’s rights. Such experience shows the caregiver’s sense of concern and care for children without official background documentation. Simultaneously, her involvement in managing this issue creates an awareness of her social positioning as a member of a foster care organisation.

### Disclosure Dilemma of Teacher

The teachers too have their own set of dilemma although they occupy different positions from the caregivers. Disclosure dilemma of the teacher (T1) is depicted in Excerpt 2 where T1 uses various linguistics cues in providing suggestions about the school management.

#### Excerpt 2

[1]	T1: The first thing <b>I guess er::: we should just give them</b>	← Hedge & pause filler
[2]	<b>some diagnostics test right?</b> / to know that where	← Tag question
[3]	are they weak at /weak in / <b>maybe</b> in Maths or	← Hedge
[4]	English / but <b>I guess</b> is is most of the core subjects /	← Hedge
[5]	then from there / <b>these students should be given</b>	
[6]	<b>er::: tuitionlah / right? / maybe</b> extra books /	← Pause filler, tag question & hedge
[7]	<b>where::: time</b> is allocated for them <b>or::: they</b> do it at	← Lengthening of words
[8]	home and they give it to the teacher / doesn’t matter /	
[9]	<b>the tuition centres are making good money /</b>	
[10]	<b>because they they see something in return /</b>	
[11]	<b>you know / and er::: I hope</b> this can be applied to	← Discourse marker & pause filler
[12]	these students where the government has some	
[13]	allocation given and they can / <b>you know /</b> help them /	← Discourse marker
[14]	they are good students / <b>their discipline wise they</b>	
[15]	<b>are fine / just pushing up in their education level</b>	
[16]	<b>will make them a fine student /</b>	

*Step 1 Indicating Dilemmas:* In this excerpt, the teacher’s (T1) dilemma is realised through the use of hedges, prolongation of pause filler /er/, lengthening of words, tag questions and discourse marker. Hesitation on the teacher (T1) can be seen when she hedges with ‘I guess’ (lines 1 and 4) and ‘maybe’ (lines 3 and 6) to soften her suggestions

about the school management on these children's academic performance. The prolongation of pause filler /er/ (lines 1, 6 and 11) and lengthening of the words 'where' and 'or' (line 7) depict her dilemma to suggest improving academic performance of foster children through providing tuition and financial support from government. In other words, even though she wants to share her opinion to help these children, she is concerned to the extent in which she can share such view to the public.

Tag questions often end with *isn't it* (Hewings, 1995; Ramirez Verdugo, 2002). This study, however, is in line with Govindan and Pillai's (2009) finding where the teacher ends her tag question with the word *right*. Although T1 employs modal verb 'should' (lines 1 and 5) to mark the necessity of carrying out the suggested tasks, the use of tag questions 'we should give them some diagnostic test right?' (lines 1 and 2) and 'these students should be given er::: tuitionlah right?' (lines 5 and 6) as well as the discourse marker 'you know' (lines 11 and 13) decrease the force of her suggestion. At the same time, the use of tag questions and discourse marker serve to seek confirmation from the interviewer to gunner the issue or some kinds of support out of concern.

*Step 3 Determining the Urgency Status:* Similar to the caregiver, the teacher is also in deliberation when she uses the hedge 'I hope' (line 11) to address the future needs of foster children (Scager et al., 2017) where it is necessary for government to provide some financial allocation to send these children to tuition centres (line 13). Ultimately, her suggestion would promote these children to attain better academic performance. T1's suggestion also indicates her disclosure dilemma about needing support from the school authority as she lacks ability to effectuate the tasks she previously suggested.

*Step 4 Uncovering the Considerations:* The reason T1 put forward her suggestions is based on the feedback she received from students in general, as depicted in the utterance 'the tuition centres are making good money because they see something in return' (lines 9 and 10). Simultaneously, she elaborates on the need to focus more on these children's academic performance as they have good discipline (lines 14, 15 and 16). However, due to her 'role' and social positioning as a teacher (Davies & Harre, 2001, p. 43), she appears to be in dilemma because she needs to conform to school authority. At the same time, she is attempting to conform to "positive identity" of workplace (Hogg & Terry, 2014).

Table 2. Summary of dilemma analysis from Caregiver and Teacher

Excerpt 1 (Caregiver)			Excerpt 2 (Teacher)		
Step 1	Step 3	Step 4	Step 1	Step 3	Step 4
Indicating dilemmas	Determining the urgency status	Uncovering the considerations	Indicating dilemmas	Determining the urgency status	Uncovering the considerations
<b>1) Hesitations</b> Cues: pause filler /er/, hedges 'like', 'the welfare you're talking about', discourse marker 'see'	<b>1) In deliberation</b> The Need for Social Welfare Agency's Support	Cues: <b>Experiences</b> 'Sometimes we have to go back and forth'	<b>1) Hesitations</b> Cues: Hedges 'I guess', 'maybe', 'I hope', discourse marker 'you know', pause filler /er/, lengthening of words	<b>1) In deliberation</b> The need for diagnostic test, extra books and tuition classes  Cues: 'I hope this can be applied to these students where the	Cues: <b>Reason</b> 'the tuition centres are making good money because they see something in return'  <b>Elaboration</b> 'their discipline wise they are fine, just pushing up in their

sure', 'but I don't like this' think they can also because they are pack up with a lot of work', 'but it's gonna take'	2) <b>Questions</b> Cues: tag question 'we should give them some diagnostic test right?', 'these students should be given er:: tuitionlah right?'	government has some allocation given'	education level will make them a fine student'
3) <b>Problematisation</b> Cues: 'we still cannot get their BCs done', 'still cannot get their ICs done'			

In sum, three out of four steps of Scager et al.'s (2017) dilemma analysis were found in the data. Nevertheless, *Step 2 Detecting the Choices and its Direction* did not emerge in the findings as the teachers and caregivers did not compare between any choices (see Table 1) when addressing the foster children's needs. The types of linguistic cues from the teacher and caregiver's disclosure dilemma are presented in Table 2.

Aside from linguistic cues, the teacher and caregiver can be seen having dilemmas in disclosing about the lack of support from social welfare and school management in *Step 3*. Both of them were in deliberation to reveal the urgency of issues raised as they address the future needs of the foster children by uttering the modal verb 'could' (Excerpt 1, line 16) and 'I hope' (Excerpt 2, line 11). Although they have constraints in disclosing their predicaments due to their social positioning and social identity, the findings reveal that the teachers and caregivers do try their best to address the needs of children in foster care. This indicates their sense of concern and care towards these children.

## CONCLUSION

Findings of the study through the interview suggest that both teacher and caregiver seem to be cautious about their social positioning as organisation members through positive connotations. The teacher and caregiver have dilemma in disclosing the predicaments they encounter in managing the welfare of foster children. There were signs of awareness about their social positioning in workplace while attending to the interviewer. They appear not to reveal any weaknesses of the organisations (e.g. lack of support from the social welfare) as their 'behaviours' seem to be determined by their 'institutional environment'. This is to conform to their social positioning in the organisation that they belong (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). In doing so, they might achieve satisfaction not only with the self but also with the policy of organisation. Therefore, workplace ethics might be a priority which may have an effect on both teacher's and caregiver's responses. The caregivers need to show integrity to the organisation and preserve their own professional values of being a member of a welfare organisation that they serve. As educators, the teachers also have boundaries to publically express their views as it might be detrimental to their career. All these responses could be done through cautious measures taken.

The findings of this study to a certain extent provide an in-depth analysis of social positioning and social identity of the teachers and caregivers as members of organisation. Disclosure dilemmas constitute powerful opportunities to inform higher authorities of the predicaments of those serving foster children. Thus, the findings contribute highly to

several political arenas which could reach out to the welfare of foster home. Through disclosure dilemma of caregivers and teachers, valuable information regarding the welfare of foster children could be provided to Ministry of Education, Social Welfare Department and Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development. Therefore, this study may be beneficial in identifying the constraints and problems encountered by teachers and caregivers in order to address the needs of foster children. Further study can be conducted on the context of interview session and the role of interviewer as they might influence the way interviewee respond to questions posed.

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## APPENDIX

Table A1. Adaptation of Jefferson Transcription Conventions (1984, 2004)

Symbol	Name	Function
/	Slash	Breaks between utterances
[ text ]	Brackets	Indicates the start and end points of overlapping speech or interruptions during the interviews.
=	Equal Sign	Indicates the break and subsequent continuation of a single utterance. The next speaker begins instantly at the end of the current speaker's utterance. This usually occurs during turn taking or when one is defending his/her points.
?	Question Mark	Indicates rising pitch or intonation. This demonstrates the way one poses questions.
<u>underline</u>	Underlined text	Indicates the speaker is emphasising or stressing the speech.
:::	Colon(s)	Indicates prolongation of a sound.
(XXX)	Single parenthesis with triple X	Speech which is unclear or in doubt in the transcript.
(( <i>italic text</i> ))	Double parentheses	Annotation of non-verbal activity.

## **EVALUATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE AND INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION COMPETENCE AMONG POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS FROM DIFFERENT NATIONALITIES**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study was conducted to evaluate the relationship between interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication competence among postgraduate students from different countries with different cultural backgrounds. A mixed method research design which includes both the quantitative and qualitative methods was applied to carry out this study. This study had 125 participants from 17 different countries. All participants of this study were postgraduate students and were living in a multicultural university campus. The results from this study confirmed that the levels of interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication among individuals from different nationalities who live in a diverse environment have close relationship and significantly affect one another. Based on the results of the study, the good level of interpersonal communication competence encourages and enables individuals to be involved in interactions with their peers from different backgrounds and gain some new social and cultural information. According to the results of this study, interactions among individuals from different backgrounds help them to improve both of their interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication competence. The results from this study may add some new and interesting information in the literature.

**Keywords:** Intercultural interactions; Interpersonal communication competence; Intercultural communication competence; Multicultural university campus; International students.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Communication among individuals from different social and cultural backgrounds may help them to gain some new social skills and cultural information. The new perspectives in diverse educational and professional environments ask individuals to be prepared with some essential competence, skills and information to overcome the probable social and environmental challenges. According to Vevea (2011), White (1955) had defined competence as the main human force and inspiration to maestro the environment. Among other individuals who live in a new and diverse environment, international students who stay and study in modern multicultural collegiate environments are needier for the essential skills and information to survive and have better lives in the new environments. According to Kashima & Loh (2006), social ties among international students from different nationalities help them to be adjusted with the multicultural environments.

Sharing of personal and cultural information among international students and their relationships are beneficial for them (Huang, 2010).

As the field of intercultural communication came out from interpersonal communication, thus the progress of intercultural communication competence is connected to interpersonal communication competence (Vevea, 2011). In multicultural academic environments, both interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication competence help international students who have their different social, cultural and communicative norms to have successful interactions with their peers. Interpersonal communication is the fundamental aspect of communication among individuals that leads to the intergroup communication and intercultural communication perspectives. Moreover, interpersonal communication is the micro level for social connections and communication process (Kim, 2001; Kim, 2005), and interpersonal communication is the main and essential element of social life of an individual which leads to social contacts and relationships (Gao, 2011; Kim, 2001; Fogel, 1993). According to Vevea (2011), many scholars and researchers have introduced Hall (1959) as the father of the intercultural communication field.

According to Gudykunts (2002), intercultural communication refers to interactions between individuals who belong to dissimilar national cultures, and it has been limited into the direct and face-to-face setting of communication. As interpersonal communication and intercultural communication have connections, thus there might be some close relationships between interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication competence. The main attributes of interpersonal communication competence are the skills to interact, to listen, to understand, and to cooperate properly (Aidoo, 2012).

Moreover, the improvement of interpersonal communication competence among students increases their academic achievements (Mahoney, Cairns & Farmer, 2003). Kim (1991) defined intercultural communication competence as “the cognitive, affective, and operational adaptability of an individual’s internal system in all intercultural communication contexts.” Scholars and researchers have defined intercultural communication in different ways (Miller, 2005), and the ways that researchers define intercultural communication influence the study of intercultural communication competence (Arasaratnam and Doerfel, 2005). Intercultural communication is relatively and conceptually different from interpersonal communication in some ways, because of the existence of various and different culturally and sub-culturally fixed mechanisms of meaning, information, viewpoints, and values (Kim, 2010).

The previous works on communication among individuals from various social and cultural backgrounds have focused on either interpersonal communication competence or intercultural communication competence. Moreover, the previous works in interpersonal communication and intercultural communication among individuals from different backgrounds (e.g. Abdullah, 2008; Huang, 2010; Hu & Fan, 2011; Gao, 2011; Aidoo, 2012) were conducted in the western parts of the world and under the western communicative norms and settings. The works based on the western communicative norms and under the western environmental circumstances may not answer questions about interactions among individuals from different backgrounds in other parts of the world. Thus, this study aims to evaluate the relationship between interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication competence among postgraduate students from different nationalities in a public university.

## **THEORETICAL SUPPORT**

A theory cannot be a particular behaviour for communication, but it is a conceptual group of viewpoints that enable us to understand the communicative behaviours, and to make it simple, a theory directs us to know daily experiences in our lives (Miller, 2005). As asserted by Kim (2010), concentration in the fundamental parts and micro levels of differences among people across cultures and societies maintain the main domain of theories and studies of intercultural interactions, where as linking it with the notion of interpersonal interactions inside the communication disciplines and regulations. Kim's (1991) theoretical conceptualization of intercultural communication competence emphasizes on the active and interactive circumstances of communication between at least two communicators. Kim stated that intercultural interactions must be situated inside an individual as the overall capability and capacity of the individual facilitate the process of interaction between individuals who belong to various cultures and also to contribute to assisting communication outcomes (Kim, 1991).

Sarwari's (2017) the Contact and Cohesion Theory focuses on Contact Initiation, Negotiation, Cognition, and Cohesion as the four steps for conducting proper interactions among individuals from different backgrounds in Asian context of communication. The Contact and Cohesion Theory also introduces seven pre-conditions for conducting successful interactions among individuals from various backgrounds in Asian context of communication. The proposed preconditions are: Coherent Competence, Coherent Heart, Self-knowledge, Purposefulness, Respect Differences, Shared Interests, and Flexibility (Sarwari, 2017). The proposed steps and pre-conditions of the Contact and Cohesion Theory could guide an academic study on the assessment of interpersonal communication competence among individuals from different cultures in an Asian context of communication. These preconditions may help students from different cultures to conduct successful interactions and improve their personal and social skills through their interactions. According to Chickering and Reisser (1993), it is important for university students as members of a new and different community to develop the levels of their social connections in the university environment, as their lives in a multicultural campus require them to have interactions with their peers from different backgrounds. Thus, consideration of the differences helps them to improve their interpersonal communication competence. The above mentioned arguments and assertions of the cited theorists and scholars are supportive of the importance of interactions among university students.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In the process of interpersonal communication and intercultural communication among individuals from various backgrounds, some skills and competence may enable them to conduct successful and productive interactions. As pointed out by Reed (2008), individuals who want to have fruitful and successful communication with other people, must be prepared with some essential skills and abilities that enable them to overcome the diversified social and cultural issues, predictable anxieties, and intergroup attitudes. It has also pointed out that intercultural competence has useful impacts on the social and professional relationships among people. For the first time, the term of interpersonal competence was used by Foote & Cottrell (1955), and they used it for the psychological health (Vevea, 2011). According to Coffey, Kamhawi, Fishwick and Henderson (2013), in the ever-growing multicultural environments, educational organizations and markets, intercultural understanding and sensitivity are among the important requirements to improve human relationships. Besides the essential skills of intercultural communication, interpersonal communication competence as the basic element of interactions may also

help students to interact successfully. Paulak (2008) asserted that, interpersonal communication competence is the main point of well performance across the different fields of human progress such as psychological, academic, relational and occupational developments.

Their personal abilities and efforts help individuals to improve their communicative skills and competence. As argued by Arasartnam & Doerfels (2005), an individual who is component in a particular setting of multicultural interaction process, it illustrate that he or she has some abilities that enable them to be involved in different situation of intercultural interactions competently. For the purpose of this study, intercultural communication refers to the direct interactions among individuals from different cultural backgrounds. Intercultural communication refers to face-to-face communication between individuals who belong to different cultures (Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Sarwari & Abdul Wahab, 2017). At the same time, besides their personal abilities and efforts, respect for cultural differences is essential for individuals to have successful interactions (Sarwari & Wahab, 2016). As argued by Schoenhuth (2005), among participants of intercultural communication processes, appreciation of the existing cultural diversities helps the communicators to achieve their goals. Moreover, existence of the similar levels of communication competence among individuals also helps them to have a productive communication. Different levels of communication competence among communicators objectively have negative effects on the equivalent status of communicators in intercultural communication (Baryshnikov, 2014).

Interpersonal communication is the first step for intercultural communication but they are not the same at all. Intercultural communication is relatively and conceptually different from interpersonal communication in some ways, because of existence of various and different culturally and sub-culturally fixed mechanism of meaning, information, viewpoints, and values (Kim, 2010). Studies on the intercultural communication field must be concerned about specific factors and elements influencing real intercultural interactions in life (Hu and Fan, 2010). The above mentioned statements and assertions of previous researchers and scholars focus on the relationship between interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication competence. But, still there are not enough evidences on mutual effects of these competences on each other.

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

Research design plays as the construction blueprint for the study, which links the research method, collection of the data, and data analyses (Bickman and Rog, 2009). A mixed method research design which includes quantitative and qualitative data sets was applied to conduct this study. As argued by Creswell and Plano Clark (2007), the mixed method design of researches can involve the multiple structures of data collections. According to them, researchers use mixed methods as a procedure on integrating of quantitative and qualitative approaches and steps in a research project to answer the questions well. The quantitative method is projected to play the predominant role in this study and the qualitative data set will be used as the secondary data set to support the quantitative data.

### **Participants**

The estimated population for this study was all 492 international postgraduate students of a Malaysian public university. As asserted by Henry (2009) the aimed population in a

study would be a group of people in a manageable structure to make it possible for the researchers to present their findings in the reports. Thus, all international postgraduate students of a Malaysian public university who were living in the same campus were proposed to be the aimed populations of this study. This study had applied the convenience sampling method during the quantitative data collection procedure.

This study had 125 ( $M = 171.8$ ,  $SD = 13.6$ ) participants from postgraduate students of the above mentioned university. The participants belonged to 17 different countries. From all participants, 96 ( $M = 182.3$ ,  $SD = 15.9$ ) of them were male and 29 ( $M = 191.6$ ,  $SD = 15.2$ ) others female students. Also, from all of them 71 ( $M = 183.1$ ,  $SD = 16.1$ ) of them were master students and 54 ( $M = 187.8$ ,  $SD = 16.8$ ) others PhD students. Based on personal agreement of some participants of the study, 10 of them were interviewed for the qualitative section of this study.

### **Instruments**

The Interpersonal Competence Questionnaire (ICQ) of Buhrmester, Furman and Wittenberg (1988) which has 30 items and was used by Sherburne (2009) was adopted to evaluate interpersonal communication competence. This instrument is a well-established questionnaire and has been used by different researchers in the past (e. g. Michaeli, 2013; Parsons, 2008; Sherburne, 2009). The ICQ instrument measures interpersonal communication competence under five domains which are: Initiation; Negative Assertion; Disclosure; Emotional Support; Conflict Management. This instrument is design based on the Likert Scale with 5 options per item.

For the intercultural communication competence section, the Intercultural Sensitivity Scale (ISS) of Chen and Starosta (2000) which has 24 items was adopted and used. Based on the literature, the ISS questionnaire was used by different researchers in the past (e.g. Lin, 2011; Gantt, 2014; Risner, 2011). The ISS instrument evaluates intercultural communication competence under five factors, which are: Interaction Engagement; Respect for Cultural Differences; Interaction Confidence; Interaction Enjoyment; Interaction Attentiveness, and was designed based on the Likert Scale with 5 options per item. The reliability test of SPSS applied to check the quantitative instruments and the Cronbach alpha score for all items together was .798. For the qualitative interviews, an interview protocol which included 8 open ended interview questions was used.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The quantitative data were collected directly from the participants by distribution of the questionnaires. After distribution of the questionnaires, enough time was given to the participants to choose the answers that mirror the level of their agreements with statements in the pre-prepared checklists in the questionnaire. The qualitative data was collected through the direct and audio-recorded interviews from the volunteer interviewees. Prior to the interviews and data collection, the printed copy of the interview protocol which includes the information about the research project, interview procedure and also the interview questions were given to them to read and reconfirm their agreement. Once the volunteer participant agreed to be interviewed, the interview was conducted under the guidance of the interview protocol and all interviews were digitally audio-recorded.

### **Data Analysis Procedure**

The quantitative and qualitative data sets were analyzed separately and the possible tests were applied based on the requirements of the data analyses procedure. To well answer the “right” questions, we must know which analyses are essential in the study (Bickman

& Rog, 2009). The essential tests from the SPSS were applied to analyze the quantitative data set, and the qualitative data were transcribed and analyzed and reported in the text based on the research questions. First of all, the descriptive tests were applied for the quantitative data to find out the statistical frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviation scores. The bivariate correlation test was conducted to find out the probable correlations between items and variables, and the independent-samples t-test was used to compare the mean scores of variables and items to find out the probable significant differences between variables and main constructs of the survey data.

The qualitative interviews were transcribed and divided under the research themes and emerging themes from answers of the interviewees. For the qualitative analyses procedure, the constant and comparison method which was developed by Glasser & Strauss (1967) was used. Based on this method, three steps will be done to code and analyze the recoded interviews. The required steps are: transcribing the interviews, categorization of the data, and identifying and categorizing main themes to correspond the data (Sherburne, 2009). As stated by Marshall and Rossman (1999), researchers must carefully listen to the recorded interviews and read the data prior to the data analysis procedures. All of the digitally audio taped interviews were listened carefully and repeatedly, and after that all interviews were transcribed and categorized under the research questions and based on the salient comments of the interviewees. Once all interviews were transcribed, the data were read and reviewed line-by-line to find out the important and relevant ideas and answers from the participants. The salient views and comments from some interviewees are directly quoted and reported in the texts under the particular and related categories and open codes. According to Strauss and Corbin (1990), a code refers to a label which covers a unit of data that derived from the responses and comments of participant.

## FINDINGS

### Quantitative Findings

The essential tests of SPSS were applied to analyze the quantitative data of this study. The descriptive test was applied to find out the frequencies, percentages and Mean/SD scores for variables and items. Based on the descriptive results, this study had 125 participants from 17 different countries as 96 (76.8%) male participants and 29 (23.2%) female participants. The data for both of interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication were analyzed separately. The *M/SD* score of interpersonal communication competence for all participants were 98.4/13.1, and for intercultural communication competence were 75.2/13.4. As the given Mean scores are above the average scores, thus it illustrates that the participants are relatively good in both interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication competence.

The independent-samples t-test was also applied to compare the mean scores of the main components of both of interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication competence. Therefore, the independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the mean scores of Initiation construct of interpersonal communication competence with the Interaction Engagement construct from intercultural communication competence. A significant difference was found as  $t(124) = 61.382$ ,  $P < .01$ , and the mean score of Initiation was  $M = 3.2$ ,  $SD = .6$ , and for Interaction engagement which was  $M = 3.5$ ,  $SD = .37$ . The same test was applied to compare the mean scores between the Negative Assertion construct from interpersonal communication competence and Respect for Cultural Differences construct from intercultural

communication competence, and a significant difference was found as  $t(124) = 43.884$ ,  $P < .01$ . Mean score for Negative Assertion was  $M = 3.0$ ,  $SD = .77$  and for Cultural Differences  $M = 2.8$ ,  $SD = .36$ . The mean scores for Disclosure construct of interpersonal competence and Interaction Confidence of intercultural communication competence were compared through independent-samples t-test, but no significant difference was found as  $t(124) = 61.214$ ,  $P < .05$ . Also the mean score of Disclosure was higher as  $M = 3.4$ ,  $SD = .42$  than  $M = 3.1$ ,  $SD = .57$  Interaction Confidence. It means that the participants were more competent in disclosure rather than interaction confidence.

The independent-samples t-test also was applied to compare the mean scores of Emotional Support to Interaction Enjoyment and no significant difference was found as  $t(124) = 75.07$ ,  $p > .05$ , mean score for Emotional Support  $M = 3.78$ ,  $SD = .63$ , and for Interaction Enjoyment  $M = 3.39$ ,  $SD = .63$ . The same test was conducted to compare the mean score of Conflict Management to Interaction Attentiveness and no significant difference was found as the result is  $t(124) = 55.88$ ,  $p > .05$ , mean score for Conflict Management  $M = 3.42$ ,  $SD = .65$  and for Interaction Attentiveness  $M = 3.5$ ,  $SD = .53$ . To find out correlations between items and variables, the bivariate correlation test was applied and based on the correlation results; there were some significant correlations between constructs and domains of interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication competence. Table 1 below illustrates the correlation test results.

Table 1: correlations between variable and main constructs of IPC and ICC

Initiation	Initiation	Negative assertion	Disclosure	Emotional support	Interaction engagement	Respect cultural differences
Negative assertion	.298					
Disclosure	.551	.324				
Emotional support	.355	.249	.480			
Conflict management	.359		.463	.612		
Interaction engagement Respect cultural differences				.210		
Interaction confidence	.294	.243	.463		.494	
Interaction enjoyment				-.266		.494
Interaction attentiveness					.275	

## Qualitative Findings

The qualitative section of this study had 10 interviewees from 10 different countries. The interviewees were: 1) a female master student from China, 2) a male PhD student from Nigeria, 3) a female PhD student from Iran, 4) a male master student from Algeria, 5) a female PhD student from Pakistan, 6) a male PhD student from India, 7) a male PhD student from Bangladesh, 8) a male master student from Afghanistan, 9) a male PhD student from Sudan, and 10) a female PhD student from Indonesia. All interviewees of this study were staying and studying in the same campus. In the upcoming paragraphs, the given code for each participants based on their numbers in the above mentioned list will be used as P1 (for participant number 1).

### *The Relationship between Interpersonal Communication Competence, Intercultural Communication Competence and Daily Lives of the Participants*

Based on the answers of the majority of all interviewees of this study, interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication competence play important role on their daily lives when they stay and study in a multicultural collegiate environment. According to them, the levels of their interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication competence enable them to have interactions with individuals from different countries, tackle the social and environmental issues and have happy lives when they are out of their home countries. For example, participant 1 told that “At first, when left my country as a degree student and joined this university, I had a tough time because of the lack of social skills and communication competence. As I come from a suburb area in China, I had not enough opportunity to interact with people from other nationalities and cultures, thus I faced many social problems in the first two years of my stay and study here, and gradually I learned how to tackle the issues and talk with other people. Now, as a master student and after four years of experience in a multicultural campus, I am good enough in both of interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication competence, have many friends from different countries and have a happy life in the campus”. Participant 3 also told that “As I am from Iran and have lived for a while in India, thus I have already experienced some interactions with people from different backgrounds and during my stay in India I have improved my interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication competence and I did not face any problem as a foreign student here in Malaysia”. The mentioned statements show the relationship between communication competence and the quality of lives of students from different countries in a multicultural environment.

### *The Relationship between Interpersonal Communication Competence and Intercultural Communication Competence*

Based on the on answers of the vast majority of all interviewees of this study, the levels of their interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication competence have close relationships. Based on their answers, their good levels of interpersonal communication competence encourage and help them to have more intercultural communication and gain some new cultural information and intercultural communication skills. Also, their intercultural communication helps them to improve their interpersonal communication competence. As stated by participant 2 “I spent almost all of my school and university lives in hostel when I was in my country, and have learned how to interact with my peers and friends, thus I have good interpersonal communication skills. But, I had no experience of intercultural communication for longer

than few minutes, and fortunately my social face and personal experiences in interpersonal communication helped me to overcome all environmental challenges and learn how to be involved in intercultural communication as well. Through my interaction with other students, I have improved both my interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication competence. Participant 6 said that “For a while, I have tried to stay alone, study alone and do not be in contact with other students even from my own country [India], but during my stay I faced many problems and I got bored in the campus. Some friends helped me to start some communication with students from my own country and participate in their daily activities. These opportunities helped me to gain some interpersonal communication skills and be involved in interactions with students from other countries who were roommates and friends of my India colleagues”.

Their ideas were supported by participant 8 who said that “I am a social person and like to have talks and negotiations with other people, thus my social skills and personal willingness helped me to have daily communication with students from different countries”. Moreover, participant 10 said that “Our social lives and cultural norms have some similarities with the host people, but my stay with students from different countries in a campus helped me to learn many things and know how to interact with different people. At first, I had more interactions with the host people, but now my close friends are from other countries and mostly I interact with them”.

These statements and answers illustrate the existence of close relationship between interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication competence and their important mutual effects on each other.

### **DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study was conducted to evaluate the relationship between interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication competence among postgraduate students from different countries. Based on the assertions of scholars, interpersonal communication is the first step of interactions and social connections among individuals and intercultural communication also derived from interpersonal communication (Kim, 2001; Kim, 2005; Vevea, 2011). Thus, study of the relationship between interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication competence is important. The results from this study also confirmed the existence of a close relationship between interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication competence. Based on the results, good level of interpersonal communication competence enables and encourages individuals to have more intercultural interactions with other individuals from different backgrounds and their interactions help them to improve both of their interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication competence.

As argued by Kim (2010), interpersonal communication is different from intercultural communication in some ways, and the findings of this study are also supportive of this argument. Even though, this study found the existence of significant relationship between interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication competence. But, it also found that individuals could be good in interpersonal communication competence and have daily interpersonal communication with their own people, but still have not good level of intercultural communication competence because of the lack of their contacts and communication with people from diverse backgrounds. At the same, good level of interpersonal communication competence plays the role of a positive catalyst among individuals to have more successful intercultural communication and gain some essential cultural information and intercultural skills.

The results from this study have illustrated that, individuals with good levels of interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication competence are successful on their daily lives in a multicultural environment, and are able to overcome the daily social and environmental challenges. These findings are supportive of the argument of Arasartnam & Doerfels (2005), as pointed out that individuals who have communication competence to conduct interaction in a diverse environment are able to overcome the different social and environmental challenges. Also, the findings from this study confirmed that stay and study in a multicultural collegiate environment is an important chance for individuals from different backgrounds to gain more social and cultural information, to improve their social skills and to be ready to overcome the probable social and environmental challenges.

The quantitative results of this study found some significant correlations between the main domains that evaluate both interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication competence. It means that, interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication competence have close relationship. Findings from the qualitative interviews of this study were also supportive of the quantitative results. Finally, the results from this study confirmed that interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication competence have close relationship and also have important mutual effects on each other. The results from this study may be interesting for scholars in the related fields and also researchers in the future. The results may also encourage university students to be involved in interactions with different people to improve their social and cultural skills and communication competence.

### **Recommendations**

This study was conducted in an Asian collegiate environment and the same study in other parts of the world may bring some different results. This study focused on the relationship between interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication competence. Future researchers can evaluate the relationship between interpersonal communication competence and personal attitudes of individuals, and their personal attitudes with the levels of their intercultural communication competence. Evaluation of the relationship between interpersonal communication competence, intercultural communication competence and environmental factors may be an interesting issue as well.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study was carried out to assess the relationship between interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication competence among postgraduate students from different nationalities. The results of this study confirmed the existence of a close relationship between the levels of interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication competence among the participants. Based on the results, their good levels of interpersonal communication competence helped the participants to have more successful communication with students from different countries and their interactions helped them to improve both their interpersonal communication competence and intercultural communication competence. According to the findings of this study, in some cases individuals were good in interpersonal communication competence but still not good in intercultural communication competence because of the lack of their interactions with students from different social and cultural

backgrounds. The results of this study may be interesting for future researchers and also scholars of the related fields. The results may also encourage university students to partake in daily communication with their peers from different nationalities and cultural backgrounds to improve their social skills and communication competence.

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**HERMAN'S STAGES OF RECOVERY ON CHARACTERS WITH A  
TRAUMATIC PAST IN YEJIDE KILANKO'S  
DAUGHTERS WHO WALK THIS PATH**

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**ABSTRACT**

In general, trauma is often a threat to life when it involves physical harm. However, an overwhelming feeling can also be traumatic. Recovery, on the other hand, is the process in which characters manage to restore their life back to normal. The main focus of this study is to examine the types of trauma and the stages of recovery that characters in the selected novel go through by using Judith Herman's concepts of Trauma and Recovery. The main concept of Trauma that will be analysed in this study is child abuse while the stages of recovery to be discussed include reconnection and the dialectic of continued trauma. The study examines these issues in the narrative of *Daughters Who Walk This Path*, written by Yejide Kilanko. This novel depicts ill-fated events that eventually lead to the characters' traumatic experience and later the recuperation that the characters go through. *Daughters Who Walk This Path* portrays how a traumatised rape victim manages to move on with life after that torture. The book portrays how the traumatised characters managed to recover from their dark past in order to live a normal life.

Keywords: Trauma, Recovery, Child Abuse, Reconnection,

**INTRODUCTION**

The novel, *Daughters Who Walk This Path*, depicts ill-fated events that eventually lead to the traumatic experiences and later recuperation that the characters go through. Trauma has been depicted as an experience whereby the victim goes through a series of ill-fated events (Caruth 1996). As portrayed in the novel, trauma was shown in the form of child abuse. In the novel, Child abuse was in the form of rape that happened to two school-going children. These two children were left under the care of people their parents had trusted.

In order to recuperate from a trauma, the victims must come to terms with the issues which are actually not allowing them to move toward the future. The only way for the victims to have a better future is by working through the residual effects of their traumatic experiences (Schick 37-55). Both the rape victims in *Daughters Who Walk This Path* had to undergo the stages of recovery in order to restart normal life. They had to come to terms with their attacks and attackers as a way for them to move forward. The stages of recovery that these two characters underwent were those proposed by Herman in his concept of Trauma and Recovery.

Generally, African texts have been discussed from a Post-Colonial theoretical perspective. The main focus of Post-Colonial literature's transcultural memory is its colonial past, which can portray important insights into life during that time. Although many of important events that took place and circumstances that existed during the colonial age have been related in Post-Colonial literature, not many themes have emerged depicting the lives of African slaves, although slavery has been a major theme portraying

the physical and mental traumatization that the slaves were subjected to by their colonizers (Eckstein 2006)

As for the novel used in this study, no prior studies were found to have been done on this book. However, many genres have been discussed using trauma theory in the African context. This study will analyse the novel *Daughters Who Walk This Path* by using Judith Herman's (1992) Trauma and Recovery concept.

### **The Trauma: Child Abuse**

In this section, the elements of child abuse that both Morenike and Morayo went through are discussed. There are four types of abuse that the two characters in the novel endured: the abusive environment, double self, attacks on the body and the child grown up.

### **The abusive environment**

In Herman's notion of Traumatic Disorders, chronic childhood abuse usually takes place in a familiar environment, wherein caregivers violate children. In the novel under study, the caregivers were trusted by the children's parents, but the trust is breeched by the appointed caregivers. The excerpts below show how Morenike and Morayo were violated respectively by the people responsible for them.

Morenike's encounter:

*... Chief Komolafe and Morenike's father co-chaired the Oremeji Neighbourhood Landlord Association ... Morenike's father often asked him to drop Morenike at her boarding school in Abeokuta ... That fateful morning ... Chief Komolafe decided that it would be safer to spend the night in Aiyetoro. They would leave for Abeokuta in the morning ... Although her mother has warned her against being alone in a room with a male, she did not think she was in any danger. Was Chief not like her father? ... Suddenly, Chief Komolafe wrestled her to the bed and rolled on top of her ... (Kilanko 107-108)*

Morayo's encounter:

*... When Bros T said he would take care of me, I saw the reluctance in Mummy's eyes ... I reminded Mummy that our neighbour Mama Comfort was also around if I needed help. (Kilanko 65)*

From the first excerpt, Morenike's father had placed so much trust in his friend that he allowed his daughter to travel with an him to school. However, in spite of Morenike's opinion of him, Chief Komolafe did not see her as a daughter. He had planned much earlier to take advantage of Morenike that night. From her portrayal in the novel, we can see that Morenike was an innocent, trusting girl, so when Chief Komolafe asked her to come to his room after thirty minutes for a discussion, she adhered to it. Morenike wanted to leave the room when she saw that Chief Komolafe was only wearing a towel after his bath. Instead he invited her in and asked her to sit. Morenike's mother had told her not to be in a room with a male, but in her mind, she considered Chief Komolafe as having a status as high as her father, and therefore, the former would not cause her any harm. However, the opposite happened. At that point in time, Chief Komolafe had been married several times and had many daughters. However, despite his own status as a father and trusted friend of Morenike's family, Chief Komolafe didn't have the sense of responsibility to protect Morenike instead of destroying her life, and in

this one incident, broke the trust of Morenike and her family and inflicted traumatic harm on her.

In the second excerpt, Morayo's mother was very reluctant to leave her in the hands of Bros T. This was because, prior to that, Bros T had some attitude problems and his parents had asked Morayo's parents to mould him into a better person. As time went by, Bros T started becoming a more positive person, but there was still doubt this in Morayo's mother. While having this worry, at the same time, they had to attend a wedding in Ilorin, and Eniayo, Morayo's sister, was in the bridal train of flower girls. Morayo knew how excited her sister was to be in the bridal train and did not want to spoil it for her. Morayo gave her mother confidence that she would be alright as her next door neighbour was also available should she need any assistance.

That evening, Morayo's mother and Eniayo left for the wedding, and Morayo was left under the care of her cousin brother. That night, Bros T had a party with his beer comrades, and that was the night Morayo's trust in Bros T was shattered. She had trusted that her cousin would care for her and that was why she told her mother she would be alright and not to worry about her. However, just as in Morenike's case, the opposite had happened. The person Morayo's family trusted breached their trust, also.

### **Double self**

Once children have become objects of violence they may resort to double think. Child victims may delude themselves into believing certain abuse did not happen. Such children might keep the abuse as a secret to themselves but fail to realise that they are actually living in denial. This is usually the type thinking that traumatically affected school children go through (Herman 103).

*... She told herself that the incident with Chief Komolafe never happened. She said it over and over again, night after night, until she started to believe it ... (Kilanko 111)*

From the excerpt above, Morenike started to double think as she was in the state of denial. She just wanted to forget what had happened that night, so she kept telling herself that no such thing had happened. This could have been because she wanted a better future for herself, and at the same time, she did not want to bring shame to her family.

Cultural factors play an important role in the situations portrayed in the novel. For example, Morenike's mother always reminded her not to be alone with a male, which shows that premarital relationships are seen as offensive in their culture. Thus, being a rape victim of an influential older man may seem like a lie to many people. Immediately after Morenike's horrific ordeal with Chief Komolafe, as she was coming out of his room, she bumped into their driver, Mr Adeoti. The next morning, when they were ready to leave, he did not feel sorry for her but he thought to himself that a young girl like Morenike was willing to do anything for money. Morenike also felt that no one would understand the trauma she went through that night, and they would blame her for it. Thus, she resolved to remain quiet.

Like in Morayo's case, she started to double think as exemplified when she started lying to her friend. Tomi, her close friend knew that something was bothering Morayo as she always seemed dull and sad. Morayo had wanted to confess everything to Tomi many times, but something was pulling her back. Morayo felt that if she wanted her horror to

remain a secret, she had to keep it to herself. So, she started showing a false front toward Tomi.

*In the months that followed, I lived a double life... I forced a smile to my face. "I am sorry I have not been coming to see you. I have not been feeling well lately. Maybe I am missing Kachi"... Some days I wanted to tell Tomi what happened with Bros T. My mouth would open and close several times. Yet I knew that I could not tell her anything ... (Kilanko 89-90)*

From the excerpt above, we can see that Morayo was referring to Kachi as her reason for feeling sad. Kachi was Morayo's boyfriend and he had left town as his father was posted to a civil service job in his hometown, Awka. From Tomi's perspective, that would seem like a legitimate answer as Tomi knew about Morayo and Kachi's ongoing relationship. However, from the excerpt, we can see that Morayo is living in denial as she is forcefully trying to smile and make the people around her feel that nothing is actually going on with her.

### **Attacks on the body**

Bodily regulation is further complicated in the abusive environment because the child's body is at the disposal of the abuser. Even bedtimes and meal times would seem like an extreme tension rather than comforting one (Herman 108).

*Bros T stayed away from my room for two months, just when I began telling myself that perhaps the horror is over, he came back one night... He even started calling me to his room during the afternoon... My reprieve was short-lived. Bros T came back on many other nights. Only he now used a condom, nothing else changed. (Kilanko 74-76)*

This abusive environment was on Morayo's property, and Tayo (Bros T) had just come there to repent from a negative attitude. He did manage to get good grades in his exams and redeemed himself in the eyes of his aunt and uncle. When he was left alone at home with Morayo once, his friends started instigating him, and at the same time, Tayo did not like Morayo having a relationship with Kachi. Therefore, he wanted to teach his cousin that she was not to talk or have a relationship with other boys. From the excerpt above, we can see that Morayo was going through the horror repeatedly. When Tayo took advantage of Morayo the first time, his friends and the beers that he consumed could have been blamed. He could have apologised to Morayo and confessed to her parents. But instead, Tayo took Morayo's silence as an advantage and started outraging her even more.

Even when she attained puberty, Bros T still took advantage of her. Once, when she started vomiting, he gave her tablets to prevent her from getting pregnant. Bros T (Tayo) did not have any fear that he might get caught. The only fear he had was he did not want to get Morayo pregnant as that would expose him. To him Morayo belonged to him and he had every right to do anything to her. He always used Eniayo to threaten her. And Morayo, who was afraid for her sister's safety, just let the horror happen to her.

### **The child grown up**

Herman states that even when a child reaches adulthood, the trauma does not end. The child (who is now an adult) is still hungry for protection and care. This hunger comes along with the fear of being abandoned or exploited. Even if the child idealizes a person who is close to her, there is still a chance that she may be abandoned. And once this

person had disappointed her, she would not hesitate to cause harm to the person she once admired (Herman 110).

... *“Morayo, we really should not be doing this”. “Says who?” “Morayo, please” ... But I was not ready to listen to his pleas ... (Kilanko 218)*

This instance happened in the case of Morayo. When Morayo was in university, she started having illicit affairs with random men around her campus. Then she met Ladi, another campus mate who was very different from the many men she had been with. Ladi was a staunch Christian and he believed that premarital relationships were prohibited. When Morayo wanted to have a relationship with Ladi, he refused and said that it would only be after their marriage. Maybe that was why Morayo’s feelings for Ladi started becoming stronger. He respected her as the woman she was. And when she was with him she always felt safe and protected. However, one night while she was still obsessed with Ladi, Morayo found another man who was smiling at her from the bar, and she followed him back. When Ladi got to know about this he confronted Morayo and asked her to stop destroying herself. Morayo could not wait for Ladi much longer, thus she forced herself on him despite knowing that it was against his wishes.

To sum up, in cases of child abuse, a child who goes through repeated trauma tends to have an adulthood that is different from those who have not had such experiences. In the case of Morayo, she was violated many times by her cousin brother. Her violation started even before she reached puberty. On the other hand, Morenike was violated once when she was a teenager, but she became pregnant as a result of that. Thus, this could have led to a very different adulthood as compared to Morayo.

### **The Recovery: Reconnection**

In this section four aspects of the recovery stage are discussed. These aspects are learning to fight, reconciling with oneself, reconciling with others, and finding a survivor mission.

#### **Learning to fight**

In reconnection, victims will begin by fighting for their rights. Herman states that if the victim is able to take charge in a real-life situation, it means they are prepared to face their fears (Herman 197). At this recovery point, the victims would have understood that their post-traumatic symptoms are just an exaggerated representation of the normal responses to danger. Because these victims are ready to come to terms with their fears, they put themselves to the test. As a result of this, they would start gaining more confidence to come to terms with their fears without having any fear in them. In this novel, only Morenike had the chance to learn how to fight.

... *but Morenike refuse to listen to any pleas, even when Chief Komolafe’s pleas became threats. “A child belongs to the father, and so Damilare rightly belongs to me. Even the law of the land recognizes this,” Chief Komolafe said to Morenike as they stood in her father’s sitting room. Morenike held on tightly to Damilare’s hand. “I don’t care. I will not send my son to live in a den of vipers. It will be over my dead body.” This time, Morenike’s father stood solidly behind her. Damilare stayed. (Kilanko 145)*

From the excerpt above, we can see that Morenike was a brave person. She faced her attacker bravely and stated clearly that her son would remain with her. Komolafe came to Morenike as one of his wives had just given birth to their twelfth daughter. He

knew that Morenike was the only one that gave birth to a boy, but it was out of wedlock. This really did not matter to Komolafe because all he wanted was a son. From the very beginning, when Ibeji, Morenike's mother, when to ask for justice from Komolafe for the horrendous act against her daughter, he refused to listen to them.

Even when Morenike gave birth to her son, Komolafe did not come to give any support, despite knowing that it was his son too. Only after many years and after the birth of his twelfth daughter, he really wanted Morenike's son. This made Morenike braver as she was holding the trump card. Morenike was able to fight back because she had the support of her entire family, even her father. This was also a reason for her to be brave and fight for her rights. Moreover, Morenike was attacked by Komolafe once. She became pregnant but got good support from her mother and grandmother. Therefore, when she was met by her attacker, she knew that she could handle it because of the support that she had. As for Chief Komolafe, he could only make his stand by using the law. And also by law, Komolafe was not legally married to Morenike. Thus, even if he went to the law, he might not win as he could be charged for rape. Leaving aside his influential life, in the eyes of law he was still a criminal. With the full support of her father, Morenike's son Damilare stayed with his mother. And after that encounter, Komolafe never came back for his son as he knew he would not be able to attain rights over him.

### **Reconciling with oneself**

The survivor no longer feels possessed by her traumatic past (Herman 202). There would come a time where the victim comes to terms with herself regarding the traumatic past that she had gone through. The way Morenike reconciled with herself was by improving her grades and becoming an outstanding student in her school.

*... Morenike's mouth dropped when Dr. Lot told her the stipend... One day, I too will make a difference. (Kilanko 139)*

From the excerpt above, Morenike began to believe in herself. She studied hard until her lecturer once called her to offer her a research assistant position until the end of her study period. Morenike reconciled with herself by wanting to be educated. After she had received her diploma, she did not want to stop there. She was later admitted to a double degree programme at the University of Ife. Her mother was filled with joy and was very proud of Morenike. She had to balance the pursuit of her education and caring for her son at the same time. We can see her that Morenike wanted to see herself as a successful person, and the only way she could have done that was to first reconcile with herself. Morenike had so much confidence in herself that she even told her mother that she wants to make a difference.

In the case of Morayo, there was no indication that she reconciled with herself. Morayo just let time heal all her sorrows. This was because of the limited support she received from her parents. Her pillar of strength was Morenike. Morenike introduced Morayo to the reading habit. Morayo also studied successfully, being admitted to the University of Lagos for the economics programme. Morayo was already recovering from her traumatic past, but she was healing with time. If only she had the support from her parents, she would have gone through a similar recovery as Morenike.

### **Reconciling with others**

When the victim reconciles with others, they would once again feel the trust in others, and that trust is warranted (Herman 205). After reconciling with themselves, the victim has to go out to face the outside world. The first man that both Morenike and Morayo reconciled with was Mr Tiamiyu. Mr Tiamiyu never showed that he wanted to gain the authority from both these women. He was an educator who wanted to become a politician to help the people of Ibadan have a better life.

*... I knew Mr Tiamiyu very well. He often came to Auntie Morenike's flat during my visits. He and Auntie Morenike would spend hours arguing about one political issue or another, their voices rising as they each tried to prove their point. I liked the way Mr Tiamiyu spoke to me like an adult, calling me "Miss Morayo" with a gentle smile... (Kilanko 154)*

From the excerpt above, we can note that Mr Tiamiyu was a gentleman. He often came to Morenike's flat, but he did not take advantage of her. It was not specified in the novel that Mr Tiamiyu knew Morenike was a single unwed mother. However, we can assume that Mr Tiamiyu knew something as Damilare's father was nowhere to be seen during his visits. If Mr Tiamiyu had some kind of agenda regarding Morenike, he might have hurt her and then left her to suffer like before. When Komolafe invited Morenike to his room, the latter was innocent, and she did not know that it would be dangerous to be alone in a room with a man. However in the case of Mr Tiamiyu, it was Morenike that invited him to her flat. And when they were together, they were always arguing about politics and not talking about personal issues. And even when Morayo was there, he also treated her with great respect. Throughout the novel, we can see that Mr Tiamiyu and Morenike were close to each other, but they never resorted to getting married. Morayo even wanted to ask Morenike why she didn't marry him. But refrained from asking as she thought it might be rude. Since this was the first man that these ladies met, it was very crucial for them to regain their trust from an unknown man.

Morayo had another experience to regain her trust in men. This time it was her childhood friend Kachi. Their meeting was a coincidence when they were travelling in the same bus. After their first meeting they met very frequently, and this nurtured feelings in Morayo for Kachi. When Morayo told Morenike about this, the latter advised the former to confess to Kachi about her past life, Tayo, and her affairs. Morayo had to gather her courage to do this, and so she confessed.

*... I kept my eyes locked on his face and I started from the very beginning. I told him about Bros T, about my life at the university and the men – faceless and nameless now to me – that had passed through my life. I told him about Ladi, about the numbness and the shame... (Kilanko 258)*

From the excerpt above, we know that Morayo did not want to start her new relationship on a lie. That was why she confessed to Kachi. Kachi, being an ordinary man, asked her to give him some time to think if he still wanted to continue with the relationship. Kachi did take some time. He did not tell Morayo his decision, but he was visiting her frequently. During those visits, Kachi never misbehaved with Morayo, neither was Morayo going back to her old attitude. At seeing Kachi being a gentleman, one day, Morayo told Kachi, if he cannot live with her past, they should stop meeting each other as things might only get worse after that. Morayo could have said that to Kachi because she

had trust in him. She invited him to her flat, and he treated her with great respect. When Morayo asked Kachi for his answer, he confessed that he still loved her. And after discussions with their families, Kachi and Morayo got married.

### **Finding a survivor mission**

Herman suggests that victims who go on a survivor mission may focus their energy to aid other people who have been victims for the same reason as them or for other reasons. These missions aim to raise the public awareness (Herman 207). Morenike, in this instance, went on a mission when she was pregnant with Chief Komolafe's child; she went to the Mission House with her grandmother on Wednesdays.

*... on Wednesday evenings, Morenike went with Mama Omu to the Mission House. Mama Omu was part of a group of basket weavers. The money made from the sale of the colourful raffia baskets went towards taking care of the young orphans in the community... (Kilanko 125)*

At the Mission House, Morenike met other women who were weaving baskets. These women were seeking something for the future. They were weaving baskets to help other orphan children. There were also many women there yearning for a child. Morenike's trauma was still fresh in her mind. However, she had started her recovery period by helping out at the Mission Home. Morenike did not weave baskets there, but she was a good listener. She listened to the sorrows that the women there were going through. Despite hearing their sad stories, Morenike did not seek sympathy by telling them her own sad story. Even when an inquisitive lady asked Morenike about her pregnancy, Morenike just answered that the baby's father denied it was his. Morenike did not elaborate on the story. This shows that Morenike focusing her positive energy on helping other people by being a good listener was also part of her mission on the road for recovery.

For Morayo, her turning point was when she wanted to commit suicide. Morenike's presence that day was a blessing that saved Morayo from dying. When Morayo heard of Morenike's story, she realised that dying was not the only option and that she could succeed more. Morenike did not want Morayo to attempt her mistake again. Thus, she started having a closer relationship with Morayo.

*... Aunty Morenike nodded. "Morayo is just going to help us hand out flyers to the people that show up for the rally... (Kilanko 154)*

*... Mr Tiamiyu's junior sisters and I started handing out sachets of cold pure water from three large plastic basins filled with ice blocks... (Kilanko 157)*

Based on both the excerpts above, Morenike wanted Morayo to be busy so that she would not have to think about her attacks or attempting suicide. The excerpts show Morayo's surviving mission as she was ready to help people out. She was on a mission to support a Human Rights activist, Mr Tiamiyu, who was also fighting for women's rights. Morayo supported him by running errands during his events so that people would come and listen to him. Apart from helping out with the political rallies, Morenike asked Morayo to read books so that she would have a diversion and at the same time she could broaden her horizons. Reading was also indeed a survivor mission for Morayo as it took her mind off many things, and eventually the thought for committing suicide vanished from her mind.

### **Resolving the trauma**

To sum up the aspects in Reconnection, recovery is never complete. Issues that were sufficiently resolved at the Safety stage may be reawakened as the survivor reaches for new milestones (Herman 211). The occurrences that happened to both Morenike and Morayo cannot be forgotten. This is because, each morning when Morenike woke up, she sees Damilare's face. And this would remind her of the horror that she went through with Chief Komolafe. It is not that she hated Damilare, she loved him a lot. It is just that the trauma cannot be perfectly recovered from and neither can it be resolved.

Like in the case of Morayo, the image of Tayo cannot be forgotten as he is part of her family. Even if she refuses to speak to him at a family function or gathering, Tayo might be there, and her traumatic past would be recalled. Not only that, when Morayo was in the university, she had affairs with random men. No doubt it did not seem like a trauma to her, but later on, she did have that sense of regret that she should have respected herself more. If she encountered a man who could still remember her, the past trauma of Tayo's attacks would return, which explains why Morayo wanted to gain power over the men she was with after being exploited by Tayo. It is thus quite difficult to say whether a post traumatic victim can resolve their entire trauma in order to live a new life.

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the trauma that both Morenike and Morayo went through was circumstantial. It could have been avoided if certain precautions had been taken. From this study, it can be concluded that Child Abuse is a type of trauma that can destroy a happy childhood. As a result of that, Morenike had to quit her studies during her pregnancy, and Morayo's university life was a result of her painful childhood. Herman's definition of Child Abuse was very well portrayed in both the main characters of the novel. Although they went through a rough childhood, they were able to recover to a certain extent.

Both the characters had their respective recovery. At first Morayo had a more negative approach towards her recovery as she was having random affairs with unknown men around her university. Later on, she found true love and got married. Like in the case of Morenike, she was a strong and successful woman, who encouraged Morayo to be a better person in life. She raised her son responsibly without the help of the man who destroyed her childhood. *Daughters Who Walk This Path*, portrayed many ways that a rape victim could find solace in their recovery. The characters also portrayed how death is not the only way to free oneself if one is a victim of rape. Instead, succeeding to greater heights is the best way one can gain self-motivation, and at the same time, become a role model to other victims who need strength to recover from their traumatic past. Also, Morayo's parents should not have left it to time to heal everything. They should have spoken to their daughter like how Morenike's mother gave her daughter encouragement and the assurance that she would always be by her daughter. In the end of the novel, the successful Morenike died as she lost her battle with breast cancer, and Morayo promised her daughter that she would always be there for her in thick and thin.

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## THE SPINSTER'S BAD FAITH AND MISDIRECTION STRATEGIES IN CATHERINE LIM'S *THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER'S SECRET*

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### ABSTRACT

Catherine Lim's *The English Language Teacher's Secret* (1987) features Sylvie Ponniah as a spinster during The Graduate Woman phenomenon in Singapore during the mid 1980s. While unaffected by the government's matchmaking efforts and the excitement of the people around her, the story revealed Sylvie's secret love story and how she had faithfully held onto the memory for twenty years without having her feelings actually reciprocated at the present time. Lim brilliantly projects the issue of feminism, freedom and individual choice within her spinster narrative, opening up possibilities for Sylvie to be read under an existentialist point of view. By using the conceptual framework that highlights the construction of Sartre's bad faith, this paper aims to dissect Sylvie's use of misdirection strategies to evade her freedom. The construction of Sylvie's bad faith is unveiled by exploring her secret devotion towards Dr. Chellam, her past lover that she could not marry due to her father's disapproval. The paper hopes to generate a balanced view upon the spinster, so that her individuality and existential freedom receives equivalent attention; as received by many efforts to record the traits of spinsterhood in fiction.

Keyword: Spinster, bad faith, misdirection strategies

### INTRODUCTION

For many generations, the spinster's trait of being 'alone' has been responded to by society with mixed feelings, often anxiety and sympathy. Kathryn Kent asserted that "women who did not participate in the 'natural' feminine functions of wife and mother were socially ostracized and culturally ridiculed" (Kent 24). The earliest and most memorable spinsters in fiction under this stigma contained the essence of grotesque, with the combination of romance and absurdity/insanity; as famously portrayed by Miss Havisham (*Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens, 1861) and Emily Grierson (*A Rose for Emily* by William Faulkner, 1930). Emily's absurdity/insanity was based on the rearrangement of reality to her own purposes - in which she "denied the death of both her father and the tax pardoner Colonel Sartoris; refused to accept the smell, her tax bills, a postal address, or the role of spinster for forty years, preferring a dead lover to none" (Munson Deats and Tallent Lenker 111). Sylvie Ponniah in Catherine Lim's *The English Language Teacher's Secret* (1987) appeared decades later with motifs similar to Emily, although less grotesque in physical form.

Catherine Lim's *The English Language Teacher's Secret* tells the story of Miss Sylvie Ponniah, set in the time when unmarried women became the highlight of the Singaporean nation. The Graduate Woman phenomenon emerged to be a serious social problem during the mid-1980s, where the trend of graduate women delaying or forgoing marriage and children for career life became prominent (Lyons-Lee 1). Bachelors and single women were scrutinized and attempted to be matchmade by the government to improve the declining marriage rates in the country, causing singletons to become a hot

topic of conversation. Sylvie, unmarried at the age of forty-six in the story, managed to evade the unwanted attention of her colleagues and students in school. It was revealed however, that she was in a romantic relationship with a man named Dr. Chellam twenty years ago. Despite Dr. Chellam's astoundingly good qualities, Sylvie could not marry him due to her father's disapproval of their relationship. She chose to break off the relationship for the sake of her father, but secretly continued to nurse her one-sided romantic sentiments towards Dr. Chellam for twenty years, even after the death of her father. She read his love letters religiously every day since the separation, reminiscing and relishing only on the glorious aspects of the relationship; solely believing that Dr. Chellam remained unmarried due to his love for her. This was the justification for her faith, which kept her content for two decades. The story discloses and untangles Sylvie's faith towards the end, as Dr. Chellam was truly revealed to be engaged to her colleague Miss De Silva. Realizing that she should have stood her ground against the tyranny of her father and pursued her wishes, Sylvie became very miserable and exploded into a nervous breakdown during a grammar lesson in school.

Despite the different eras they were in, Lim's Sylvie Ponniah (1987) and Faulkner's Emily Grierson (1930) share certain similarities in their plot and characterisation. Both women were not allowed to marry by their fathers. Sylvie, like Emily, had refused to accept the change that comes with the passing of time. Their refusal to move on from their past romance was developed to resemble an obsession, which led to tragic endings with hints of insanity. To preserve her love, Emily was hinted to have poisoned her former lover and kept him in a bridal bed, with the trace of her own silver hair by his remains suggesting very close proximities to the deceased. Sylvie defied the expiry of her love by worshipping the love letters from her past, suffering a nervous breakdown as she faced the truth of the present. While Emily's tale was definitely darker than Sylvie's, both were hysteric, depicting a state of psychological instability within the nurturing of their romantic obsessions. The similarities within the narratives reflect how absurdity and insanity continue to be the essence of the spinster character, regardless of the fact that Sylvie's story had emerged well after two waves of feminism.

While Emily's tale is a distanced and mysterious recollection by another narrator, Sylvie's story allows the readers to divulge into more intimate details of her experience. This enables one to evaluate Sylvie's spinsterhood from an individualistic point of view as the Self, as opposed to the abundant reading of fictional spinsters as the Other. Scrutinizing Sylvie under the construction of Sartre's bad faith would reveal the nature of her existence as a single woman, beyond the usual reading of spinsters as stereotypical or grotesque. To apply a Sartrean framework upon the spinster would reveal not only the process of how she descends into stereotype, but also the extent of control she has upon herself, as opposed to the societal pressures commonly involved upon the discussion of spinsters. This method of reading the spinster would be different from the usual attempts to document how society views her, by paying specific attention to how she utilizes her free will to project herself as an unmarried woman in the society.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Throughout the years, the fictional spinster has received a good amount of attention in describing her stereotypical character. Among the first attempts to this was done by Deborah J. Mustard, who observed and discussed the evolutionary portrayal of spinster characters in Hollywood films, based on how the society perceives them. She listed four

characteristics to this profile which are “abnormal”, “pitiful”, “unfulfilled” and “suspect” (2000). This trail was followed by Ann Chang (2015), whose focus on unmarried women in Irish fiction involved the society’s hand in shaping the spinster stereotype. Chang’s discussions revealed spinsters to be treated as social outcasts and monsters, as well as their involuntary role as social mothers as a form of containment. Rungthip Anmai also pursued a similar path in describing the attitudes against spinsters and spinsterhood in modern Thai fiction (2011). Anmai’s analysis shows largely of the spinster’s recurrent role as the villain and social outcast as she does not participate in marriage, to enforce the ideals of Thai heterosexual norms. The work of Katherine Sullivan Barak (2014) tracks the evolution of the spinster into the cat lady, whose containment was deemed necessary by society as they “intrinsically transgress social norms, query gender roles and challenge the limitations of mediated womanhood” (Barak iii). Barak’s discussions reveals not only how the spinster stereotype has been developed and perceived by society, but also the extent of freedom she has in the age of post-feminism. Barak claims that “in post-feminist mythology all women are presumed to start their lives independent and free to create whatever life they choose” (115). While the freedom to choose had been popularized upon the daughters of post-feminism, she points out that choice itself works as a modality of constraint, where women are pressured to choose “correctly”. The powerful mark of sovereignty called choice then, was an illusion (Barak 116).

Meanwhile, Catherine Lim’s *The English Language Teacher’s Secret* contains the concerns parallel to the discussions above. Sylvie Ponniah, an English language teacher, sat in the periphery of society during the time when unmarried Singaporean women received massive scrutiny and attention by the nation. Sylvie was set in a close society who contemplated why their single colleagues were not married (a sensitive question to other spinster teachers as they tend to address personal insecurities). Perhaps here she relates to Mustard’s characteristic of being abnormal and suspect, for being single past the ideal age of marriage and yet successfully secluding herself from the intrusive curiosity of the people in her school. While Sylvie’s graceful, gentle and aloof personality spared her from receiving a villainous light, the unravelling of her secret unfolds Sylvie to be a romantic (and neurotic) spinster; which is not new nor unusual in the portrayal of fictional spinsters. Here emerges the issue of freedom and choice, where Sylvie had been successful in escaping the gaze of the society, but had in the end brought herself to join the coven of spinsters who became hysteric wrecks due to their unsuccessful romances. A few examples from this group (aside Faulkner’s Emily Grierson) would be Miss Havisham (*Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens), Paradi Sawangwat (*The Mansion of Sai Tong* by Kor Surangkhanang) and Nong-Ram (*Charmless* by Vor Vinnichayakul).

Although scores of papers have been written to describe the fictional spinster, they were made with the view of the spinster as the Other, from which they were described as outcasts for not participating in the social norms of marriage. The employment of this perspective aids us to record and understand the spinster stereotype from the spectacle of society. The reversed perspective of the spinster as the Self however, would allow us to explore the spinster’s individual freedom to define herself against the gaze of others and reveal her own uniqueness as a single woman. Such is the perspective this paper aims to take, through the employment of an existentialist point of view.

### RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

This paper seeks to read Catherine Lim’s main character Sylvie Ponniah (*The English Language Teacher’s Secret*, 1987) from an existentialist perspective. Its main objective is

to explore Sylvie's bad faith, specifically on the use of misdirection strategies to establish her individuality as a spinster. This would be made possible by utilizing an inward existentialist framework derived from the Sartrean reading of bad faith, which pays more attention to the construction of bad faith itself than the usual scrutiny of how a being exists in or escapes bad faith.

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Bad faith is a phenomenon where a being of consciousness deceives itself regarding its anguish and freedom (Detmer 75), hence not allowing itself to transcend and achieve authenticity. In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre cites the goal of bad faith to be "what I am, in the mode of 'not being what one is', or not to be what I am in the mode of 'being what one is'" (110). He willingly grants that "bad faith is a lie to oneself" (87). Joseph Catalano (*A Commentary On Jean-Paul Sartre's Being and Nothingness* 79) pointed out that to further explicate the definition of bad faith, Sartre compares it to the common process of lying, which is made of three basic steps. The first is to believe something to be true. The second step would be to express the opposite of this belief to others. The third step which secures the success of the lie, is for the others to believe in the statement expressed. While holding similarities with the process of lying, bad faith differs slightly in its fundamentals, as the lying is done to one's own self. David Detmer draws out that to be in a position of bad faith, the being "knows the truth (so that its denial constitutes a lie, rather than a mere error) and not know it (so that it is genuinely deceived)" (*Sartre Explained: From Bad Faith to Authenticity* 75). In simpler words, a being who is in bad faith involves the situation in which "the liar is more or less the victim of his lie, that he half persuades himself of it" (Sartre 88).

Sartre also claims that a person can live in bad faith. This is not necessarily without "having abrupt awakenings to cynicism or to good faith", but with the implication of "a constant and particular style of life"; where "people gladly have recourse to the unconscious" (*Being and Nothingness* 88). This suggests that the trick of securing the success of the lie is through the skilled manipulation of perspective, as explained by Sartre:

*The very essence of the reflexive idea of hiding something from oneself implies the unity of one and the same psychic mechanism and consequently a double activity in the heart of unity, tending on the one hand to maintain and locate the thing to be concealed and on the other hand to repress and disguise it. (Being and Nothingness 94)*

Such suggests that the being would learn to avert its gaze from unpleasant matters in a scrupulous and consistent manner. At the same time, it keeps other matters topmost in its mind (and perhaps exaggerates them), and thereby convince itself of misleading partial truths (Detmer 77). It could train itself to avoid the consciousness' clarifying gaze upon vaguenesses and comforting falsehoods, so that they remain hidden from the scrutiny which would reveal their true conditions. These maneuvers are made possible by the nihilating powers, self-division, and ambiguous being that Sartre claims characterize one's consciousness (Detmer 78). From these observations, we could identify two misdirection strategies used in bad faith – "omission and emphasis", as well as "ambiguity and vagueness" (Detmer 78).

In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre states that consciousness affects itself with bad faith. There must be an original intention and a project of bad faith; this project implies a comprehension of bad faith as such and a pre-reflective apprehension (of) consciousness

as affecting itself with bad faith (Sartre 89). Bad faith is strengthened by the fact that we are always in a situation, which Sartre describes as an ambiguous synthesis of two components. The first is facticity, which refers to the factual givens of our lives. The second is transcendence, which could simply be put as our way of living to surpass facticity. Some of the steps involved in the process towards transcendence includes focusing solely on certain selected features, performing specific interpretation upon them, and initiating projects with reference to them (Detmer 78). Both components provide a background for the practice of self-deception. The first is through the “denial of transcendence”, where one restrains itself by setting a boundary to limit the freedom of its consciousness. This is accomplished through defending its state of facticity. It eliminates the option of setting its consciousness upon facticity, thus rejecting any attempts to go beyond it; especially the process of negation which would cause it to evolve. One who denies transcendence would be most likely to portray itself as someone who is forced to succumb to the situation it is in (“I can’t help it”), or to the object of its being (“That’s just the way I am”) (Detmer 78). The second type of self-deception would be the “denial of facticity”, where one refuses to believe in the facts and reality that is part of its existence. Perhaps this would be the more straight-forward of the two types of denial, as it is done by simply denying the action and occurrence one had participated in; normally to escape the effects of its consequences. One who denies facticity defends itself from the reality that is unpleasant to it, by resisting to accept its entire truth. Supporting this resistance is the shift of its conscious gaze to a better account of itself. This account however, could be real and also fabricated.

### **THE CONSTRUCTION OF BAD FAITH IN *THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE* *TEACHER’S SECRET***

To escape from her anguish of being free, Sylvie manipulates the perspective of her disrupted consciousness to reduce the distress of opposing it. This is done through the calculated simulation of Dr. Chellam’s presence, as he is the representation of her desire and freedom. In his absence, Sylvie has established a secret devotion towards him, though the anomalous conservation of his image and memories.

Sylvie’s devotion towards Dr. Chellam qualifies as bad faith, as it is based on the diversion of her true consciousness. Sylvie’s anguish was her state of existence that had depended on the relationship with other persons to achieve meaning. The attempt to defend her relationship with Dr. Chellam was an act parallel to her authentic consciousness, which is exclusively dedicated towards her transcendence. The first step towards this is the separation from her father’s undisputed authority to decide upon her. Having failed to do so, Sylvie is stuck in the agony between what she was and what she wanted to be.

Sylvie’s attempt to soothe her anguish then, within the unreadiness to embrace her true freedom, is to linger between the two dimensions of her existence. For her part as a filial daughter, she released Dr. Chellam to commit to her father. The consciousness found earlier continued to be nursed in her secret profile as a distant lover. Although done in a clandestine manner, the preservation of Dr. Chellam reflects the attendance to her own consciousness and freedom, as he was the first salient choice she has ever made for herself; both as a woman and free individual. The indication of bad faith however, surfaces within how Sylvie directs her consciousness. What was to be the council of her own progress had been manipulated towards relieving the emotional agony of her anguish:

*In the crucible of Miss Ponniah's suffering, the love had become purified of all dross so that it was now most precious gold, enshrined in Miss Ponniah's heart. For Miss Ponniah had heard that Dr. Chellam never married; he had returned from his studies and gone to settle in Malaysia, where he was attached to a large private hospital, but he never married. Miss Ponniah had heard of attempts by relatives to matchmake for him, but he remained resolutely unmarried. Only she understood why. He had gone away a brokenhearted man, and he returned still brokenhearted, unable to forget the woman he could not marry. Miss Ponniah's father had died at the ripe old age of eighty, by which time Miss Ponniah was forty and her sad little love affair entombed almost twenty years in her faithful heart. Knowing that her memory was also being kept alive in the loyal heart of the man who declared his love for her so long ago had invested this secret love with an almost religious quality, so that Miss Ponniah, unmarried at forty-six and pitied by some for her lonely existence, was in reality a deeply contented woman. (Lim 95)*

The excerpt introduces how Sylvie has navigated her consciousness to heal the wounds upon losing her lover (and symbol of freedom), by adopting the belief that Dr. Chellam had refused to be married in honor of their love. Despite her innocent intentions pertaining Dr. Chellam, the deceit lies within Sylvie's treatment upon the issue of her past lover. The devotion towards him had grown unhealthy for Sylvie, whose consciousness had been turned to focus onto the memories of Dr. Chellam under suspicious beliefs. From this, Sylvie's consciousness had been driven to the denial of transcendence.

### ***Denial of Transcendence***

While admitting to the chronology of her unsuccessful romance, Sylvie's treatment upon the image of Dr. Chellam has blocked her path towards transcendence. Her secret devotion towards him has only served the purpose of providing emotional comfort after the devastating departure of her first love:

*Every day she thought of Dr. Chellam and she reread his letters in the privacy of her room, with the reverent ardour of a devotee, and, again and again, she thought of how no other woman had risen to take her place in his affections. She had left a void in his life, as he had said in his last letter, and since then, the void had remained unfilled, indeed, could not be filled because it had already been sanctified by her memory. (Lim 95)*

Having believed that Dr. Chellam has been faithful to her for years, Sylvie turns the focus of her consciousness towards honoring him, by being equally faithful to his memory. The fortification of this faith then turned into a personal project for Sylvie, which carried on for twenty years. Her consciousness has been made occupied with this project of conserving the memories of their relationship in the past. The effort to conserve the ideals of their relationship had included protecting them from any potential notions that would taint their "sublimity" (Lim 96). This however, would be further discussed in the use of misdirection strategies. To keep their memories alive, Sylvie had refused progress upon herself; as progress is the greatest threat capable of reducing invisible sentiments from the past. The preservation of Dr. Chellam would mean stagnancy for Sylvie's authentic consciousness, as this project does not allow her to move past her sentimental commitment to a love affair that has transpired over two decades ago. In simpler words, her loyalty to Dr. Chellam allows neither need nor space for Sylvie to transcend. This denial was nurtured by the use of two strategies of misdirection, which are ambiguity and vagueness, as well as omission and emphasis.

### ***Ambiguity and Vagueness***

The first strategy, ambiguity and vagueness, is the idealist foundation of Sylvie's practice of bad faith. It is through the use of this strategy that Sylvie had successfully manipulated the image of Dr. Chellam to blind her consciousness from its original purpose. It begins

with the implication of ambiguity upon Dr. Chellam's image. He was the representation of Sylvie's freedom from her father, but has also been made the constrictor of her consciousness. Despite the fact that she was unable to live the life of her choice (which was to be married to Dr. Chellam), Sylvie's secret devotion is a method for her to retain him – her symbol of freedom – within her. This concept has been imposed upon her consciousness; allowing it to be effectuated in the form of a passionate on-going reminiscence of the past.

The project of focusing her consciousness towards the faithful sustenance of Dr. Chellam had become more important than the consciousness towards transcendence itself. Her dedication towards Dr. Chellam had resulted glory to his memorial image, providing her emotional comfort in exchange. The outcome of this devotion is static, if not unbalanced; as there was no significantly authentic development upon Sylvie's consciousness from its relentless concentration upon Dr. Chellam. Sylvie relies more on the outcome on this devotion, compared to her conceptual idol. Her need for solace has granted power upon his image, in which the strength of her devotion towards Dr. Chellam has been equal to her commitment to Mr. Ponniah; if not stronger. The devotion towards her past lover has bound Sylvie to him, eliminating any need for progress and transcendence.

Strengthening this ambiguity is the effect of vagueness, which had supplied Sylvie the justification for her faith. The provider of this effect is the concept of love, as partially seen in the relationship with her father. Sylvie's bond with her father was built on familial love, made up of the combination of empathy and obligation. In a similar *modus operandi*, her faithful devotion towards Dr. Chellam was in reply to what she assumed to be his tribute to their romance. The effect of vagueness lies between the one-sided conceptions of love, in which Sylvie was under the impression that Dr. Chellam had chosen to remain unmarried due to his love for her. Her inference was built from an emotional point of view, with the intentional dismissal of any present potential that proves against her preferences:

*Even her secluded innocent world was not free from malicious gossip: snippets reached her of the carefree, bachelor existence of Dr. Chellam and some of his colleagues, which was at odds with his enshrined image. But this gossip was not even disquieting to Miss Ponniah, for having long ago consecrated her love for Dr. Chellam, and his for her, on the altar of sublime love, anything that did not add to the sublimity was dismissed from her consciousness. (Lim 95-96)*

The interpretation of the cause of Dr. Chellam's bachelorhood became the backbone of Sylvie's devotion towards him. The naivety within her secret however, reveals to be a diversion to protect the suspicious nature of her faith. Sylvie has opted to focus her faith towards a moment of "sublimity" (Lim 96), which is her relationship with Dr. Chellam without any threats of separation or disloyalty. She dismissed any notions that would taint the beauty of their memory, hence paying no heed to any news of Dr. Chellam that would jeopardize his image as her perfect lover. Such is reflected within her silent battle against the effect of time, which would have threatened the truth condition of her past ideals in the present. This proves Sylvie's current feelings for Dr. Chellam to be strongly one-sided.

Here surfaces Sylvie's delusive attitude concerning temporal validity, where she had attempted to evade the circumstances of time. In general, Sylvie's predilection for the past had brought her to elude the possibility of change; which generally comes with the progression of time. While acknowledging herself to be twenty years away from the occurrence of her romance, Sylvie dedicated her life into worshipping its best moments by

trimming the parts that opposes its glory, e.g. the separation in the past and potential disloyalty in the present. Her love story, "purified by all dross" to become "most precious gold" (Lim 95); has been reduced into sublimity, as literally termed by the author herself. Her life of devotion towards this concept then, revolves around the construction and preservation of its ethereal image.

Parallel to the effort of dedicating her consciousness towards the memory of Dr. Chellam, Sylvie had ignored any potential reality that would terminate the validity of the sentiments preserved from the past. Its survival through time and doubt has allowed Sylvie's lover and love affair to remain a seraphic concept. However, the means to secure such survival have been dubious. To preserve the memories of Dr. Chellam, Sylvie had removed herself from the position that allows her ideals to be challenged by the effects of realistic time. This included the ignorance to rebuild her relationship with Dr. Chellam after her father's death, in preference to the concept of sublimity that she had clung onto for years:

*It had never occurred to Miss Ponniah to consider an attempt at renewing contact with Dr. Chellam; her father being dead, there was now no earthly reason why they should not be married. Perhaps she had waited for Dr. Chellam to make the first move, and when he did not, and the years went by, she set up the little altar of their love and there placed herself and her lover, exactly as they were twenty years ago, young and ardent and pure. Removed thus from time and place, they become immortal: it did not matter that Miss Ponniah's hair had turned gray and the youthful roundness of her face and body were gone; it did not matter that Dr. Chellam too had probably grayed and that gossip hinted at debauchery relieving the loneliness of a bachelor existence. She in her world, he in his, but how close together in their lives of chosen commitment to the past! (Lim 96)*

With the aid of stealth, Sylvie had "escaped the tyrannies of the present and the future, and was therefore happy" (Lim 96). Happiness was the result from the protection of Sylvie's consciousness from the potential challenges against her ideals. While its origin (the assumed faith of Dr. Chellam) has been suspicious, the pure love she devotes herself to is vague; as it had been purposely made shielded from truths that are potentially threatening. Sylvie had doted on the concept nonetheless, in attempt to retain the presence of Dr. Chellam in her life. Such has been done not only to divert the focus of her consciousness from its authentic purpose, but also to convince itself that it is on the correct path. This was assured by the illusive sensation of happiness.

### ***Omission and Emphasis***

The second strategy, omission and emphasis, is the more visible and practical part of Sylvie's bad faith. Both tactics work in synchronization to implement the beliefs constructed with the first strategy, as previously discussed. Within the story, Sylvie attempted to omit her single status in the present by emphasizing the romantic relationship she had in the past. Such includes intense efforts to reminisce critical sentiments within the relationship, as done by Sylvie through the routine reading of Dr. Chellam's letters. Being the only relic from their days of courtship, Sylvie had used the letters to instill the belief that she is irreplaceable to Dr. Chellam, hence being the only woman he preserves himself for. The daily reminder of his sentiments, combined with the assumption of why he remains unmarried up to the present day, becomes the justification for Sylvie to develop and continue her own faith towards him.

Having eliminated the challenges of the present upon her ideals, Sylvie chose to emphasize only upon the preferable elements of her romance. Both had worked in tandem to induce the sensation of love, in which Sylvie had believed herself to be loved by Dr.

Chellam even after twenty years of their separation. To feel that she is still loved by Dr. Chellam produces the effect of tranquillity within Sylvie:

*'I am loved,' thought Miss Ponniah with a glow that radiated outward; people often remarked on the radiant serenity of Miss Ponniah's smile. ... 'I am loved and I love in return,' thought Miss Ponniah, the inner glow suffusing her features, and her love had the capacity of expanding to embrace the whole world. (Lim 96)*

The constant claim that she 'is loved' marks a level of success upon Sylvie's efforts to diverge her consciousness from its true purpose. The success includes a sense of confidence, from which Sylvie has fully embraced the ideals of her own positive assembling; having avoided any dispute of its existence.

The absent Dr. Chellam has been made present through the preservation of his image in their sublime relationship, which she devotes herself to every day for twenty years. As the years went by, her faith towards Dr. Chellam has taken a new form practice. Taking a different route than her usually inward praise, Sylvie had begun to project her feelings outwards:

*A happy secret, after a time, has need to reveal itself to the world: Miss Ponniah, teaching English language to a class of secondary school pupils, found herself abandoning the 'Johns' and 'Marys' and 'Mr. Tans' that invariably provide the human link to the dry little bones of grammar, and instead wrote on the chalkboard 'Dr. C' and spoke it aloud in the oral practices. (Lim 97)*

Although appearing in a subtle fashion, Sylvie has brought the memory of Dr. Chellam into a more vivid light. A portion of his existence that had always been alive within the motionless privacy of her bedroom, was innocently let out into a vocal classroom. While it might not have been intended, the appearance of 'Dr. C' in grammar lessons becomes another step for Sylvie to emphasize his exclusive presence in her life. This move however, risked the stealthy nature of her faith, which later contributes to the confrontation and the undoing of the belief that she had held on to for twenty years.

### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this paper has introduced Catherine Lim's *The English Language Teacher's Secret* as a spinster narrative by comparing it to William Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily*. It has also mentioned a few previous works that viewed and discussed spinsters as the Other, where attention was paid to the society's perception and attitude towards the spinster. From there onwards, it attempted to study Sylvie Ponniah past her common traits as a spinster, by utilizing an existentialist framework that highlights the construction of Sartre's bad faith to explore her individuality and how she deals with her freedom. It is discovered that Sylvie was in denial of transcendence, in which she utilized two misdirection strategies to establish her bad faith. Such efforts were done was to validate and maintain the existence of Dr. Chellam in her life, despite the fact that Sylvie herself had discontinued their relationship. In her bad faith, Sylvie manipulated her freedom to bind herself to the memories of Dr. Chellam and nursed an obsession towards their relationship for two decades.

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## A THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF MTV SHUGA “DOWN SOUTH” DRAMA SERIES

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### ABSTRACT

This paper briefly thematically analyses the moral lessons derived from the MTV “Shuga down south” drama series acted in South Africa, which portray the issues youth are confronted with in our contemporary society, such as HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy, identity and sexual awareness. As such, the study suggests positive health behaviours and choices youths can imbibe. The Edutainment framework was adopted in this study to demonstrate the place of television drama in creating awareness and attitudinal change in the society. The themes explored in this study include peer pressure, supporting friends and living with HIV, HIV disclosure, abortion, unplanned pregnancy, dangers of traditional medicine, infidelity deceit of underage female in the society, HIV testing, stigmatization, living with HIV, and transactional sex. This analysed themes led to suggestions that youths in Africa and the world at large, can adhere to, so as to improve their health behaviours and choices, such as the need to test for HIV/AIDS regularly, that contraceptive/condom use is not the answer to prevent HIV, the best is abstinence, never give up even when you contract HIV, live a positive life and support friends living with HIV. Furthermore, the study proposes that female youths should abstain from illicit sex that leads to abortion as the most dangerous abortion technique is the traditional method.

Keywords: Africa, attitudinal change, drama series, edutainment, HIV infection, youth

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Background to the study**

MTV Shuga was first produced in 2009 for Kenya television by the MTV Staying Alive Foundation, in partnership with MTV Base Africa (UNAIDS, 2013). The drama series demonstrates a classical example of edutainment film rich with didactical lessons. The series encapsulate stories around the youth of different African region, showcasing their lifestyles and realities to the rest of the world, and addressing the key issues of society, especially matters surrounding HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy, identity and sexual awareness. According to Booker et al. (2016), the entertainment-education, the drama was designed with specific goals of promoting the use of condom, single versus multiple sexual partners, and the stigmatization of HIV. Hence, the main aim of the TV drama was to educate and empower the youths with respect to their sexual and reproductive health.

The MTV Shuga series started from Kenya with the first two seasons, then to Nigeria for another two seasons and next to South African which is Season 5. This ground breaking TV show portrays the lives and loves of a group of young people and examines the ramifications of sexual decisions on the lives of young people, their partners, and their loved ones. Seamlessly interwoven into the storylines are vital messages related to HIV and a wide range of other sexual health messages (Christodoulo, 2014). Hence, the drama

was done to bring to the attention of young people the social complexities of negotiating safer sexual and lifestyle decisions. Supporting this view, Arnold (2017) observed that the drama series is a campaign that employs the power of entertainment to generate positive sexual and reproductive health outcomes among young people.

In recent decades, there has been research into how safer sex, anti-stigma messages, and overall sexual content were integrated into the MTV Shuga drama Kenyan edition. Results indicated that condom use and HIV stigmatization messages were frequently and clearly communicated. Negative consequences for risky sexual behaviour were communicated over the course of the entire series. However, messages about multiple concurrent partnerships were not evident (Booker, et al. 2016). Likewise, Martins et al. (2016) conducted a content analysis of the MTV shows 16, Pregnant Teen Mom and Teen Mom 2 to determine whether these programs accurately portray teen pregnancy. The results revealed that teen mothers on 16 and Pregnant were younger, more often white, and had healthier babies as compared to national averages. The babies’ fathers were more involved in the daily care of their child as compared to reality. Medical insurance or receipt of government assistance was almost never discussed. Teen mothers in the Teen Mom shows were significantly more likely to achieve a high school diploma as compared to reality. Finally, mothers on Teen Mom and Teen Mom 2 were significantly less likely to voice concern about finances and had more active social lives than mothers on 16 and Pregnant.

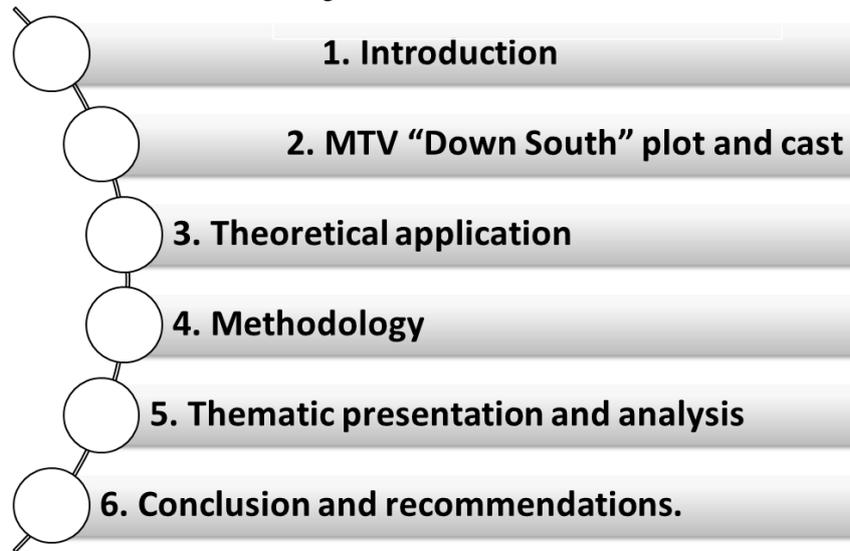
As evidenced above, there is limited or no focus on the MTV Shuga South African edition as at when this present study is carried out. Christodoulou (2015a) remarked that the MTV Shuga’s objectives are to heighten awareness and foster improved communication about HIV, and other sexually transmitted diseases among youth, as well as address the lack of youth-focused, targeted HIV campaigns. In this view, this present study will extend the literature that has examined the MTV Shuga drama by focusing on the South African ‘down south’ edition. As such, this paper will thematically analyse the MTV Shuga “down south” drama series in order to highlight its implication on youth health behaviours and choices. It will extend to discuss the basic health change behavioural themes in the drama series.

### **The aim, focus and article structure**

This paper thematically analyses the MTV Shuga “down south” drama series in order to explore its implication on youth health behaviours and choices. It will extend to discuss the basic health change behavioural themes in the drama series. Its rationale stems from the high rate of HIV infection in Africa that is disproportionately affecting the youths. Thus, the drama is said to play a role in educating the youth through interviewing didactic messages and entertainment such as protective measures on HIV/AIDS as well as other sexually transmitted related diseases.

The MTV Shuga drama consists of 5 seasons (Booker et al., 2016), however, this essay will focus on season 5 “Down South” which was set in South Africa. As shown in (Figure 1), this paper is categorized into 6 main sections, describing the introduction and background; MTV “Down South” plot and cast; theoretical application; methodology; thematic presentation and analysis; and conclusion and recommendations.

Figure 1. Article Structure



### MTV “DOWN SOUTH” PLOT AND CAST

MTV Shuga “Down South”, directed by **Mmabatho Montsho**, **Thabang Moleya**, and **Rea Rangaka**, and set in South Africa, focuses on issues affecting adolescent girls in South Africa, with a particular emphasis on their vulnerability to unintended pregnancy and HIV infection. It is full of interweaving stories of heartbreak, love, betrayal and difficult decisions among contemporary South African youth. Other key plot points include transactional sex, living with HIV, infidelity, and issues affecting LGBT teens (Arnold, 2017). *Season Five (5)* is set in English and Xhosa with precise subtitling. The characters are real and have believable stories, and the cast is comprised of brilliant young actors who bring these stories to life.

The fifth instalment, *MTV Shuga “Down South”* begins with Bongi’s (see Figure 2) return from Nigeria to a town called Zenzele in her home country, South Africa.

Figure 2. Bongi, and DJ Coalstove, Source: (MTV Shuga down south series: <http://www.mtvshuga.com/cast>)



Bongi, who was known as the musically talented high school student in Lagos in Season 4 reunites with her friend, Reggie, a young boy struggling with accepting his identity as a homosexual. After two weeks of stay in her hometown Zenzele, she registered in Reggie

school, where she meets his friends, Zamo and Q. In the same season 5, she started a relationship with DJ Coalstove (see Figure 2), who, unknowingly to her, contracted HIV from his ex-lover and transmitted it to her. At the initial stage, it was difficult for her to cope with the diagnosis, but with friends and her aunt, she was able to get back her life and continue struggling even as an HIV patient.

We also find Femi (see Figure 3), a Shuga regular since Season 2, who had contracted HIV and living well with it, moving to South Africa for a new job as a manager at Club Surge, a club owned by Rakeem.

Figure 3. Femi and Sheila, Source: (MTV Shuga down south series: <http://www.mtvshuga.com/cast>)



He meets Storm, Rakeem’s gorgeous wife (Figure 4), who tried to flirt with him, however, he rejected her in order not to sabotage the serious relationship he started with Sheila (right from Season 4) in Nigeria.

Figure 4. Storm and Rakeem, Source: (MTV Shuga down south series: <http://www.mtvshuga.com/cast>)



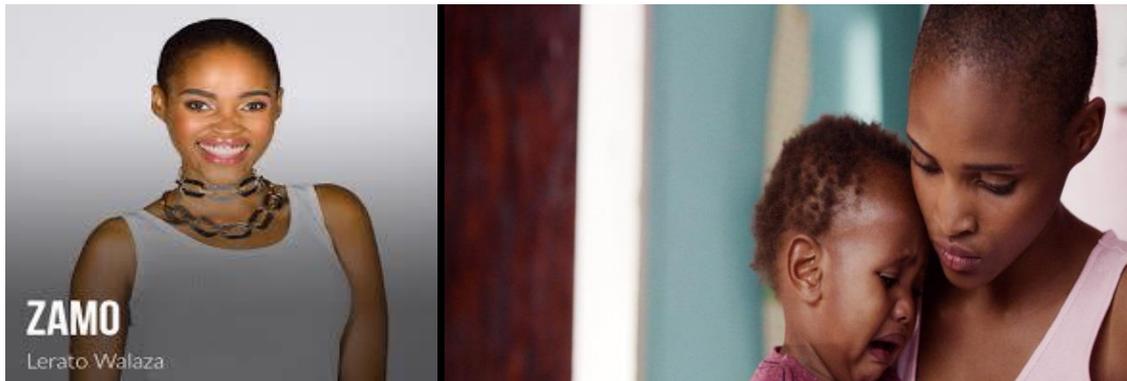
Ipeleng, on the other hand (Figure 5), is a brilliant orphan who has just lost her parents to HIV/AIDS and has a younger brother to look after. Ipeleng, who seems quite focused on her studies, has to deal with a boyfriend called Quinton (Figure 5), who demands sex every other time, and a club, she works at that hints that the only way to be rich is to let men touch you.

Figure 5. Ipeleng and Quinton, Source: (MTV Shuga down south series: <http://www.mtvshuga.com/cast>)



But, as time goes on, she copes and continues striving as a teenager amidst the hardship. Zamo, on the other hand (Figure 6), is a teenage mother who misplaces her priorities every now and again and chooses a materialistic lifestyle over that of a mother any day. Zamo, who is a mother at 15 and literate, is sexually active, and loves partying and showcasing. As the film progresses, she battles between taking care of her child and coping with the standard she has set for herself.

Figure 6. Zamo, Source: (MTV Shuga down south series: <http://www.mtvshuga.com/cast>)



As the story unfolds, we see Tsholo and Khensani (see Figure 7), who also go to Bongi's school and they too have their stories; Tsholo is a materialistic teenager who loves to hang around and get the latest gadgets. Such greed and materialism result in her being raped and abused due to a transactional relationship with a rich spoilt Sol.

Figure 7. Khensani on the left and Tsholo on the right, Source: (MTV Shuga down south series: <http://www.mtvshuga.com/cast>)



Khensani is a teenage girl who faces heartbreak and unplanned pregnancy from blindly believing that her teacher loves her and allows him to have sexual relations with her. She switches from a love-struck teenager to a confused and desperate pregnant girl. Although the stories are completely different, they are closely linked. Even when Leo (Figure 8) is brought in as coming to hide in Zenzele from the backlash of his attempted rape on Sophia his girlfriend in Nigeria (in Season 4), we still find him somewhat connected to the characters in Zenzele.

Figure 8. Leo, Source: (MTV Shuga down south series: <http://www.mtvshuga.com/cast>)



## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### Entertainment Education

This essay focuses on the application of the Entertainment-Education concept. As in much of Sub-Saharan Africa, HIV-prevention efforts, targeting Kenyan, Nigeria and South African youth and young adults, have frequently made use of mass media, including entertainment-education programmes (Govender, 2013). Entertainment education (EE) involves “pro-social messages that are embedded into popular entertainment content” (Moyer-Guse, 2008:408). Entertainment Education has been described as the process of purposively designing and implementing a media message both to entertain and educate in order to increase audience members’ knowledge about an educational issue, create favourable attitudes, and change overt behaviour (Singhal & Rogers, 2001; Singhal et al., 2003). The entertainment-education theory attempts to fuse educational and moral messages into entertainment genres with the aim of inducing positive attitudinal change (Suntai & Targema, 2017; Littlejohn & Foss, 2009). It uses

familiar and entertaining forms to convey pro-social messages to target audiences (Durden, 2013).

Entertainment Education comes in diverse forms such as serial drama, broadcast on television and radio, public service announcements, situation comedy, feature films, reality programming, magazine or variety programmes, theatre and street theatre, forum or interactive theatre, animated cartoons and folk media (Suntai & Targema, 2017; Johns Hopkins, 2008; Brown, Kiruswa, & Fraser, 2003). Singhal and Rogers (2001) remarked that the Entertainment-Education is incorporated into the media to demonstrate to individuals how they can attain a safer and healthier life. As such, evidence has demonstrated the effectiveness of Entertainment-Education (Patel et al., 2004), in disseminating health communication campaigns (Shen & Han, 2014). Among these efforts is *Shuga*, a television series designed to spread the message of responsible sexual behaviour and tolerance of people living with HIV among adolescents and young adults (Booker, et al., 2016). It presents health information in an entertaining manner so that youths would learn from the program even as they follow the lives of their favourite characters (Arnold, 2012). Johns Hopkins (2008) postulated that, for more than 30 years, the Entertainment-Education has been adopted for changing health behaviour through drama, music or other communication formats that engage the emotions to inform audiences and change attitudes, behaviour and social norms.

Strengthening this notion, Suntai and Targema (2017) remarked that globally, several programmes have adopted Entertainment-Education to improve health which has encouraged people to live healthier lives. For instance, Entertainment-Education programmes for family planning have helped motivate people to utilise contraceptive, to prevent HIV infection by having fewer sex partners, and to use antenatal care services. Furthermore, Johns Hopkins (2008) postulates that seeing and observing how the characters in a drama solve problems can give audiences the sense that they too can control their lives and solve such problems. More so, watching the character's encounter issues due to certain actions (for example, a character engaging in illicit sex and contracting HIV) can serve as a lesson for the viewers as well as encourage them to desist from certain dubious actions in life. Indeed, the film teaches a great lesson to viewers as they emulate the good examples of the characters and reject the bad ones. Through a movie's moral lessons, people can believe in their own individual ability to change, and the society, as a whole, can come to believe in its collective ability to change. Thus, through the message in a film, positive health behaviours can be influenced in order to promote health and prevent diseases. Health behaviours have been defined as the overall behavioural patterns, actions and habits that relate to health maintenance, health restoration and to health improvement (Gochman, 1997: 3). Evidence has demonstrated that films' didactic messages can teach individuals how to shun smoking, alcohol use, sexual behaviours, unwanted pregnancies, and drug abuse (Conner & Norman, 2017). Thus, this position renders Entertainment Education relevant to the discussion and analysis of this essay as well as provide a rationale for examining the themes in *Shuga* drama series, which explicates how individuals and the society at large can avoid certain actions that could tarnish their image, affect their health (for example, unwanted pregnancy, HIV, STD's), as well as career. Thus, this paper focuses on the numerous lessons which the characters in the drama projected, inducing the audience to emulate the good aspect and reject the bad aspect. Therefore, focusing this study on the

Entertainment-Education becomes a step in the right direction as it is a panacea for inducing positive health behaviour.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research design**

This study made use of the thematic analysis method. According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data (film). It minimally organises and describes dataset in detail. Guest et al. (2012) described thematic analysis as an approach that emphasises the researcher’s perceptions, feelings and experiences.

### **The theme coding and selection procedure**

Thematic analysis is performed through the process of coding in six phases to create established, meaningful patterns. These phases include familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes among the codes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thus, the researcher watched the drama over a period of six weeks, namely from July 12 to August 23, 2017, in order to categorise the various themes prevalent in the film. This entails noting the reoccurring messages in the film.

On the first week, the researcher watched the film to understand the plot. During the second week, the meaning and basic message in the film were noted. On the third week, the researcher generated the initial codes by documenting where and how themes occur in the film. On the fourth and fifth weeks, the themes were identified and categorised into 10. After a careful consideration in the sixth week, the themes were reduced to 7 to include transactional sex, peer pressure, supporting friends and living with HIV, HIV disclosure, abortion, unplanned pregnancy (dangers of traditional medicine, infidelity and deceit of underage female in the society), HIV testing, stigmatization, and living with HIV. The rationale for exclusion and inclusion of themes were if the themes identified are prevalent in more than 6 episodes, then it is included, but, if it was demonstrated in an episode or two, it was excluded.

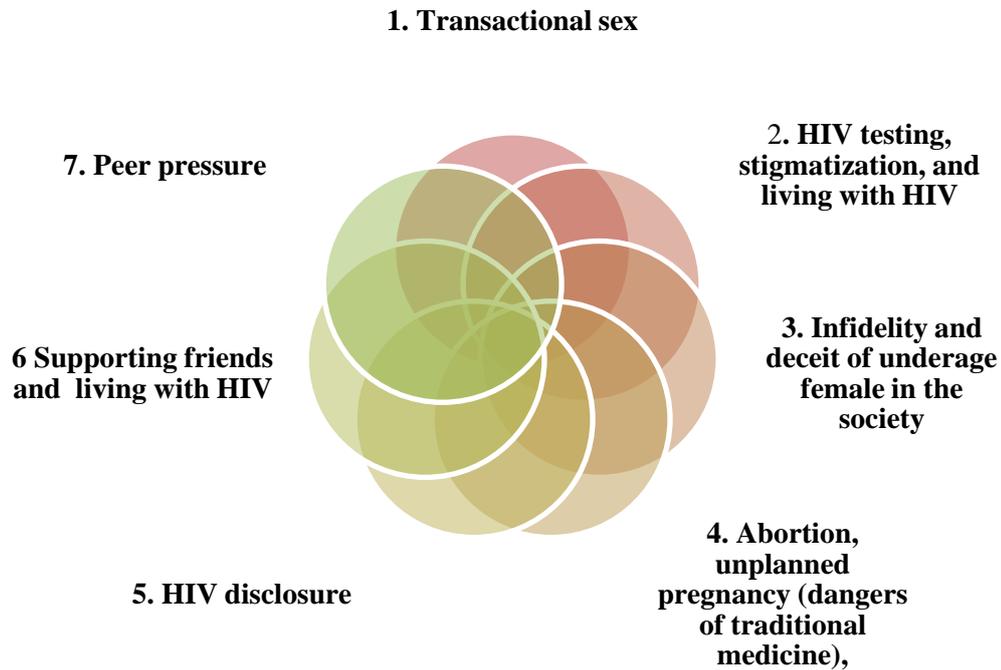
## **THEMATIC PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

The themes noted in the Shuga down south drama were categorised and analysed thematically, which entail discussing each theme in a specific running head and corroborating it with related literature in order to draw an inference.

### **The themes in the drama and lessons for youth**

This section demonstrates the thematic embodiment of the Shuga TV drama titled “Down South” acted in Zenzele South Africa, with the purpose of showing the didactical lessons and key health behavioural messages. It consists of the following themes (See Figure 9).

Figure 9: The themes explored in MTV Shuga “Down South” drama



***Transactional sex***

Transactional sex refers to sexual relationships where the giving of gifts or services is an important factor (Hunter, 2002). The participants do not necessarily frame themselves in terms of prostitutes/clients, but often as girlfriends/boyfriends, or sugar babies/sugar daddies (Hoefinger, 2013; Hoefinger, 2010). This theme was demonstrated through Tsholo who was a very materialistic girl. She was always after the latest gadgets in town in order to impress her friends, and such greed led her to date Sol who is a taxi driver. He cajoled and convinced her through the showering of various gifts such as mobile telephones. Eventually, she accepted his proposal base on his continued provision of her materialistic needs. As time went by, Sol realised she never loved him, but was just after material things, so he started molesting and beating her. It got to a stage that he drugged and forcefully had sexual intercourse with her while secretly recording it, which he later posted online.

Tsholo could not bear the shame of people seeing her as a cheap prostitute that had a sex video disseminated all over town; so, in a bid to escape from home, she was knocked down by a car and that resulted in her death. The lessons learned here is to be mindful of being materialistic, to fall in love with the right person, not because of material gains, to avoid pre-marital sex and to report anyone who threatens your life. If Tsholo had informed her father on what transpired, she would not have died nor be drugged by her supposed lover.

***HIV testing, stigmatization, and living with HIV***

HIV testing entails detecting the presence of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), the virus that causes acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), in serum, saliva, or urine through visiting a hospital or HIV testing centre. Such tests may detect antibodies,

antigens, or RNA. Stigmatization, on the other hand, refers to the avoidance and shunning of individuals infected with HIV while living with HIV refers to an affected person battling the scourge of the virus. This is the central theme in this drama which was demonstrated through some of the characters. In episode four, Bonki and her fiancé were admonished by her aunt, who is a nurse, on the dangers of HIV and the need for them to prevent as well as test themselves. She said:

Bonki I know you are becoming a woman and I need to know you are both responsible, I know these things are difficult to talk about, the problem is many people don't talk about these things... have you been tested for HIV together? sexual health is both your responsibility, issues of condom and contraceptive is not just one partner's responsibility (Season 5 Episode 4).

After the advice given to her by her aunty, Bonki took contraceptives but did not get herself tested for HIV. As she got closer to her fiancé DJ Coalstove, she became more attached and intimate. At a point in time, she wanted to have sex with him and there was no condom, so she decided to take the risk with the notion of her already taking contraceptives. However, this resulted in her contracting HIV which, unknowing to them, had been transmitted to him by DJ Coalstove ex-lover. At the initial stage, it was difficult to cope but, with her friends and aunt, she was able to get back her life and continue to struggle as an HIV patient.

The lessons deduced here are that youths should always test for HIV/AIDS and should always use contraception, and that condom use is not the answer to preventing HIV where the best option is abstinence. Other lessons include being mindful of those you rush into a relationship with and know your partner's status before starting any relationship. Most youths today contracted HIV due to ignorance and stubbornness; thus, it is vital to listen to elders in order to have a better and suitable life. If Bonki had listened to her aunt, she would not have contracted HIV.

### ***Infidelity and deceit of underage female in the society***

Infidelity is the violation of a couple's assumed or stated contract regarding emotional and/or sexual exclusivity while the deception of an underage female in the society entails deceiving, cajoling and convincing of young girls by men in order to sleep with them. This act is one of the most prevalent issues in our society today. The drama projected this issue through Khensani who is a teenage girl who faces heartbreak and unplanned pregnancy from blindly believing that her teacher loves her and thereby allowing him to have sexual relations with her. She switches from a love-struck teenager to a confused and desperate pregnant girl. On the other hand, her teacher, who is a married man, is unfaithful to his wife; he demonstrates a high level of infidelity by chasing underage students, neglecting his beautiful wife at home. This situation happens among youths today, where teenage girls are blindly deceived into sleeping with men in the society which in turn results in HIV and AIDS and unwanted pregnancies, leading to a plethora of deaths.

The lesson deduced here is that female youth should avoid going after men old enough to be their fathers and that lecturers/teachers should avoid deceiving and chasing their students but rather bring them up in the best manner. If Khensani, who is from a good Christian background, had listened to her parents she would not have gotten pregnant. Her situation leads to the explication of the next theme.

### ***Abortion, unplanned pregnancy (dangers of traditional medicine)***

Another notable theme demonstrated in the drama is abortion. This is depicted through Khensani who is left devastated and confused, resulting in her devising other means to terminate her pregnancy. She is advised by her friend to get abortion pills, so she opted for a traditional abortion medicine which results in a series of complications that affect her womb. She loses her womb, her parents' trust, and her integrity before the society. In highlighting the issues of abortion, Spooner (2014) reported that over 6.4m abortions happen on the continent every year; however, only 3% of these happen under safe conditions while those who are under-aged or unmarried are more likely to look for cheaper rates in dodgy backstreet clinics or visit "traditional doctors" to assist them in the termination of their pregnancies.

The lessons learned from this theme are that female youth should abstain from illicit sex that leads to abortions and that the most dangerous abortion technique is the traditional method. When issues happen, report to parents so that the best and possible action will be taken. If Khensani had informed her parents of the pregnancy, she would not have lost her womb. Thus, the precautionary measure should never be neglected by youths in Africa and the world at large.

### ***HIV disclosure***

Due to stigmatization, a lot of people have died of HIV and AIDS. This drama encourages HIV patients to always own up to their status in order not to infect the other partner. This theme is prevalent right from season two when Femi discloses to his girlfriend Shiela his HIV status. Additionally, in season 5, when Bonki contracts HIV, she informs her aunty as well as her best friend Reggie. They encourage her never to give up but continue to see the brighter side of life. Femi, who already has HIV, also encourages Bonki to live a happy life even with HIV. This suggests that an individual can have HIV but still live a normal life as far as he/she obeys the basic rules.

### ***Supporting friends with HIV, and living with HIV***

Supporting friends with HIV and living with HIV is another notable theme and basic message in the drama. It is one thing to contract HIV but it is another to live and support each other. Femi is supported by his girlfriend Sheila; she meets him as an HIV positive patient and never abandons him for a second. This encourages and makes him see a better side of life rather than getting sicker or committing suicide. On the other hand, Bonki is encouraged by friends and family, and this keeps her moving. The main message here is to never give up even when you contract HIV, and to live a positive life. Although it is not that easy, the drama series embedded with so many lessons depict how one can do so by not being too emotional about one's status but rather to take the bull by the horn and carry on with daily life.

### ***Peer pressure***

Peer pressure refers to the direct influence on a youth by peers, or the effect on an individual who gets encouraged to follow their peers by changing their attitudes, values or behaviours to conform to those of the influencing group or individual, and this theme is notable in this TV drama. For example, Tsholo is a materialistic teenager who follows her peers by changing her attitude, values, and behaviours which results in her death. In Episode 5, while discussing with her friend about the success of other girls in the town, she says:

Do you see Zamo always surrounded by boys and nice things I need some of those things, I need good things, I need to find myself a good guy...that will buy me these good things (Episode 5).

As demonstrated in the drama, she does find the good things temporary through dating a taxi driver; however, that leads to her destruction. She is also deceived by her friend, as seen in the same conversation where the friend replies:

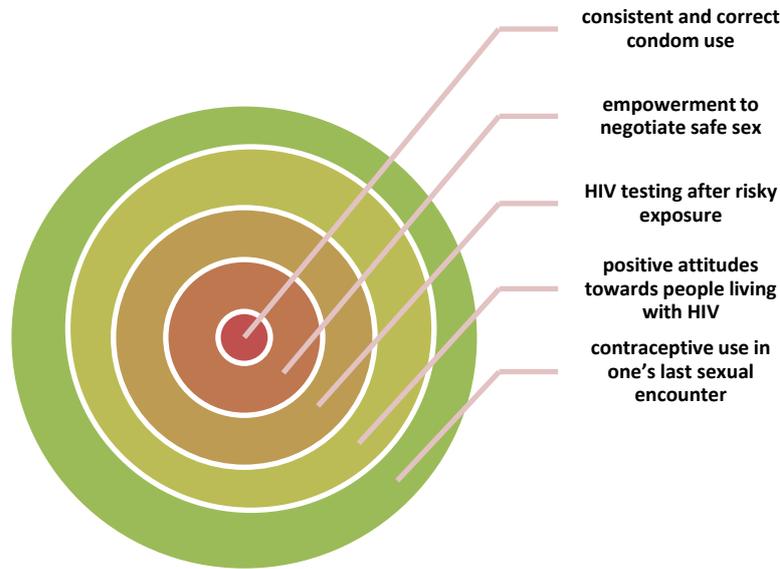
You just need to get a good guy like I have done, you need to get a guy like Lano, who is our school teacher, to shower you with love and gifts (Episode 5).

Such peer pressure leads to her doom, where she loses her life in the process of pleasing her friends and trying to catch up with her other peers. On the other hand, her so-called friend who is in love with their teacher also loses her womb. So, both incompatible friends have led them to danger. There is an adage where a blind man cannot lead another blind man; therefore, youths should endeavour to shun every power of peer pressure and to not hang around the evil company but rather those who will encourage you to do the right thing at the right time. According to Marquis and Tilcsik (2016), peer pressure leads to independent decision-making which results in sexual intercourse relationship and substance abuse. As such, the major themes highlighted in this study bring to light the essence of infusing entertainment-education in drama and movies. It is noteworthy that these themes have the capability of shaping the perception of youths to the realities of life in contemporary times.

### **Shuga drama and its implication on youth health behaviour**

MTV Shuga down South, which focuses on teenagers, has raised awareness of safe sex and public health issues in sub-Saharan Africa. It is a means to change the behaviour of young people by addressing their voices and applying innovative media strategies that engage them on their level as well as educate them about sexual health and HIV awareness. As such, the change impact of Edutainment is well established. TV drama has been proven to play an important role in introducing ideas in societies where literacy is relatively low and social norms discourage novel ideas, especially related to stigmatized behaviours (Christodoulou, 2015b). Therefore, the Shuga TV drama, through its didactical themes and messages, has managed to reach out to its viewers through the weaving of all the key issues of HIV preventions, such as the stigma of HIV testing, the risk of having multiple or concurrent partners, the stigma of living with HIV, and condom use. This notion supports an earlier view by Shetty (2010) who stated that the story ideas were broadened to align with the shifting nature of the audience, originally 15- to 24-year-olds, as the programme expanded to pan-African and then international audiences. Figure 10 below outlines the specific behaviour change objectives of the TV drama.

Figure 10: Specific behaviour change objectives of the Shuga drama series (Levey, 2015)



### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper highlights the themes prevalent in the MTV Shuga “Down South” drama which demonstrates the stories around the youth of different regions in Africa that are confronted with key issues in the society, such as matters surrounding HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy, identity and sexual awareness. Edutainment framework was adopted in this study to demonstrate the place of film in creating awareness and attitudinal change in the society. The themes explored in this study include peer pressure, supporting friends and living with HIV, HIV disclosure, abortion, unplanned pregnancy, dangers of traditional medicine, infidelity and deceit of underage female in the society, HIV testing, stigmatization, living with HIV, and transactional sex. The rationale for this study stems from the high rate of HIV infection in Africa that is disproportionately affecting the youths.

The notable lessons and messages in this review include to never give up even when you contract HIV, to live a positive life and to support friends who are living with HIV. Furthermore, female youths should abstain from illicit sex that leads to abortion as the most dangerous abortion technique is the traditional method. The study likewise cautions youths not to form relationships with men old enough to be their fathers, lecturers/teachers likewise should avoid deceiving and form relationships with their students but rather to bring them up in the best manner.

Other themes include a regular test for HIV/AIDS, contraception and condom use are not the answers to preventing of HIV, the best is abstinence, and to be mindful of those you rush into a relationship with and to know your partner's status before starting any relationship. Additionally, the explored themes in this study are warning youths to be mindful of being materialistic and to fall in love with the right person, not because of material gains. Additionally, the themes also revolve around avoiding pre-marital sex and to report anyone who threatens your life. Conclusively, the themes highlighted in this study bring to light the essence of inculcating didactic lessons via weaving entertainment and education into drama and movies. It is noteworthy that these themes have the

capability of shaping the perception of youths to the realities of life in contemporary times.

Although this paper addressed the prevalent issues among the youths in Africa, such as HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy, identity and sexual awareness. Nevertheless, the analysis lacks in-depth explication. The series was not in-depth elaborated while the issues were not pertinently discussed. The result of each analysis, which ends each section, seems a bit rushed. Additionally, this present study relied merely on thematic analysis without carrying out a survey to understand youth’s perception as regards the impact of the drama series on their health behaviour and choices. This implies that this present study is a brief thematic analysis that requires other studies to extend upon. Therefore, further in-depth thematic research should be carried out in order to gain a broader understanding of the implication of the MTV down south Shuga drama. Furthermore, a survey should be done so as to understand the youth perspective towards the MTV down south series as regards to their health behaviours and choices.

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